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Local Government Councils and Economic Security in Rivers State, 2015-2026

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ABSTRACT
Economic security remained a significant development concern in Rivers State, particularly in relation to the capacity of local government councils to improve the livelihood conditions of residents. This study examined Local Government Councils and Economic Security in Rivers State, 2015–2026, with specific focus on employment creation, poverty reduction, economic empowerment and food security. The study was guided by the Human Security Theory and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised residents of selected local government areas in Rivers State, from which a sample was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from relevant textbooks, journal articles, official documents and other published materials. The questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability procedures, while data were analysed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that local government councils had made relatively limited contributions to employment creation, with a grand mean of 2.25; the hypothesis test produced an r-value of 0.071, calculated t-value of 1.420 and significance value of 0.156, resulting in the acceptance of H_{01}. Poverty reduction also recorded a limited contribution, with a grand mean of 2.22, r-value of 0.084, calculated t-value of 1.682 and significance value of 0.093, leading to the acceptance of H_{02}. Economic empowerment strategies, including skills acquisition, vocational training, agricultural support and assistance to small-scale enterprises, recorded a grand mean of 2.26, with r = 0.063, t = 1.259 and p = 0.209, resulting in the acceptance of H_{03}. Food security recorded a grand mean of 2.25, with r = 0.096, t = 1.924 and p = 0.055, leading to the acceptance of H_{04}. The study concluded that local government interventions had not produced statistically significant outcomes across the four dimensions of economic security. It recommended stronger administrative structures, inclusive economic development, improved support for local enterprises and agricultural interventions. The study contributed empirical evidence by demonstrating the limited effectiveness of grassroots local government interventions in strengthening economic security in Rivers State and provided a basis for improving their implementation and institutional capacity.

Keywords: Economic security, development, employment creation

INTRODUCTION

Economic security is among the most important dimensions of human security in the contemporary world. It concerns the ability of individuals and households to obtain stable livelihoods, adequate income and the basic resources required for a dignified and sustainable life. Economic insecurity denies people opportunities for productive participation in society and exposes households to poverty, unemployment, deprivation and other forms of vulnerability. Scholars and policymakers have therefore established a strong connection between poverty and human insecurity, emphasizing that economic destitution extends beyond the inability to meet immediate financial obligations to include food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, limited educational opportunities, environmental vulnerability and exposure to violence. The United Nations Development Programme's human security framework recognizes freedom from want as an essential component of human security and places economic well-being at the centre of sustainable human development (UNDP, 1994). The challenge of economic insecurity has become particularly important in Africa because of the interaction between structural inequality, weak governance, poverty, unemployment and environmental vulnerability. The number of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa remains exceptionally high, with almost 60% of the world's extremely poor population residing in the region (World Bank, 2023). Nigeria represents one of the most important cases in this regard because of its large population, extensive poverty burden and persistent economic inequalities. According to recent official statistics, 30.9% of Nigerians were living below the international poverty line, while 63% of the population experienced multidimensional poverty. These conditions demonstrate the importance of strengthening economic security through institutions capable of responding to the needs of citizens at the grassroots level.

The poverty situation in Nigeria has also been characterized by considerable spatial and demographic variations, with rural communities and disadvantaged populations experiencing greater economic vulnerabilities. Within this context, local government councils constitute an important institutional level for understanding the provision of economic opportunities and basic services at the grassroots. As the level of government closest to the people, local government councils are expected to contribute to local economic development through employment support, provision of social infrastructure, poverty reduction initiatives, agricultural development, skills acquisition and other programmes capable of improving household livelihoods. Consequently, the effectiveness of local government councils can have important implications for economic security among residents. Rivers State provides an important context for examining the relationship between local government councils and economic security. Although the state is endowed with substantial oil and other natural resources, many communities continue to experience unemployment, poverty, inadequate livelihood opportunities and insecurity. The situation has been particularly challenging in local government areas such as Ikwerre, Emohua and Obio/Akpor, where insecurity, unemployment and youth vulnerability have affected social and economic activities. The persistence of electoral violence, thuggery, gangsterism, cultism, armed robbery and kidnapping has created conditions capable of discouraging investment, disrupting transportation and commercial activities and limiting opportunities for local economic development. The disruption of economic activities along major transportation corridors, including the East-West Road and the Owerri-Port Harcourt highway, illustrates how insecurity can undermine the economic security of households and communities.

The emergence of community-based security arrangements such as the ONELGA Security and Peace Advisory Committee (OSPAC) and the Akpor Security, Peace and Advisory Committee (ASPAC) further demonstrates the extent to which communities have had to respond to conditions that affect their social and economic well-being. In Akpor Kingdom, for example, community insecurity was associated with cult rivalry, land disputes, chieftaincy conflicts and violence. These conditions affected the ability of residents to engage freely in economic activities and created additional financial burdens for communities that contributed resources towards local security arrangements. The experience therefore illustrates that local governance, security and economic security are interconnected dimensions of grassroots development. The relationship between insecurity and economic development has also attracted scholarly

attention. Ojewale (2021) reported that despite government interventions, insecurity in Ikwerre, Emohua and Obio/Akpor continued to present serious challenges. Similarly, Chukwu (2018) argued that youth unrest could result in the movement of capital away from affected communities, describing this phenomenon as "capital flight." Such circumstances could reduce investment, employment opportunities and household income and consequently deepen economic insecurity. Local government councils therefore remain strategically positioned to address economic insecurity through grassroots development interventions. Their responsibilities in local development, infrastructure provision, social services, agricultural support, employment-related programmes and community development can contribute to strengthening the economic resilience of individuals and households. However, the effectiveness of these interventions may be constrained by inadequate financial resources, weak institutional capacity, poor coordination, corruption, insecurity and limited community participation. The challenges confronting public institutions and the wider security system have consequently raised important questions about the capacity of government institutions to deliver sustainable development outcomes.

Against this background, the study examined Local Government Councils and Economic Security in Rivers State, 2015–2026, with particular attention to the capacity of local government councils to contribute to employment, income generation, poverty reduction, livelihood development and improved socio-economic conditions among residents.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine local government councils and economic security Rivers State, 2015-2026. The specific objectives were to;

i. assess the impact of local government councils on employment creation in Rivers State.

evaluate the role of local government councils in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated by the researcher to aid the completion of the study;

i. To what extent have local government councils contributed to employment creation in Rivers State?

How have local government councils contributed to poverty reduction in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated to guide this study;

H_{01}: Local government councils have no significant impact on employment creation in Rivers State.

H_{02}: Local government councils have no significant role in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

Human Security Theory

Human Security Theory refers to theories used in this research. Some of the major exponents of human security theory are Mahbub ul Haq, Amartya Sen, and Lloyd Axworthy, while the human security theory emerged in the 1990s. The UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 represents an important document in the development of human security theory, partly due to contributions made by Haq and Sen. In addition, Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Foreign Minister, advocated human security especially in 1999. Human security theory refers to the human security theories used in this research. Human security theory is a people-focused security theory which differs from the traditional security theory in the sense that it focuses on individuals rather than the state. Steps taken to ensure human security are the most extreme because here the referent object is not the state, society, or community but the individual himself. The traditional notion of security is "state-centered," and its basic principle consists in ensuring the security of the state against all kinds of dangers threatening its sovereignty, territory, and even existence. But human security is completely opposite to that. It is "people-centered," and the central question in it is how secure and free we are as individuals. A continuum has been employed to define the possible conception of human security.

The definition of the spectrum in its narrow sense, however, still concentrates on the traditional concept of security which is associated with the state. It covers only violent threats such as mines, small arms, violence, and intra-state conflict (Lylod, 2000). The spectrum can be viewed in its broad sense as

including a long list of potential threats like war and some newly raised concerns about development such as health, poverty, and environment. Hence, the new conception of human security is the safeguarding of the very essence of life of all human beings from critical and comprehensive threats and situations by capitalizing upon their strengths and aspirations. The concept of human security brings together several different forms of freedom- freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to act on one's own behalf. In order to achieve that, it employs two basic strategies: protection and empowerment. The former provides protection against threats (UNDP, 1994). It implies the need to make joint efforts in creating the necessary norms and institutions to address insecurities. The latter makes it possible for individuals to realize their potential and to fully participate in decision making. The strategies of protection and empowerment are complementary and both of them are necessary in most cases. There is another strategy related to human security, which is the strategy of respect. It presupposes that regardless of what its ultimate goal is, every actor should ensure that their actions do not in any way endanger human security. This notion of respect is closely linked with respect for individuals. Increasing number of people across the globe- along with increased salaries, buying power, consumption and economic development of emerging economies-have increased the demand for food, commodities, oil and other kinds of natural resources. Given that there will be 9 billion people across the world in 2050, everyone should have the right to population security, which will guarantee the sustainability of the resources of this planet according to the growth and consumption of the population. It seems very clear that there is an urgent need for defining the concept of security in an extended manner so that human security also needs to include the concept of survivability of humans. There is imbalance among nations- population growth, poverty, food, resources, environment, migration, energy money, peace and cultural awareness are major security concerns. They have the capability of impacting individuals in an exponential manner across the globe.

As transnational concerns, they are the amplifiers of human security-either for widespread stability or instability-and these amplifiers could form a new basis of human security as a responsibility of the global common. In addition to that, it is also important to realize that all these aspects of human security are related to one another and affect human security just alike. Human Security's important dimensions explicitly show that the idea of human security is an amalgamation of significant innovations in the realm of security that lead to the transition from seeing the international affairs and security issues from the standpoint of the state to that of the individuals. This allows for the wide spectrum to go from prevention to emergency through the reconciliation of human rights, human development and security. This is included in the understanding of Mills who states that no nation is ever going to be free unless the people themselves fight for this freedom. In fact, it is the only way that the people shall be able to get their empowerment, dignity, freedom from fear and freedom from want that will allow them to work for democracy and rights. In Rivers State, the government did not meet the needs of the people, which, as per the Human Security theory, are supposed to be at the core of security. As such, the people became dissatisfied. The dissatisfaction leads to more aggressiveness and frustration among individuals and eventually forces them into kidnapping and armed robbery as ways of survival. Due to this degree of insecurity that comes about due to the actions of the youth, Rivers State has had several developmental challenges. This is because according to Chukwu (2018), youth restiveness results in insecurity and hence affects development of any society. Thus, aggressive behaviour expressed by dissatisfied youth leads to insecurity, which leads to lack of development in the region. The human security perspective generates many policy implications, criticism, and difficulties. The human security concept is criticized on its arbitrary nature and vagueness of the idea as well as the wide scope of its threat epistemology. Threats listed by the UNDP report and Canadian Government documents include anything from drug abuse to genocide, and hence it becomes difficult to find out where policies need to focus their attention and how priorities should be set. Given that there are so many possible threats in terms of critical and pervasive nature, what criteria are used to pick some of them out?

Some have opposed this on the grounds that the goal of this notion has not been achieved. For instance, human security has health security as one of its components, but when one looks at the reality, it has been

said that there is no health security in the world. In spite of all the progress that has been made in the health sector, 22 million people died due to avoidable illnesses in 2004. The HIV/AIDS virus has become the biggest health disaster. More than three million people died of the disease in 2011. In Sub-Saharan Africa, by 2015, nearly half of all the orphans in the region will have been orphaned due to the HIV/AIDS virus.

There is water pollution in the lives of 132 million people in 20 countries. Other challenges include child mortality and maternal mortality (khanchit, 2007). The second critique is based on the vagueness and incoherence aspect of the human security concept. According to Roland Paris, who analyzes some of the skeptical literature, human security is like sustainable development; everybody supports it but very few people know its meaning. Existing definitions of human security tend to be enormously costly and vague, covering everything from physical security to mental well-being, which does not give much advice to policymakers when prioritizing policies (Roland, 2001). In addition, as a concept, human security tries to explain everything and thus explains nothing in practice. It confuses the academics since it is used to support all hypotheses and their opposites

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the contribution of local government councils to economic security in Rivers State from 2015 to 2026. The study was conducted in Ikwerre, Emohua and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State, which provided varied urban, semi-urban and rural economic settings. The population comprised adult residents aged 18 years and above in the three selected local government areas, with a combined population of 1,125,403. Using the Taro Yamane formula at a 0.05 level of precision, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined. Respondents were selected through simple random sampling. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, official reports, statistical publications, policy documents and relevant previous studies. The questionnaire consisted of demographic items and sixteen substantive items structured around the four research questions and utilised a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Face and content validity were established through assessment by three experts in the relevant academic field. Reliability was determined using the test–retest method, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.74. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using appropriate inferential statistics at the 0.05 level of significance.

DATA PRESENTATION

This chapter covers the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. The aim of this section of the study is to examine local government councils and human security in Rivers State, 2015-2026.

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	208	60
Female	192	40
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Research Question Analyses

Question One: *To what extent have local government councils contributed to employment creation in Rivers State?*

Table 4.2.1: Responses on the contribution of local government councils to employment creation in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Local government councils have created employment opportunities for residents in Rivers State.	58	76	126	108	368	2.23	1.08
2	Local government councils have implemented skills-acquisition programmes that have improved residents' employment opportunities.	64	82	119	103	368	2.29	1.09
3	Local government councils have supported small businesses and enterprises in ways that have created employment opportunities.	55	79	132	102	368	2.24	1.06
4	Employment creation initiatives of local government councils have improved the economic well-being of residents in Rivers State.	61	73	129	105	368	2.24	1.09
	Grand Mean					**368**	**2.25**	**1.08**

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table presents the respondents' assessment of the contribution of local government councils to employment creation in Rivers State. The results indicate that the contribution of the councils was relatively limited across the four indicators examined. Item 1 recorded a mean score of 2.23, indicating that respondents did not consider the employment opportunities created by local government councils to be substantial. Item 2 recorded a mean of 2.29, suggesting that the skills-acquisition programmes implemented by the councils had not sufficiently translated into improved employment opportunities. Item 3 recorded a mean score of 2.24, indicating that council support for small businesses and enterprises had made a limited contribution to employment generation. Similarly, Item 4 recorded a mean of 2.24, showing that employment-creation initiatives had not sufficiently enhanced the economic well-being of residents. The grand mean of 2.25, which fell below the 2.50 decision benchmark, suggests that the contribution of local government councils to employment creation remained below the expected level.

Question Two: ***How have local government councils contributed to poverty reduction in Rivers State?***

Responses on the contribution of local government councils to poverty reduction in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.
5	Local government councils have implemented programmes aimed at reducing poverty among residents in Rivers State.	54	72	136	106	368	2.21	1.07
6	Local government councils have provided livelihood support to economically vulnerable households.	49	78	137	104	368	2.19	1.05
7	Local government councils have supported residents through skills-acquisition and vocational training programmes that reduce economic vulnerability.	60	81	126	101	368	2.27	1.08
8	Poverty-reduction programmes implemented by local government councils have improved the living conditions of residents in Rivers State.	51	74	139	104	368	2.19	1.05
	Grand Mean					**368**	**2.22**	**1.06**

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 4.2.2 examines the contribution of local government councils to poverty reduction in Rivers State. The findings demonstrate that the contribution of the councils was generally inadequate across the indicators. Item 5 recorded a mean of 2.21, suggesting that respondents did not perceive the poverty-reduction programmes implemented by the councils as sufficiently extensive or effective. Item 6 produced a mean of 2.19, indicating that livelihood support to economically vulnerable households was considered insufficient. Item 7 recorded a mean of 2.27, showing that skills-acquisition and vocational training programmes had achieved only a modest reduction in economic vulnerability. Item 8 also recorded a mean of 2.19, indicating that council interventions had not sufficiently improved the living conditions of residents. The grand mean of 2.22 fell below the 2.50 benchmark, demonstrating that the contribution of local government councils to poverty reduction was relatively low and requires considerable strengthening.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 4.3.1: t-Test of Relationship between Local Government Council Activities and Employment Creation in Rivers State

H_{01}: Local government councils have no significant impact on employment creation in Rivers State.

Variables	r-value	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	df	Sig.	Decision
Local Government Council Activities vs Employment Creation in Rivers State	0.071	1.420	1.966	398	0.156	**Accept H_0**

Source: Computed from Pearson Correlation Output (2025).

The result showed a very weak positive relationship between local government council activities and employment creation in Rivers State, with an r-value of 0.071. The calculated t-value of 1.420 was lower than the critical t-value of 1.966 at the 0.05 level of significance. The significance value of 0.156 was also greater than 0.05. The relationship was therefore not statistically significant. Consequently, H_{01} was accepted, indicating that local government councils did not have a statistically significant impact on employment creation in Rivers State.

Table 4.3.2: t-Test of Relationship between Local Government Council Programmes and Poverty Reduction in Rivers State

H_{02}: Local government councils have no significant role in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

Variables	r-value	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	df	Sig.	Decision
Local Government Council Programmes vs Poverty Reduction in Rivers State	0.084	1.682	1.966	398	0.093	**Accept H_0**

Source: Computed from Pearson Correlation Output (2025).

The result indicated a weak positive relationship between local government council programmes and poverty reduction in Rivers State, with an r-value of 0.084. The calculated t-value of 1.682 was below the critical t-value of 1.966, while the significance value of 0.093 exceeded 0.05. The relationship was therefore not statistically significant. Accordingly, H_{02} was accepted, indicating that local government councils did not have a statistically significant role in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To what extent have local government councils contributed to employment creation in Rivers State?

The findings revealed that local government councils had made a relatively limited contribution to employment creation in Rivers State during the period covered by the study. The descriptive analysis showed that the four indicators measuring employment creation recorded mean scores below the decision benchmark of 2.50. The item on the creation of employment opportunities recorded a mean of 2.23, while skills-acquisition and vocational training recorded 2.29. Support for small businesses and enterprises recorded 2.24, and the contribution of employment-related programmes to residents' economic security

also recorded 2.24. The grand mean of 2.25 therefore indicated that respondents did not perceive the employment interventions of local government councils as sufficiently effective in generating substantial employment opportunities.

The finding could be understood within the wider economic and developmental conditions of Rivers State. The literature supplied for the study indicated that economic activities in the Niger Delta had historically been affected by conflict, oil-related insecurity, unemployment, weak development structures and instability. Amnesty International (2009), in its discussion of petroleum, pollution and poverty in Nigeria, reported conditions in which oil-producing communities experienced environmental and socio-economic difficulties despite the enormous resources generated from petroleum. Such circumstances were relevant to employment creation because economic opportunities at the grassroots depended not only on the availability of natural resources but also on the existence of stable local economies and effective institutions capable of converting available resources into productive opportunities.

The findings were also consistent with the broader argument of Ikelegbe (2005), who examined the economy of conflicts in the oil-rich Niger Delta and showed that the economic environment of the region had been strongly influenced by conflicts surrounding resource control and distribution. Similarly, Allen (2012) examined the relationship between oil and the Niger Delta and highlighted the contradictions between oil wealth and the socio-economic conditions experienced within oil-producing communities. These perspectives provided an important context for understanding why local government councils might experience difficulties in producing substantial employment outcomes. Where local economic activity was affected by instability and weak productive structures, the capacity of grassroots institutions to generate sustainable employment could have remained constrained.

The role of governance was also relevant to the finding. Amunden (2009) examined good governance in Nigeria and emphasised institutional effectiveness as an important element of development. Jinadu (2016) similarly discussed democracy and development in Nigeria, drawing attention to the relationship between governance and development outcomes. From this perspective, employment creation at the local level required more than the existence of government programmes; it required effective administration, adequate resources, accountability and sustained implementation.

The inferential result reinforced the descriptive finding. The Pearson correlation between local government council activities and employment creation produced an r-value of 0.071, representing a very weak positive relationship. The calculated t-value of 1.420 was lower than the critical t-value of 1.966, while the significance value of 0.156 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, H_{01} was accepted, indicating that local government councils did not have a statistically significant impact on employment creation in Rivers State.

The finding therefore suggested that although local government councils might have undertaken employment-related activities, their contribution was not sufficiently strong to establish a statistically significant impact. This was important to the study because employment constituted a major component of economic security. The limited outcome implied the need for local government councils to strengthen skills acquisition, enterprise development and productive-sector interventions and to connect such programmes more directly with sustainable employment opportunities.

How have local government councils contributed to poverty reduction in Rivers State?

The findings indicated that local government councils had made a relatively limited contribution to poverty reduction in Rivers State. The descriptive analysis produced a grand mean of 2.22, which fell below the 2.50 decision benchmark. The implementation of poverty-reduction programmes recorded a mean of 2.21, livelihood support to economically vulnerable households recorded 2.19, skills-acquisition and vocational training recorded 2.27, while improvement in residents' living conditions recorded 2.19. The results indicated that respondents generally did not perceive the poverty-reduction activities of local government councils as having produced sufficiently substantial improvements in household economic conditions.

The finding was particularly significant within the context of the Niger Delta, where the presence of substantial petroleum resources had not necessarily eliminated poverty and socio-economic vulnerability. Amnesty International (2009) documented the connection between petroleum exploitation, environmental degradation and poverty in Nigeria. The report demonstrated that communities located within resource-rich areas could continue to experience economic hardship despite the enormous value generated from petroleum resources. This provided a relevant background for the present finding because poverty reduction at the local level depended on whether government institutions were able to convert available economic resources and public interventions into tangible improvements in household livelihoods.

Ikelegbe (2005) also provided an important contextual explanation by examining the economy of conflicts in the Niger Delta. The study showed that conflict and competition surrounding resource control had economic consequences for communities. Similarly, Amadi, Imoh, and Obomanu (2016) examined oil, the Niger Delta and the emergence of militia capitalists and demonstrated the complex relationship between petroleum resources, economic interests and conflict structures in the region. These studies suggested that poverty reduction could be difficult to achieve where economic resources were embedded within wider structures of conflict, inequality and competition.

The literature on governance also reinforced the importance of institutional capacity. Amunden (2009) examined good governance in Nigeria and underscored the importance of effective governance for development. Jinadu (2016) similarly connected democratic governance with development. These perspectives suggested that poverty-reduction programmes required effective institutions, appropriate implementation mechanisms and accountable management of public resources. Thus, the relatively low assessment of local government poverty-reduction activities could partly reflect broader institutional and developmental challenges.

The descriptive finding was further supported by the inferential analysis. The Pearson correlation between local government council programmes and poverty reduction produced an r-value of 0.084, indicating a weak positive relationship. The calculated t-value was 1.682, which was lower than the critical value of 1.966, while the significance value was 0.093, which exceeded 0.05. Consequently, H_{02} was accepted. The result indicated that local government councils did not have a statistically significant role in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

The acceptance of the null hypothesis suggested that the observed activities of local government councils had not translated into a sufficiently strong measurable poverty-reduction outcome during the study period. The result did not necessarily imply that councils had undertaken no poverty-related activities; rather, it indicated that their contribution was insufficient to establish a statistically significant relationship within the study population.

The finding therefore highlighted the need for stronger grassroots poverty-reduction interventions. Local government councils would need to place greater emphasis on sustainable livelihood programmes, productive employment, enterprise development, agricultural support and targeted assistance to vulnerable households. Such interventions would be more consistent with the broader objective of economic security because they would address the productive capacity and income-generating ability of residents rather than relying primarily on short-term assistance.

The analysis produced four major findings in line with the research questions:

1. **The study found that local government councils had made a relatively limited contribution to employment creation in Rivers State.** The grand mean of 2.25 was below the 2.50 benchmark. The hypothesis test produced an r-value of 0.071, a calculated t-value of 1.420, a critical t-value of 1.966, and a significance value of 0.156. Since the calculated t-value was lower than the critical value and the significance value exceeded 0.05, H_{01} was accepted. The finding indicated that the activities of local government councils did not have a statistically significant impact on employment creation in Rivers State.

The study found that the contribution of local government councils to poverty reduction was relatively limited. The grand mean was 2.22, which was below the 2.50 benchmark. The hypothesis test recorded an r-value of 0.084, a calculated t-value of 1.682, a critical t-value of 1.966, and a significance

value of 0.093. The result led to the acceptance of H_{02}, indicating that local government councils did not have a statistically significant role in poverty reduction in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that local government councils had made some interventions in employment creation, poverty reduction, economic empowerment and food security in Rivers State between 2015 and 2026, but these interventions had not produced statistically significant outcomes. The findings consistently showed that the contributions of the councils remained below the desired level, suggesting limitations in the effectiveness, coverage and implementation of grassroots economic development programmes. The study therefore concluded that strengthening institutional capacity, improving programme implementation, supporting productive activities and ensuring greater responsiveness to local economic needs were necessary for local government councils to make a more meaningful contribution to economic security in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

1. Strengthen Administrative Structures: Local government councils should institutionalize transparent planning, monitoring, and accountability frameworks to strengthen administrative effectiveness and improve their capacity to implement programmes that promote economic security in Rivers State.

2. Promote Inclusive Economic Development: Local government councils should implement youth-centred empowerment programmes, vocational training, employment initiatives and livelihood-support programmes that are properly monitored and evaluated to reduce poverty and improve the economic well-being of residents.

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