

Local Government Administration and Community Participation in Cameroon: A Case Study of Buea Municipality

Dr. Ebob Adeline Etaka

Assistant Lecturer, University of Buea

Abstract: This study seeks to address three-fold issues, which are: To evaluate how community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy; To investigate how community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability and To examine the challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. This study has made a positive contribution to knowledge by combining the local government administration and community participation in Buea Municipality. The research made use of the Democratic-Participatory Theory and brought out the relevance of the theory to this study. Through the various instruments used, such as: closed-ended and open-ended questions, interview and observations, it has been identified that Community Participation in local government administration do encourage local government, local accountability and do face enormous challenges. This was achieved with the aid of 82 respondents who answered the questionnaires from the Buea Community. Results from the field work were analysed quantitatively. Quantitatively, the researcher employed the chi-square method to test the three hypotheses of the study. With a general agreement rate of 68% and calculated X^2 (112.1), greater than the table value (22.13) at 0.05, the first research alternate hypothesis (H1) has been accepted which stipulates that community participation in local government administration do encourage local democracy in Buea Municipality. Moreover, with the general disagreement rate of 76% and calculated X^2 (27.48), greater than the table value (16.57) at 0.05, the second research alternate hypothesis (H2) has been accepted which means that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability in Buea Municipality. Finally, with the general agreement rate of 72.4% and with calculated X^2 (38.72), greater than the table value (18.15) at 0.05 level of significance, the third research alternate hypothesis (H3) has been accepted which stipulates that there are challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. The researcher rounded up the study with the following recommendations. Organisation of sensitization campaigns, creation of structure for Community Participation, enforcement of the laws and the practice of transparency in local government administration.



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1.1 Background to the Study

The participation of the local people in community activities have been in existence through the ages since the emergence of society that progressively formed states and nations. The United

Nations is credited with the emphasis on community participation in local government administration especially the development process of the community. UN defines participation as “ the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development”. Community participation has a link with the interest in democracy, in organization, in self-help and political incorporation in the community development traditional around global (UNDP, 2001- 2005).

Before the advent of colonial rule in Africa, local government administration was already in practiced in some parts in Africa like Nigeria and South Africa. In Nigeria, there was a centralized system of government in the Hausa-Fulani Emirate, a decentralized system of government in the Oyo Empire with no transparent clear cut system of government in the Igbo Kingdom, the Igbo Kingdom operated a family/compound controlled system with representative of family/compound forming the leadership structure in the each community (Etebom, 2019:43-54). There were traditional institutions in operation across Africa, upon which the kings/chiefs built the native administration. There were established pockets of traditional administration set-ups fashioned along the lines of King, Chief, Emir, Oba, Head of a family lording over his subjects using traditional councils especially in large communities in Africa during pre-colonial era, Ola and Tonwe, (2009:275-276); Onajide (1997:80). During colonial era, the British adopted the system of Indirect Rule to preserve and use the majority of existing local institutions across Africa to administer on the local people. Sir Donald C. a British officer who worked with Lugard, collaborated the overhead view, he argued that 'we desire to make the chief a good African'. He said this objective could not be achieve if they destroyed all the local institutions, traditions and habits of the people in Africa and superimposed upon them what we consider better administrative methods and principles (Mukoro, 2003:322-332). All local government administration in British colonies were associated with indirect rule introduced by Lord Lugard. The system succeeded in many parts in Africa like Ghana, Nigeria and Southern Cameroon.

In Cameroon, especially the British Former Southern Cameroon, whose headquarter was Buea the case study for this research, was one of the few African countries that had a significant experience with a democratic political life. Decentralization in Cameroon has a long standing history which goes back to the 1922. From the years of colonization, through the battles and struggles for independence to this present day, successive governments have thought of how to create and foster a local government while keeping up a vibrant central government as well (Ayee, 2000:28-31). For example: the Cameroon decentralization law is based notably on the 18th January 1996 Constitution which established the decentralized nature of the State. Article 55 of the Constitution stated that local authorities shall enjoy full administrative autonomy in the management of local interest, despite this constitutional provision, it was noticed that full autonomy was not yet enjoyed by the local authorities as the council remained incapable for carry out major developmental projects. Due to the challenges facing decentralization at that time it was needful for the government to create another law. The weaknesses of the 1996 Constitution led to the establishment of the Law No 2004/017/ of 22nd July 2004 on the orientation of decentralization to make local authorities more performant. In order to ensure that local council became more performant in the execution of their tasks, the law instituted the idea of devolution of power and transfer of resources which are basic tools for effective performance. Despite all efforts put in place by government, to ensure effective decentralization, it still remained a process with many lapses as the real meaning of decentralization was not clear as the transfer of resources remained a 'paper idea' than a reality. According to Nkrumah, decentralization in Ghana during the post independence era was mainly deconcentration, and this is what Cameroon as a State is practicing Nkrumah,(2000:57). Local government(decentralization) during the colonial period in British Cameroon was in the form of native administration that consisted of hand picked and non-elected members mostly the traditional authority of a locality, Paramount chiefs, sub chiefs and elders.

According to Crawford, the British administered the Gold Coast State, (and Southern Cameroon) through the abberant principle framework where chiefs were utilized as the operators (Crawford, 2004:9). These natives / local authorities assisted the British colonial government to administer the law and order in their respective localities. In the beginning, the British set up chambers as chosen bodies incharge of the general well-being and harmony in the State, however they realized that allocating some measures of authority to the local communittees was most likely to increase the fulfilment and achievement of their interest, hence the incorporation of the native authorities and natives (indigene) in their administration (corporate participation in administration).

Towards the independence of the Country, the British realized that they were losing power over the settlement and took reparative actions. In 1950 and 1951 the British permitted the Gold Coast inner self-government, portrayal and progressively critical collaboration in local government (Boafo-Arthur, 2001:3). British Southern Cameroon (Buea) inherited a legacy of a strong unitary system of government that concentrates power and resources at the center and conservatively devolves less to local governments.

Local governments administration in Cameroon was placed under the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization. This placement was later changed to the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development. The main objective of this placement (reform) was to expand public services to all parts of the Country Awortwi, (2016:335-356). Mayors in Cameroon were first appointed, all this was to structure proper system for local administration following the example of the British. The Constitution included a local government act which asserted that local government should be self-sufficient and responsible for it's own financing (Crawford 2004). Despite these tremendous efforts and milestones towards autonomy local governance, there were elements of centralization in the process. A typical example was the appointment of secretary generals to all local governments in Cameroon by the central government. This situation still persist till date despise alots of criticism by opposition parties like S.D.F.

Local government administration in Buea Municipality started in 1922 as the Bakweri Clan Council under the leadership of Chief Endeley, when the British local Government was still in practice. It only began in full fledge by Presidential Decree No 77/203/ of June 1977 to become Buea Rural Council. The local council has grown into a Modern Council institution following the law of Decentralization in Public Administration with the following services, which demand collective participation: the secretary general, the legal affairs and mayor cabinet, the general affairs, the human resources, the hygiene and sanitation, the social and culture, the treasury, the public relations and communication, the information and technology unit, the municipal police, the economic and finance and the civil status registry. Many mayors have ruled the council so far, some were appointed while others were elected.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Community participation is the key to effective functioning of local government administration. This key has not been made use of in Buea Municipality. People are generally reluctant to participate in local government administration in Buea Municipality despite the provision in Cameroon's Constitution and legislation that strengthen public participation processes. In line with the current global trend of streamlining the role of state, the government of Cameroon has devolved power to the grassroots institutions with a view to enhance community participation and strengthen local democracy. But, in reality such devolution have in many cases been quite ineffective and inefficient to achieve this goal.

The practice of effective decentralization in Cameroon still remain a process with many lapses as the real meaning of decentralization is not clear, the transfer of resources remain a 'paper idea' than a reality. There is need to empower the local people to participate actively in grassroots

governance, this is because the local people lack control over their resources and opportunity to participate in decision making process. There is poor community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality because of following reasons: the local people are not empowered, no local government sensitization campaigns, poor local government, irresponsive local government, lack of communication between the public and local government, lack of accomodations, ignorant of the people, and the people also think that their opinions donot count, so no need to participate. The lack of active community participation in local government administration usually hinder development efforts. Community participation in local government administration encourages socio-economic development at grassroots, and participatory democracy. This is so because people (tax payers) freely contribute for the development of the community. This helps to improve responsive and accountable local government which is lacking within the Buea Municipality. Local government administration in Buea Municipality lack public accountability and irresponsive to the people demands.

This is absolutely the opposite of what Agrawal and Ribot expressly stated, that “ If powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their constituents, or who are accountable only to themselves or to their superior authorities within the structure of government, then decentralization is not likely to accomplish it stated aims” Agrawal and Ribot (1999:478). There is alot of unemployment around the Buea Municipality, which could have been solved by the community participating in local government. According to what Freire (1993:21-27) highlights, community participation in local government administration when they are mobilized. He views mobilization for active participation as a growing recognition of the potential for cross-fertilization ideas and experiences. Community participation enables people to learn some skills and give opportunity to unemployed to get employed especially when they are involved in the local development activities. So, Buea Council must develop a ‘culture of participatory governance’ that mobilize and promote citizens participation in local government administration. This study therefore examine the influence of community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main Research Question

To what extent has community participation in local government administration influence socio-economic development of Buea Municipality?

1.3.2 Specific Research Questions

1. How has community participation in local government administration encourage local democracy in Buea Municipality?
2. To what extent has community participation in local government administration yield to strong mechanisms of accountability?
3. What are the challenges faced by the community with regards to their participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

These objectives are divided into two, which are: main objective and specific objectives.

1.4.1 Main Objective

To examine the extent to which community participation in local government administration influence socio-economic development of Buea Municipality.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate how community participation in local government administration encourages local or grassroots democracy in Buea Municipality.
2. To investigate how Community participation in local government administration yields to strong mechanisms of accountability in Buea Municipality.
3. To examine the challenges faced by the community during participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis One

Ho:U- Community participation in local government administration do not encourage local democracy.

H1:U- Community participation in local government administration do encourage local democracy.

Hypothesis Two

Ho:U-Community participation in local government administration yields to weak mechanisms of accountability.

H1: U-Community participation in local government administration yields to strong mechanisms of accountability.

Hypothesis Three

Ho:U-There are challenges faced by the community with regards to participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

H1: U-There are no challenges faced by the community with regards to participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this study will be of help to: researchers, policy makers, the council and the community.

i) Researchers

It is hoped that this study will be of significance to other researchers who intend to carry out research in this domain of local government administration and community participation. It will serve as a reference for subsequent research works in this area of speciality.

ii) Policy Makers

It is hoped that research will be relevant to policy makers because they make use of the recommendations of this study in order to improve on decision making, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation particularly in the area of local government administration and public participation in the Country. Findings will suggest to policy makers to involve the community in the local government administration so as to enhance socio-economic development and encourage local democracy and effective accountability.

III) The Council

To the institution in which the research is conducted, it is hoped that the findings of the study will help to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery to the public. It is equally hoped that if the findings are applied, it will encourage community participation in local government

administration, thereby facilitating the achievement of the local government's goals. It will result to innovative approach and method of local government administration in Cameroon.

iv) The Community

Finally, it is hoped that the research will be relevant to members of the Buea Municipality because it will create awareness and enhance their knowledge on the effective community participation in local government administration. This therefore will encourage and promote community participation in Buea Municipality. This is needful because the processes of community participation in Buea Municipality do not seem to be as effective as they should be.

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1: Geographical Scope

Buea Municipality is located at the slope of Mount Fako, found in the South West Region of Cameroon, and it is also the Regional Headquarter. Buea Municipality is bordered as follows: north by the Tropical Rainforest of Mount Fako, southwest by the Limbe, East by Muyuka, South East by the Tiko and West by the Idenau. Buea Municipality covers a surface area of 4100km², 1000m above sea level. Buea Municipality is made up of 82 villages with first, second and third class chiefdoms. Buea Municipality have a population of about 250,000 inhabitants and it's made up of Bakweri people, notwithstanding other tribes like; Bayangi, Doula, Bayang, Ewondo, Bulu, Bangwa and others, which have blend the other parts of the Municipality.

1.7.2: Time Scope

The time frame for this research ranges from 2024-2025. This period is very strategic to the Buea Municipality because it witnessed power transition during the heat of Anglophone Crisis, when everything was stagnant. The coming of the mayor represented hope to people of the municipality. Even though the crisis still persist, however, there has been drastic change in the Council's budget.

1.7.3: Content Scope

This study falls within the scope of public administration, specifically local government administration and community participation. The study focuses on the influence of community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. The research excludes other neighboring municipalities found within the Buea Subdivision, even though the municipality has tremendous impact on them (other neighboring municipalities). The study include every individual, public and private institution, non-governmental organizations, universities, GCE Board, banks and every inhabitants of the Buea Municipality.

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Local government: Shah (2001:1) defines local government as a specific institutions or entities created by national constitution (Brazil, Denmark, France, India, Italy, Japan, Sweden); by state constitution (Australia, United States); by provincial or state legislation (Canada, Pakistan); or by executive order (China) to deliver a range of specified services to a relatively small geographically delineated area.

1.8.2 Participation : Creighton (2005:7) defines participation to be process by which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making. He emphasizes that participation is a two-way: communication and interaction: with the overall goal of making better decisions that are supported by the public.

1.8.3 Community participation: Creighton (2005:7) defines community participation as the involvement of 'common' community members or electorates in the decision making process. In

other words, the grassroot level hold exercise power, through their involvement, over decisions related to the general affairs of their own communities.

1.8.4 Administration: Herbert A. Simon defines administration in broadest sense, as activities of groups cooperating to accomplish common goals.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The presentation of this study is arranged into five chapters. Which are:

Chapter One comprises of nine elements; which are: background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, hypotheses of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, definition of terms and organization of the study.

Chapter Two literature review and theoretical framework consists of an exhaustive detail on the conceptual issues in local government administration and community participation in Buea Municipality. The study contains an empirical review, research gap, adopted theory of local government, bringing out the significance of the theory to the research.

Chapter Three examines research methodology involving study area, research design, qualitative and quantitative researches, methods of data collection, sampling techniques, research instruments and procedures and methods of data presentation and analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four highlights data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

Chapter Five concludes the study presenting summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Nature and Concept of Local Government

The section starts with a discussion on the concepts of governance and government before narrowing down on local government. Governance is the exercise of power or authority political, economic, administrative or otherwise to manage a country's resources and affairs. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate and mediate their differences, UNDP (1997). It is also ' a process of managing public affairs at all levels in which power and authority are exercised in a collective manner' Adhikari (2006:66). In sum, governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporates governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. In this study, the mention of governance refers to national and local governance. There are several actors involved in the process of governance and government is one of actors in this process. Government according to Sills (1968:215) is a group of individuals exercising legitimate authority and protecting and adopting the community by making and carrying out decisions. The group of individuals shares a defined responsibility for exercising power. This government can be at various levels including the national, regional, federal and local levels. Local indicating the level below the first three levels mentioned. This study however is concerned mainly with local government, an actor in the local governance process. Scholars all agree that local government is to bring administration very close to the ordinary individual in a particular locality. According to Shah (2006:1) local government refers to specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions (as it is the case with Brazil, France, India etc); by state constitutions (as it is the case with Australia, United States of America etc); by ordinary legislation of a higher level of central government (as it is the case with New Zealand, U.K); by provincial or state legislation (as it is the case with Canada, Pakistan,); or by executive order (for example, China) to deliver a

range of specified services to a relatively small geographically delineated area. There are various views and different approaches to the emergence of local governments. However, it is stated that local governments first emerged in Western Europe in the 11th and 12th Centuries. Akyol (2012:5) relatedly, the origin of contemporary local government, is attributed to the Western and traditional culture. Modern local government emerged as an answer to a succession of separate needs and demands Wilson and Game (1994:41) and was seen as an expression of freedom of society Kjellberg (1995:42). Local government appeared in different countries for various reasons. In the Scandinavian as well as other countries, local government surfaced as a deliberate attempt to limit the intrusion of central government in the affairs of local communities. In United States of America, local government institutions grew in response to a combination of citizen demand, interest and pressure groups and state government acquiescence Brownman and Kearney (2000:248). Local government in Turkey did not come about as a result of indigenous development; it was set up without a demand from the public. It was introduced from the top as a result of great influence from the western world when the Country opened up to the outside world. Another major influence was the Country's interest in the efficient and effective provision of public services throughout its boundaries Polatoglu (2000:156). In sharp contrast to the USA, but similar to Turkey, local government in Cameroon was established in a top down manner and the mayor's were appointed. It was initiated to promote popular grassroots participation in the management and administration of local governance institutions for improved conditions of life Ahenkan et al (2013:191). Broadly, local government exists for diverse reasons. The basic reason perhaps has to do with the concept of subsidiarity. The idea of bringing government as close as possible to the citizens of a country. Ozer and Akakaya (2014: 85) group the reasons for the existence of local government into four categories, which are social, political, administrative and economic reasons.

Administratively, it is literally impossible for central government to single handedly coordinate all the affairs of the country efficiently and effectively, so local administration is very necessary. Politically, local government is a means of instituting a sense of nationalism and participation. Local governance enables and empowers citizens previously excluded from decision making thereby forging a strong sense of involvement and belonging in the citizens of a nation. Local government, because of its direct connection with the grassroots level is a means of economically providing and distributing public services to specific areas and localities of a country, Dryanova (2013:17).

The sphere of authority of the local government at a surface glance may not be on a very large scale as that of the national or international affairs, however, it has a very central role in the lives of citizens. The local government is very intimate and affects the citizens in all sorts of ways from the cradle to the grave. What Jackson implies was that local government is the "somebody" that keeps the community tidy and fit for living, ensures that houses are properly built; the young children have a place to learn; and makes sure that the sick, the poor and aged are attended to, Jackson (1945:14-15).

2.1.1.1: Rationale for Local Government in Cameroon

According to Shah and Shah (2006:3-4), decentralized decision making and a strong role for local governments in local development is supported by many accepted theories on the ground of efficiency, accountability, manageability and autonomy. Again, Stigler (1957:217-219) identifies two principles of jurisdictional design. He states that the closer a representative government is to the people, the better it works. Also, people should have the right to vote (participate) for the kind amount of public services they want. In the light of those principles, decision making should occur at the lowest level of government consistent with the goal of allocative efficiency. Furthermore, the decentralization theorem advanced by Oates (1972:55), proposes that 'catch public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the

minimum geographical area that would internalize the benefits and costs of such provisions' because local governments understand the concern of local residents, local decision making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended, thus encouraging fiscal responsibility and efficiency, especially in financing the services. Therefore, we can deduce that local governments in Cameroon exist to reduce some of the local responsibilities of the central government, since the best understand the needs and aspirations of the local people.

The above analogy is supports the views of Laski (1960:411), that 'all problems are not central problems and that the results of the problems are not central in their incidence require decision at the place where the incidence is most deeply felt. This suggests that local governments are establish in Cameroon to help solve local problems where the impacts of these problems are heavily felt. It is also envisaged to manage local affairs and ensure that the basic needs of the local people are met. Local governments in Cameroon also provide the framework within which local human and material resources could be mobilized for the development at the grassroot level. To the central government, it serves as a bridge against excessive centralization of government powers and helps to decongest issues that are essentially local and to facilitate local governance at the local level. To achieve social and general economic growth, requires a spread of efforts so that local community can participate to bring under idea conditions, energy, enthusiasm and most importantly of all, so local government in Cameroon' is there to work out an opportunity for local development activities. In this sense, local authorities in Buea are obliged to provide opportunity for local people to participate in local decisions making and local schemes within the general National policies and to act above all as local centres of initialize and activity conducive for development.

2.1.1.2: Responsibilities of Local Governments

According to Shah and Shah, (2006:6), 'local governments are seen as the handmaidens of a higher government order.' They are seen to be extensions of the State or national government and act on behalf of those higher levels of government. Many cases, especially in the unitary State system of Cameroon, policy development, standards of service and policy performance are determined at the central level and given to the local government. The local government then carry out the oversight implementation at the local level. In the promotion of local economic development in Cameroon, local government are seen to implement policies, programmes, and projects on the behalf of those higher levels of government. From this, it could be deduced that local governments in Cameroon are not autonomous and only exist to advance the interest and wishes of the higher levels of government. This affect adversely the participation of the local people and local institutions in local decisions making and issues directly influencing the development of the local area. Also, programmes and projects that are implemented may not be in the interest of the local people as their needs may not be captured in the process and adequately catered for. This notwithstanding, the standards of service and policy performance determined by the centre may serve as a check on the activities of the local government administration in Cameroon. This can help the local government administration pursue agenda not outside the national interest. Again, local governments have the responsibility as independent facilitators of creating public values (Shah and Shah, 2006:6-7). This places significant emphasis on the governments as an agent of the people to serve public interest both at the national and local level, creating public values which indicates measurable improvements in social outcomes or quality of life of the people in Cameroon, particularly in Buea Municipality. This concept is directly relevant to local and Municipal service, for which it is feasible to measure such improvements have some sense of attribution. This is useful in evaluating conflicting and perplexing choices in the use of local resources and in defining the role of local governments in Cameroon. The role of public managers in Cameroon local governments in this direction therefore, is to tap local free resources and push the frontiers of improved social outcomes beyond what may be possible with meagre

local revenues. This, public managers create value by mobilizing and facilitating a network of service provided beyond local government. This responsibility make it mandatory for local governments in Cameroon to seek the interest and welfare of the local people. It has the right to use resources at its disposal for the good of all.

2.1.2 Local Government and Participation

Participation simply means the action of taking part in the achievement of a set goal or objective. Creighton (2005:7) mentions participation to be the process by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision making. He emphasizes that participation is a two-way communication and interaction, with the overall goal of making better decisions that are supported by the public. Local government participation therefore means, the involvement of 'common' community members or electorates in the decision making process. In other words, the grassroot level hold exercise power, through their involvement, over decisions related to the general affairs of their communities. Dave and Grant (2003: 13) emphasize the need that decentralization leads to increase participation. This means that local government invariably leads to participation. In fact, it is for the sake of participation and self-governance that local government is instituted and vital.

Where local government is participatory, it is increasingly responsive to and interactive with the community. Members of the community have a voice or a say in the administration and governance of that particular place. For this reason, services are increasingly provided in response to grassroot and citizen demand and priorities (Centre For Democracy and Governance 2000). This in turn increases the enthusiasm of citizens and their involvement in projects that the government is championing. The great part of participation in local government is political. Political participation embraces electoral participation in the election of officials at the local level. Citizens are allowed to choose their own leader through voting. In other words, regular local elections are the heart of the process (of participation).

Cameroon's local government has fallen short in this area. The appointment of officials such as the secretary general and regional governors as the executive body of the local government undermines participations. Apart from fact that the citizens at the grassroot levels are not given a chance to choose all their own leaders, the central government in Cameroon serve in the power scope (Crawford 2009:69): Their position is very key in the function of local government. Their power seems not to have boundaries, despite the checks and balances of the general assembly and even the Constitutional provisions. This is mainly because the decision taken by the local government, mostly go unaccomplished and that of the central government mostly go unchallenged. Perhaps due to the many reasons like appointment of officials to the local bodies, financial provision, the practice of partisan politics etcetera, all these, discourage prospective challengers to challenge the decisions of the central government Oluwa and Wunsch 2004:72). Therefore, the central government are mostly seen to be championing the cause of their affiliated political party instead of the local communities they govern. According to Antwi-Boasiako (2010:173) political participation encourages government responsiveness and improves efficiency. This is because citizens have a mandate to replace or retain official and leaders with poor performance.

Participatory governance can also rely on the mechanisms and instruments such as town and interest group meetings, hearings and community involvement in budgeting and planning. This ensures that the local public is generally informed and can provide input concerning key decisions directly at public meetings, occasional survey or referenda. When an active channel of communication and interaction exist between the leadership and the citizens, the latter tend to participate voluntarily in the locality improvement projects because they 'own' them (projects) and feel a strong sense of responsibility and hence cooperate towards the completion of set projects.

Participation is (or remains) a very vital element in good governance at all levels of government. Participation being a necessary condition for successful governance, however, does not mean that it is a sufficient one; participation without accountability can result in futility. This research argues here that participation should go hand in hand with accountability.

2.1.3 Community Participation

Community participation involves the role play by communities and stakeholders in the policy making and implementation processes of a municipality. These include involving communities in various activities such as policy identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring , evaluation, and budgeting. The advantage of successful community participation is that people understand local government and the constraints under which it functions. Community participation fails because organizations promoting involvement are unclear about the level of participation offer. Limited consultation with few real options, do not present opportunity for active participation and is likely to produce confusion. Effective participation is most likely when the different stakeholders involved in a project or programmes are satisfied with the level at which they are involved. Community participation is where people make all decisions themselves. All the people affected participate in the decision making and there are no representatives who can decide on their behalf. This can work in small communities or organizations where everyone can meet to discuss and decide on the issue. Effective local democracy needs a combination of representatives and participatory democracy. While ultimate decisions are made by elected councilors, residents should be consulted as much as possible.

In the local governance processes, the involvement of citizens and participation is important and it promotes the municipal development. The citizen involvement explores the role of councilors, this is achieved through structured participation and establish conditions for public's involvement throughout the cycle planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Patel, Y. 2005). The United Nations is credited with the emphasis on community participation in development. It defines participation as “ the creation of opportunities to enable all members of the community and the larger society to actively contribute to, and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development” Midgley (1986:24). Community participation has links with the interest in democracy in community organizations and in self-help and Political incorporation in the community development tradition.

2.1.4 Objectives of Community Participation

Some reasons have been given why community participation approach is essential by Oakley (1991:17). These include:

Project Efficiency: Participation is seen as a means of promoting efficient use of resources available to develop projects. Through timely inputs of beneficiaries to projects planning and implementation, community participation can be used to promote cooperation and friendly interaction among beneficiaries and between them, and the implementing agency of the project.

Project Effective (Output/input Ratio): It is also seen as a means to enhance the achievement of project objectives. The involvement of beneficiaries contributes to better project design and implementation and leads to a better match of project services with beneficiary's needs and constraints.

Sharing of Projects Costs: Community participation provides an opportunity to share project cost with beneficiaries, participation may be used to facilitate a collective understanding on cost sharing and its enforcement.

Project Coverage: It helps to ensure a wider coverage of the benefits of a project among potential beneficiaries.

Project Sustainability: Participation is seen as a mechanism for developing a self-sustaining project. When beneficiaries share in the management tasks by taking an operational responsibility, they enhance their interest and management competence and this can contribute to the sustainability of a project beyond its stipulated duration.

Self-reliance: Self-reliance helps to break the dependence syndrome through promotion of Self-awareness and confidence.

Empowerment: Empowerment is a veritable mechanism for empowering the “ excluded”as it seeks to increase their skills and abilities, their control over the resources and decision affecting their lives.

2.1.5 Elements of Participation

According to Osuji (1991:203), not every action of the community members can be considered as participation. Adekola (2004) asserted that the elements of participation in a general conception, include:

- taking part in decision making to identify needs;
- taking part in the mobilization of resources and planning of projects to be undertaken;
- taking part in monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The involvement of the community members in any of the above activities is considered as participation. However, it should be noted that programme designers and executors have the right to determine what action of the people would amount to participation in a particular programme or project. This is so because various community development programmes are designed to achieve different objectives. Thus, what constitutes participation may differ from project to project and from time to time.

2.1.6 Challenges in Community Participation

There are many challenges faced by community participation in local government in Buea Municipality and other municipalities in Cameroon. Some of these challenges include:

Political Affiliation : There is always this conflict in the community that the elected officials especially the ruling representatives that if someone does not belong to their political party that is CPDM, in that area, there will be no public service delivery for them. If one is to be considered, he or she must be a card carrying member of a certain political party particularly the ruling CPDM party. This act is very bad to a community that desperately want development because it limits or bores the participation of certain people especially within the Buea Community and the participation that is practice is called Selected or Partisan Participation. With this type of participation, people openly deprived of their rights. This scenario takes place in almost all municipalities in Cameroon, which attempt to blasphemed that there’s community participation, (Mfenguza, 2007:38-39).

Failure to Convene Monthly Community Meetings: For people to actively participate in any community program, there must be a fixed program for it(either weekly, monthly, or yearly). Without a fixed program, people hardly show up. This is one of the delay factors in service delivery. Community will not know about the services that the government wants to deliver to them unless there are informed through regular meetings. If there’s no established meeting programmes, and it so happened that there’s a conflict between the community and the representative, that emanates from the representative belongs to other political party, the meetings may fail because of being blocked or sabotaged by the other group. This is a great challenge because the community’s needs, aspirations and values will not be identified and included in the local administration programmes.

The Determination of Committees: The issue in determining members of the committees evoke mixed feelings and suspicious rife that councilors in the municipality are merely the extension of the ruling party programmes. This is because most councilors within the municipality belong to the ruling CPDM Party: any policy that doesn't have their interest is voted out and anyone that has their interest is voted in. With this, one can say that, the suspicious rife about the councilors are true. Also, the fact that other Political parties donot really partake actively (even if they do, their opinions don't count) in the community meetings this proof that there's biased. However, these problems need to be addressed by informing the community that this initiative of committee is the vehicle for an inclusive participation in local governance.

2.1.7 Advantages of Community Participation

Participatory approach enhances understanding and commitment if the people have involved in the preparation and implementation of the plans. Participation helps with coalition formation and consensus building and viewed as a process of empowerment that helps to amplify traditionally unacknowledged voices. Participation relates to exchange of ideas between the public and local government administration. This is one of the principles provided in Batho Pele (1997:30). The free flow of information promotes cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders. It acts to help the parties to gain insight into local conditions and is considered a basic democratic right of people to be involved in matters affecting their own circumstances (Slochum et al. 1995:4).

Participation breaks the mentality of dependence and promotes self-reliance, Self-awareness and confidence: It is obvious therefore that confident people positively seek solutions on matters affecting their communities. The participation of communities in the planning and implementation processes will help in monitoring and constant communication between all stakeholders. The involvement of residents in the democratic process, beyond just voting serves to strengthen and deepen democracy. Community participation also eliminates the mistrust between the stakeholders. Meyer and Theron (2000:4-5) view public participation as part of the “ building blocks of community development,”which entail the process of social learning, capacity building, empowerment, sustainability and self-reliance, (Mfenguza, 2009:39).

2.1.8 Disadvantages of Community Participation

Other people donot agree that participation is such an important factor in local government, especially as far as development projects are concerned. According to them(opposers) Projects start up can be delayed by negation with communities, when they are consulted, and that, they (Community) might oppose the project. This resistance will be based on who brings the project in that community. The debate will take a long time before they come into consensus. Participation also require an increase in staff, which will increase the delay, and can thus become time consuming and costly. Burkey (1993:52) warns that the organization of development projects can create centres of formal power control by a small group of people.

According to Allen and Thomas (2008:376-377) they argue that democratization can impede development in poor societies. They quote Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew (1992) addressing the audience in the Philippians “ I donot believe that democracy necessarily leads to development, what the country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy.” But they further make a contradictory example of India.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Influences Socio-economic Development

The Representation Theory has profound bearing on the subject or main theme of the study; that empowerment and freedom are instrumental or prerequisites in socio-economic development endeavors because they boost participation and involvement. The theory has helped to identify

some of features which a good decentralized democratic state like Cameroon must possess to be admitted that power has been devolved, Pitkin (1967).

Community Participation creates social capital through several anchors: equal rights, interdependences, organizational justice and collective identification. With regards to equality of rights, social capital is generated more in groups of individuals where decision-making power is defined not according to economic criteria but according to democratic and inclusive approaches, Saz-Gil et al. (2021:534).

Bretons and Errasti (2016) Community Participation through joint ownership, democratic decision making, teamwork and open communication leads to higher levels of trust, this trust brings confident in leadership, which leads to an increase in social capital. This social capital collected is used for the socio-economic development of the community. Based on Bretons and Errasti perspective's, we can deduced that the social capital created and accumulated in an organization, based on trust and established norms of reciprocity, influences the attitudes and behaviors of members outside the Organisation, thus moving towards the generation of social capital for community development, Arando et al. (2012:41-54).

Rodney (1992) Development should have a social individual bent. He defines development as a ' state of increased in skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline and material well-being.' Rodney's definition units social, economic and political aspects of development. Amount to the optimum realization of the well-being of individuals in their communities. It may best be described as any observable traces of response by people to modern trends of social change. The emphasis of socio-economic development is on people as it is the people who are stimulated, motivated, helped or encouraged to adopt new methods and to learn new skills for the attainment of their well-being. Rodney perspective is confirmed to that of the White Paper vision of local government entrenched in the constitution. It establishes a basis for developmental local government, in which, " local government is committed to working citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improves the quality of their lives." It gives substance to the paradigm shift in terms of how municipalities should integrate development planning references to redistributing income and opportunities in favor of the poor and democratizing development.

2.2.2 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Encourages Local Democracy

Direct democracy is engaged by the citizens on virtually all matters before the community. In representative democracy, citizens choose among candidates or political parties who make authoritative decisions for the entire community. A vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national level democracy, even though certain concepts are critical to our understanding of governance such as: local governance is the basis of citizenship and community participation; democracy involves ongoing deliberation, meaningful dialogue, debate and discussion in an effect to solve problems that arise before the community; citizens participation allow individuals to gain knowledge about community affairs that otherwise resides with the elected officials; Participation tends to enhance good relations among the citizens, building a community that is self-reliant and public-spirited.

Participatory democracy is where citizens have right not only to vote or elect their representatives, but to actively participate in government decision making on a continuous basis between elections. Democratization is such a struggle in the local sphere of the State. The power struggle is the issue here, powers and functions are not clear to the people who are involved in local government issues. As a result, one would think that, the other level of government has over exceeded her boundaries of powers and functions. The legal framework of Participatory democracy in Cameroon is presented in the Constitution and Legislation. The 1996 Constitution

recognizes the democratized nature of the State and officially establish the Region as a regional and local authority (1996 Constitution of Cameroon). In 2004, several laws were passed to finally laydown a legal framework of decentralization which include a transfer of power to local entities. This devolution included financial, material and human means as well as the establishment of the National Council for local services (Cheka 2007). Apart from the Cameroon Constitution, other constitutions in Africa particularly that of South Africa, Section 152 and 153 states that the object of local government are among others, “ to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to encourage the involvement of communities, community organizations in the matters of local government.” This emphasizes the need for communities to mobilize participation commitment and energize communities by establishing participatory processes, which are constructive and effective. Community participatory processes are therefore important to ensure that their needs are articulated. White Paper on local government underscores the Constitutional concepts of human dignity, human rights and democracy as fundamental elements and developmental local government David (2002:37). This indicate that the community participation is not an end itself but rather a means to achieve better quality of life for the people and deepening democracy.

2.2.3 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Yields Strong Mechanisms of Accountability

Accountability is one of the essential of good governance which cannot be over emphasized. Accountability exists when there is a relationship where an individual or body and the performance of tasks or functions by that individual or body, are subject to another’s oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their actions. From the definitions, it is evident that accountability involves two facets: the obligation of the government to provide information and justification for it’s decisions and actions to the institution responsible for providing oversight and feedback from the overseeing institution.

Agrawal and Ribot expressly stated that, “ If powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their constituencies (Communities) or who are accountable only to themselves or to superior authorities within the structure of government, then decentralization is not likely to accomplish it stated aims” Agrawal and Ribot (1999:478). Accountability is a necessary condition in governance to help keep officials in check and ensure that misconduct and corruption is avoided in the daily functions of the government. Governments discretions are most especially prone to abuse of power and absence of accountability mechanisms will leave them, as it will leave an organization, prone to corruption and huge imbalances in the community (World Bank 2009). This is commonly seen in the case of Cameroon where the government appointments are made on basis of political affiliation. A typical example, is the appointment of secretary generals in all local governments in Cameroon and the appointment of more than 30 percent National Assembly Members by the President. The original motive for the appointment was to bring a fair distribution of skilled professionals in all local governments. However, in practice, this appointment quota is used by ruling party to establish local or regional partisan support. There are various types of accountability but the three essentials for the research are: political accountability, which expresses itself in periodic elections; administrative accountability, which is represented through the horizontal and vertical mechanisms with and between agencies; and social accountability, which includes mechanisms that hold agencies accountable to citizens. Local governance is said to be more focused on the social accountability. This study discusses accountability as regarding, upward accountability (local government in relation to the central government) and downward accountability (local government in relation to grassroot level or local electorates) and emphasizes the need for the latter. There’s sufficient upward accountability in the bureaucratic structure of local government in Cameroon. Local governments in Cameroon are placed under the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development. This clearly shows that

upward accountability cannot easily be dismissed, as it helps to keep the entire nation in synchronization, that is, ensuring that both local and central government are working towards a common goal. Many authors emphasize downward accountability because it is evident that this form of accountability is the one that the local government system in Cameroon falls short of.

Western Political ideologies affirm the centrality of local accountability in democratic political system Antwi-Boasiako (2010:173). Babo and Gillian, (1990:382-387) argue that local government in the political process through elections ensures self-empowerment as locals gain more political power. By allowing locals elect their own leaders, make the government more accountable. The accountability that election provides is however not enough to sufficiently afford a very responsive government, Ahmed T. et al. (2016:11-12). Consequently, social accountability in between elections is necessary. There is always a tendency to assume that local participation automatically yields strong mechanisms of accountability, Jackson (2003:8). In actual fact, participation and accountability can each singularly be presented in the absence of the other. Crawford (2009:65-71) draws a similar conclusion from a field work in two rural districts in Ghana, where he finds reasonably high levels of political participation coupled with incommensurate level of downward accountability mechanism.

2.3 Missing Gap and Contribution to the Existing Body of Literature

A lot of research carried out in the domain of local government administration covers mainly the development aspect of local government activities at the grassroots level. Many researchers are concerned with how local governments formulate, implement, and evaluate local policies, even though it is essential, but it is still at the elementary stage in most developing countries like Cameroon. This study on local government administration and community participation is timely because many researches covered only development activities of local government at grassroots, no research has really looked into the aspects of community engagement in local government administration. As such, this study closes up the existing gap between local government administration at the grassroot level and community (local) participation in Buea Municipality specifically. Again, this study is timely because those researches carried out in the field of local government administration have not really appointed out the vital role played by the community in local government administration in Buea Municipality. This so because the process of community participation in local government in Cameroon and in Buea specifically is still developing (elementary), people have not fully realize the importance of their involvement in local government activities. This study therefore is carried out to bridge the gap literature and open people up to the reality that their engagement in local government activities are essential and helpful. This then is the focus of the study.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This section presents a review on the theoretical framework of the study: This study adopts the Democratic participatory Theory, stressing on one major theory relevant to the study.

2.4.1 Democratic-Participatory Theory

Participatory democracy has been one of the earliest models in Social Sciences, particularly in political discussion since about 2000 BC. It was propounded by Jean Jacques Rousseau and later promoted by John Stuart Mills. Mills' (1964) work on Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative government that serves as an impetus for renewed commitment to this school of thought, re-emphasized that local government is the starting point of democratic participation which leads to development, regardless of other intrinsic and extrinsic functions it performs.

The tenets of the school are that *local governments are created in order to encourage participatory democracy and serve as training ground for recruitment of leaders, provide government and political education at grass root levels.* Its strength lies in direct citizen

involvement, popular control and egalitarian and non-exploitative social relations. This was demonstrated through the works of some scholars like Chukwuemeka et al., (2017:115), Am et al (2013:89), Adeyemo (2011:94) that the idea local government is intricately connected to a philosophical commitment to democratic participation in politics and self-governing at the grassroots level. For instance, David Butler (2008:131) in his study of British politics in 1964 revealed that 53% of Labour members of parliament and - defeated Labour Party parliamentarian's candidates were once local government politicians, and political office holders. Mackenzie (1954:163) also illustrated this with data showing that more than half of the Deputies and about the same proportion of Senators in Italy had had political positions at the local government.

However, Fischer (1993) argues that representative democracy is not generally considered participatory since citizens may lack the time, knowledge or will to contribute to policy making. In addition, in spite of the constitutional provision for local government in Cameroon's decentralization Reform, it is however sad that the manner in which the local government is run clearly and unambiguously deviates from the stated objectives. The overbearing posture of regional Governors and the centralization of power in Cameroon has strangled local government from serving truly as one of the important tiers of government. In effect, Local Government that is expected to serve as an avenue for political socialization, recruitment and participation has not been fully realized.

Relationship/Relevance of the theory to this work

Applied to this study, Mill's democratic-participatory theory suggests that local government is the starting point of democratic participation regardless of other intrinsic and extrinsic functions it performs. Hence *there is a need for absolute decentralization of power and service for effective and efficient service delivery at local levels, giving the local people or the community an opportunity to participate in decision making which will lead to local development. Here, citizens are provided power to make political decisions.*

Most localities develop more when the people participate effectively in the decision making concerning their area; this makes them feel important and in turn works hard to develop their area. The Buea council have not realized that democratic participation which is Mill's focus affects development at local levels and even the councils that are aware of what can help develop communities have hold on to power for their personal use and greed.

Adopting the democratic participatory theory to this study, it will provide insight as to how the Local Community can participate effectively to promote local development and the application of this approach can be most effective as our decentralization is still in its early stage of conceptualization and the policy is under constant review and gradual implementation.

Relationship of the Democratic Participatory Theory to the work

Applied to this study, Eysenck's efficiency theory premises the existence of local government as an efficient agent of government for providing services that are local in character. Local Government has a duty to carry out developmental projects on time. Most developmental projects are being delayed at the local level because of the challenges faced by local governments.

The model has an educative effect. Participation can in turn lead the public to seek or accomplish higher qualities of participation in terms of efficacy and depth.

More so, the fact that the model has as function, greater democratization which is the thrust of carrying out this research which helps to explain more how development at grassroots can be enhanced through participation.

In Addition to the above, main advocates of participatory democracy view it as an appropriate political development considering the inherent democratic deficiency in representative models.

Weaknesses of the Theory

- One of the criticisms of this theory is that of minimal democracy, while some critics such as David Plotke, call for a conciliatory medium between participatory and representative models, others are skeptical of the overly leftist democratic ideology.
- Another weakness is that, the theory is the lack of motivation for extensive participation to begin development. First, the self-interested, rational member has little incentive to participate because he lacks the skill and knowledge to be effective, making it cost effective to rely on the officials' expertise.
- Furthermore, Dr Fuller rejects equating or even subsuming instruments of Deliberative democracy (such as citizens' assemblies) under the term of participatory Democracy as such instrument violates the hard won concept of political equality (one man one vote), in exchange for a small chance of being randomly selected to participate and are thus not participatory in any meaningful sense.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

According to Bailey (1982:13) research design is a stage where the researcher must decides how to measure the two main variables in his or her hypotheses and on what group of people to test the hypotheses. This involves deciding not only how many people will be used as subjects but also what their particular characteristics should be and under what circumstances the data will be gathered. Kruger and Welman (2001:46) define research design as "the plan according to which we obtain research participants, with a view to reach conclusions about the research problem (research hypothesis, research question)." While Babbie and Mouton (2001:75) define research design as the road map or blueprint according to which one intends to conduct a research and achieve his or her research goals and objectives.

Burnham et al. (2008:55) identify five mayor types of research designs namely: experimental design, cross-sectional design, longitudinal design, case study design and comparative design. This study makes use of the case study research design which seeks to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically. It is a way of organizing data and looking at the object to be studied as a whole giving room for a great deal to be learned from a few examples of the phenomenon under study (Ndue, 2017:89). The case study of Buea Municipality allowed the researcher to have an in-depth investigation of the problem/challenge of the community participation in local government administration.

3.2 Study Area

Babbie and Mouton (2001:281) define a case study as an intensive/in-depth investigation of a single unit. Leedy (2001:157) states that the purpose of a case study is to understand one person situation or perhaps a very small number of cases in great depth. Case study uses observations, interviews, written documents and/ or audiovisual material as methods of data collection. Case Study is sometimes conducted because the case chosen is itself of intrinsic interest to the researcher. The rationale for case study then rests entirely on the belief that a full and satisfactory analysis of single case can be relevant to our understanding of the wider community or society. The extent to which the findings of case study can be used to analyze wider structures and possessions will, however, always be limited and will always call for estimation and assessment by comparison with findings from other cases and from other types of study. The researcher has chosen Buea Municipality as case study. The choice of this case study is strategic. Buea

Municipality is situated at slope of Mount Fako, bounded to North by tropical rainforest of Mount Fako, south by Limbe, east by Muyuka and Tiko. It has surface area of 870km². Buea is the Headquarter of South West Region of Cameroon and formal colonial capital of German Kamerun from 1901 to 1919, the capital of the Southern Cameroon from 1946 until 1961 and the capital of West Cameroon until 1972, when Ahmadou Ahidjo abolished the federation of Cameroon. The German colonial Administration in Buea was temporarily suspended during the eruption of Mount Fako from 28th of April 1909. Buea Municipality hosts the University of Buea, Cameroon's first anglosaxon University.

3.3 Population and Target Population Used in the Study

According to Nkatini (2005:38) target population is the actual population that can be studied. After consultation with the study supervisor, the researcher confined the study in Buea Municipality. The researcher targeted the inhabitants of Buea Municipality and the Buea Council officials. Buea Municipality has an estimated population of about 250,000 inhabitants, while the Buea Council has about 260 staff. Community participation is collective action by every adult resident within municipality. This requires the general involvement of every adult person. The Council officials are also vital for this research, especially that of the department of planning, and socio-economic development. They are incharge of compiling the development plan documents, the communities are the beneficiaries but should be involved in the whole process. However, the municipality councilors are the ones who should be ambassadors of the development plan as they are the link between Municipal Council and the Community.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Lazerwitz (1968:278) holds that sampling procedure is the process of selecting a sample from the target population. There exist two main types of sampling techniques; the probability sampling and the non-probability sampling. The probability sampling include: simple random sampling; stratified random sampling and the systematic random sampling. While the non-probability sampling techniques include: quarter sampling; convenience sampling and the purposive sampling. However, the researcher makes use of two sampling techniques in this study, which are simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Again, purposive sampling is used to administer questionnaires to officials in Buea Council and non-governmental organizations like MTN, Orange workers within the Municipality.

3.4.1 Methods of Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting observations according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:164). It has often centred on the ability of resources to gauge public opinions such as voting intentions. Despite a history of errors, current techniques are quite accurate compare to old techniques. A sample is defined as the subset of a population observed in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population itself.

According to Nkatini (2005:38) sampling should be understood as a technical counting or measuring device that is used to explain how specific information is selected and collected from which data will be drawn. There are various ways of selecting a sample. The different methods of sampling include: simple random sampling, purposive sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, quota sampling among others. Two sampling methods were used in this study, which are: the purposive method and random method.

Purposive sampling targets is a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. The purposive method was used to give questionnaires to all very important persons of the study such as Council officials and non-governmental organizations workers.

Random sampling is also used. Adetero (1986:22) explains that random sampling method allows every member in the population an equal opportunity for being selected. The researcher implies

fish bowl methods in which to catch respondents from different organizations, institutions and sectors only within the Buea Municipality. The researcher bowl and shuffled until the desired respondents were drawn for the research. This method was found to be reliable as it limits chances of bias.

3.4.2 Sample and Sample Size

Determining an adequate sample size according to Wimmer and Dominick (1987:80-87), is among the most controversial aspect of sampling. There are suggested sample sizes according to Dawha (1999:146) for various statistical procedures, ranging from less than 50 to more than 1000. Research at any level is very expensive and these costs have great influence on a project of this magnitude. The general rule is to use as large a sample as possible within the economic constraints of the study.

The population size under this case study is about 250,000 inhabitants of Buea Municipality including the 260 Staff members of Buea Council. The researcher targeted 25 members of the Council head officers; 25 respondents from the non-governmental organizations like MTN, Orange; 25 people from different Political parties and 25 respondents from the business organizations like store owners, Taxi drivers, buyam sellam; Making a round figure of 100 respondents. That's to say, 25 percent respondents from the local government administration' and 75 percent respondents from the community inhabitants. Scholars in social sciences believe that sample size of 70-79 percent respondents is good, 80-89 percent is very good, and 90-100 percent is excellent. So, the researcher is working with an excellent figure of sample size, according to ranges proposed by social scientists.

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

There are two main sources of data collection used in this research by the researcher: the primary and secondary sources.

3.5.1 Primary Sources of Data Collection

Gary (2009:31) sees primary sources of data collection as a 'straight from the horse's mouth' in other words, no other person has subsequently analyzed or summarized it. According to him, examples of primary sources include: autobiographies, diaries, government documents and statistics, letters and correspondence (including electronic kinds such as email), original documents, photographs and audio or video recordings, speeches and technical reports. The primary data includes the interviews of the local government authorities and residents. Questionnaires are administered to a sample population, which constitutes male and female adult citizens and council officers within the Buea Municipality to access and assess their opinions on community participation in local government administration .

3.5.2 Secondary Sources of Data Collection

Meanwhile, a secondary source of data collection according Gary is a reworking of usually many primary sources, either in analysis or summary. Example of secondary sources include: textbooks, review articles, dictionaries and encyclopaedia, biographies etcetera, Gary (2009:31-32). The secondary sources are obtained from both published and unpublished materials. These include: books, dissertations, theses, periodicals, magazines, journals, newspapers, reports, research papers, articles, internet and other related publications on the study. In this study, the researcher made use of mostly, the journals, Internet, theses, and books.

3.6 Instruments of Data Collection and Procedures

Punch (2006:52) interprets the question 'how will the data be collected?' as a question that asks about the instruments and procedures to be used for data collection. We get quantitative from counting, scaling, or both. Qualitative data are most likely to be words, which we get by asking

(interviewing); watching (observation); reading (documents); or some combination of these three activities. Procedures refer to the actual process of data collection, over and above any instruments proposed. If instruments are involved, the question here is how the instruments will be used or administered. If field work is involved, how would it be carried out? The researcher made use of two data collection instruments for this study in order to avoid the problem of placing too much trust in any one instrument. The main instruments employed were questionnaire and structured interview techniques which were arrived at after studying the work of Miller and Brewer (2003:53).

3.6.1 Interview

Interviews are questions asked orally. The study uses the structured interviews, that is face-to-face interviews. Interview is one of the most basic forms of data gathering. People freely talk about themselves and their involvement in local government administration: that is for the few of them that participate in local government administration. The researcher through her pre-discussions with some of the respondents found out that they do not really appreciate the offer of active participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality, because of many reasons such as partisan politics, discouragement that their opinions would not count: "I do not want to waste my time", some of the respondents affirmed. The face-to-face interviews were conducted mostly to the respondents who are of the business organizations and some in non-governmental organizations who are figure out to be too much busy, could not sit down to fill the questionnaires and are not always stable in their respective work places, this makes it impossible for the researcher to drop the questionnaire for them to answer and come back some other times, to collect. This exercise enabled the researcher to get balanced view from the Community on how they see local government administration process and how they are involved in the processes. The interview was conducted in appropriate language depending on the venue and the level of the respondent comprehension. The advantage of face-to-face interview includes its high information yield, because it is highly flexible, it facilitates the investigation of highly complex issues and promotes useful familiarity with the respondent's environment and background. However, the researcher uses the structured questionnaire as interview guide.

3.6.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire constituted the main data collection instrument of this research. Despite its shortcomings, the questionnaire according to Kerlinger (1977:62) is a widely used instrument in educational research. He estimated that as many as half of the research studies conducted used questionnaire as part of the data collection process. The questionnaire is a device for eliciting responses to questions by using a form which the respondents fill by themselves. The questionnaire is structured to facilitate comprehensive data collection. The impersonal nature of a questionnaire ensures some uniformity from one measurement situation to another. In the same way Adetero (1986:55) accepts that questionnaire has administrative and psychological advantages of assessing a large number of individuals at minimum cost and the possibility of confidentiality which makes the subjects respond objectively. The researcher therefore designed a questionnaire to collect information from the council staff and other respondents who were chance to fill on the day of its administration. The researcher designed 15 questions to test the hypotheses, a likert scale format of five options was used, that is strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree. The researcher used both open-end and close-end questions so as to combine the advantages and eliminate the disadvantages associated to them. Open-ended questions for Mannheim and Rich (1991: 116) allow respondents to answer in their own words; no options are imposed on them. These questions have the advantage of allowing the researcher to discover unanticipated patterns in the respondents' answers. Meanwhile, close-ended questions according to them, force the respondents to choose answer from a limited number of options. These

questions have the advantage of allowing the researcher to make comparison of responses simple, processing and ensuring the relevance of responses.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

3.7.1 Validity of Instruments

Validity is the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values. The validation in this study is based on content validity which focuses on the extent to which the content of the instruments correspond to the content of the theoretical concepts, it is designed to measure. Miller and Brewer (2003:255) observed that the main criticism of the used of questionnaire is that the data collected may lack validity. Especially in the case of questionnaire where the interviewer is not present to provide help, respondents may interpret the questions posed and the response options in different ways, making the interpretation of the responses by the researcher problematic.

3.7.2 Reliability of Instruments

Reliability is the extent to which a test produces consistent reproducible results. According to this definition, the results obtained must be stable, dependable and relatively free from error measurement or else, it will not be reliable. Miller and Brewer (2003:53) assert that the use of a highly structured interview schedule or questionnaire like the type the researcher used in this research has many attractions. This kind of questionnaire enables the collection of large quantities of data from large numbers of respondents. This can be done easily depending on the way it is administered, and within a short space of time. It is easier because each respondent is asked exactly the same questions and in the same way, and administered using the self-administered technique. However, the response score will likely be high on reliability, which is very essential for all studies in this magnitude.

3.7.3 Administration of the Instruments

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires directly to the council officials, who were willing to fill the questionnaire on the day which questionnaires were administered. Equally, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to workers of non-governmental organizations, business men and women, as well as the community dwellers in Buea Municipality. This was done especially on respondents who were stable in their work places and were willing to fill the questionnaires also. Therefore, the researcher is right to say that, this research enjoys the benefits proposed by Manheim and Rich (1991:120) who assert that in self-administered questionnaires, it helps respondents avoid misreading or mismarking and can give them the sense that the questionnaire is easy to complete. Moreover, the researcher personally interviewed respondents who were proven to be very busy and unstable, following the programs on their daily schedule (daily routine).

3.8 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Presentation refers to the organization of data into tables , graphs or charts. In other words, data presentation is a process of comparing two or more data sets with visual aids such as graphs, charts or tables. There are five solid and reliable data presentation methods, which are: textual, statistical, tabular, graphical and measures of dispersion. Data was presented in tabular form using frequency distributions and proportions. The frequency tables indicating the various distributions of variables were used and data collected from the administered questionnaires were presented using statistical methods such as bar charts and pie charts.

The process of data presentation follows data analysis and helps to organize information by visualizing and putting it into a more readable format. Amin (2005:306) sees data analysis to involve a number of closely related operations, which are performed with the purpose of

summarizing the collected data and organizing them in such a manner that they answer the research questions and hypotheses if they exist. Data analysis is a process of extracting, compiling and modeling raw data for purposes of obtaining constructive information that can be applied to formulating conclusions, predicting outcomes or supporting decisions in business, scientific and social science settings. Data analysis began with data presentation by editing the data, examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions. A careful scrutiny of the completed questionnaires and interviews schedules was done in order to ensure that the data was accurate and consistent with data gathered through other sources. However, Chi-square (χ^2) was applied to test the hypotheses in this study. The chi-square as a test tries to establish if observed frequencies agree with the expected frequencies and if not, whether the difference between the two under hypothesis can be attributed to sampling variation or to non change factors. The Chi-square is used to test for the inter-dependence of two variables. The information is usually presented in a contingency table.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

According to Hussey (1997:35) “ it is difficult to conduct much research at all without running into ethical argument. One has to consider a number of different issues and find out what rules there may be for conducting research at an early stage.” There are principles to be followed with their advantages and disadvantages when researchers are conducting any research. The researcher of this study has observed the ethics especially in the participatory action of the research methodology. The members of the community were not expected to reveal some information for revealing such information can have a negative influence on them. Others can end up being targeted by the elected officials for divulging certain information around the service. The researcher applied the ethical principles such as confidentiality, integrity, honesty, anonymity, freedom to decline participation (or voluntary participation, willful participation) so as not to cause harm to participants. Any researcher must be aware of dangers and guard against them. It is the obligation of the researcher to protect subjects or respondents from any kind of harm. If there are risks involved, the researcher should inform the participants before proceeding and take all possible measures to minimize distress: especially since all these ethical principles are perceived to be important for the study.

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Data

This section constitutes the presentation of return rate of questionnaires as well as the presentation and analysis of the first part of the questionnaire. It presents findings related to gender, age, level of education, marital status and political affiliation.

4.1.1 Return Rate

A total of 100 questionnaires were printed and administered to the various respondents of the study, for example, 25 respondents from Buea Council, 25 respondents from business organization, 25 respondents from different opposition parties and 25 respondents from Non-Governmental Organisation. The table below represents the various return rate of questionnaires.

Table 1: Return Rate of Questionnaires

Names of Respondents Sample in the study	Sample Population/Distributed Questionnaires	Return Rate/ Completed Questionnaires
Buea Council	25	20
Non-Governmental Organisation (like MTN, Orange)	25	22

Different opposition parties	25	17
Business Organisations	25	23
Total	100	82

Source: Field Survey APRIL, 2025

According to Spector, (2002:41), a return rate or completion rate is the percentage of the total number of participants who completed and returned the questionnaires against the total sum of participants to whom research questionnaires were distributed to. As indicated on the table above, questionnaires were distributed to 100 respondents and 82 were returned, successfully completed. This represents a return rate of 82%. For the purpose of generalizing the study findings, this return rate of questionnaires seemed high and satisfactory.

4.1.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

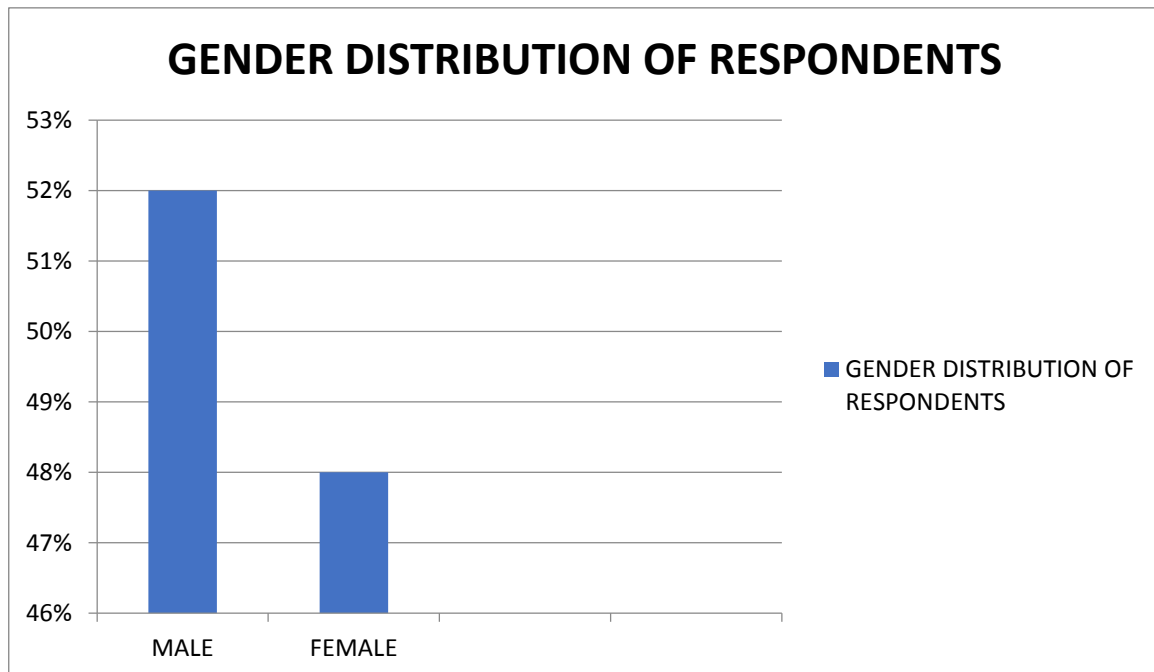
This section identifies the gender composition of the respondents to determine the extent of disparity in gender in the sample study and to ensure that this study is representative of both gender. The results are presented below in table 2 and figure 1.

Table 2 : Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	43	52
Female	39	48
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey APRIL, 2025

Figure 1: Bar-chart Showing Gender Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

The results indicate that 52% of the study respondents were male, while 48% were female, which indicates that majority of the respondents in the sample were males as compared to females. The results also reveal that the both gender were well representative in good numbers.

4.1.3 Age Distribution of Respondents

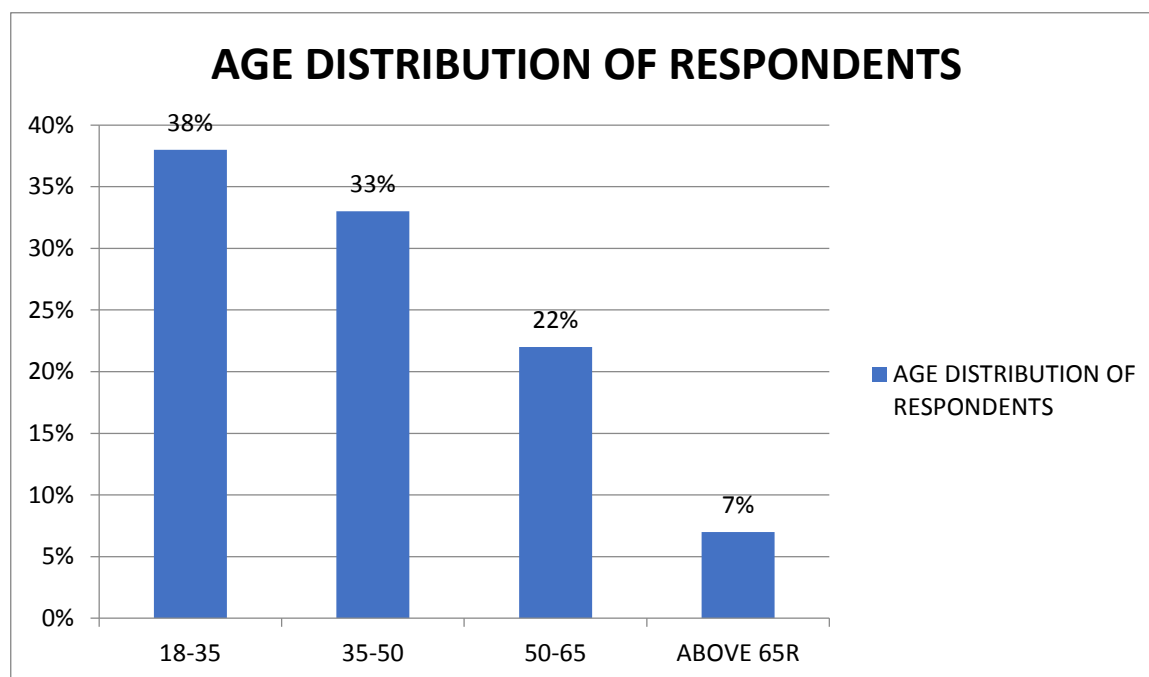
This subsection seeks to establish the ages of the respondents to ensure that the view of different age group or range are taken into consideration. The results are presented in table 3 and figure 2 below.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age(years)	Frequency	Percentage%
18-35	31	38
35-50	27	33
50-65	18	22
Above 65	6	7
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Figure 2: Bar-chart Showing Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

As shown in table 3 and figure 2, the age range 18-35 represents 38% majority of the respondents. This is followed by the age range 35-50 with 33% and the age range 50-65 with 22%. The age range above 65 had the least with 7%. This result clearly shows that, the sample was dominated by the age bracket of the labour force.

4.1.4 Educational Qualification of Respondents

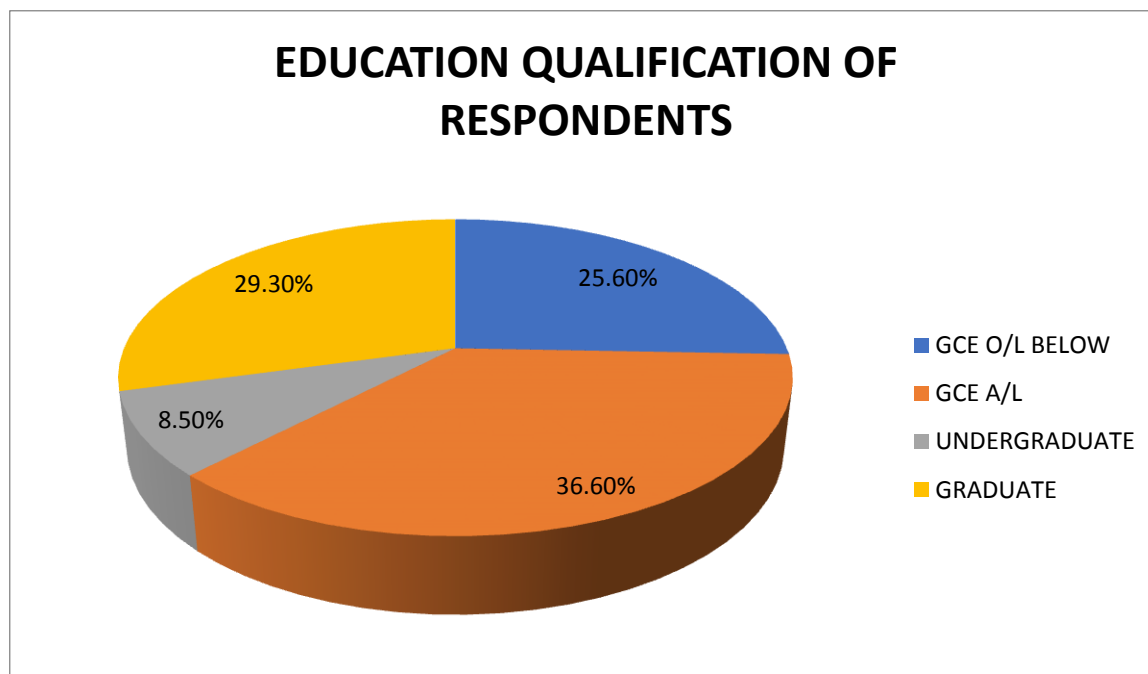
This subsection seeks to know the educational level of the respondents. The level of education encompasses knowledge and skills which assist the researcher to understand the level of perception of the respondents. The results are presented on the table and figure below.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage%
GCE O/L Below	21	25.6
GCE A/L	30	36.6
Undergraduate	7	8.5
Graduate	24	29.3
Total	82	100

Source: *field Survey April, 2025*

Figure 3: Pie-chart Showing Educational Qualification of Respondents



Source: *Field Survey April, 2025*

Results on Table 4 and figure 3 reveals that a majority of the respondents in the sample were GCE Advance Level holders, this was represented by 36.6%, followed by graduates with 29.3%. GCE Ordinary Level and below was the third with 25.6% and Undergraduate has the least with 8.5%.

This results clearly show that the researcher had to deal with respondents who can atleast read and write well.

4.1.5 Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status

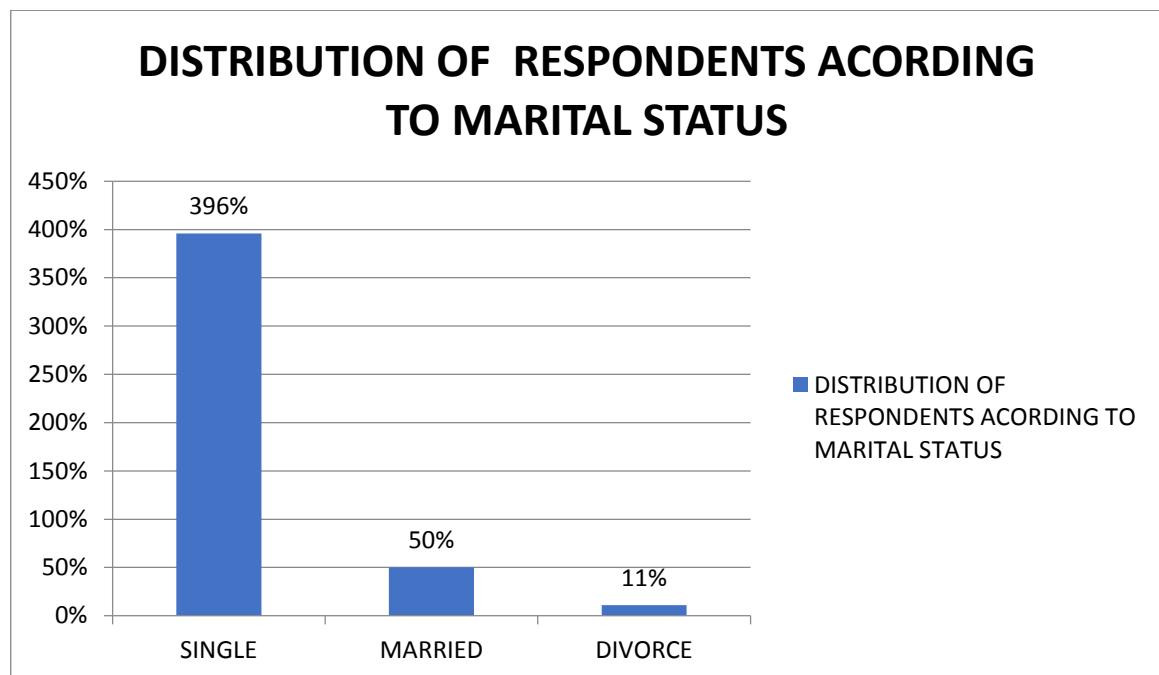
This section seeks to examine the marital status of respondents in the sample, in order to determine their level of responsiveness as far as their decision making process life is concerned. The results are presented below in Table 5 and figure 4.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage%
Single	32	39
Married	41	50
Divorce	9	11
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Figure 4: Bar-chart Showing the Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

As seen in Table 5 and figure 4 above, majority of the respondents in the sample were married couples, represented by 50%, while single individuals has the second highest with 39% and

divorce rate had the least with 11%. This findings clearly show that majority of the respondents in sample were responsible men and women who have decided to get married and remained faithful to their marital vows.

4.1.6 Distribution of Respondents According to Party Affiliation

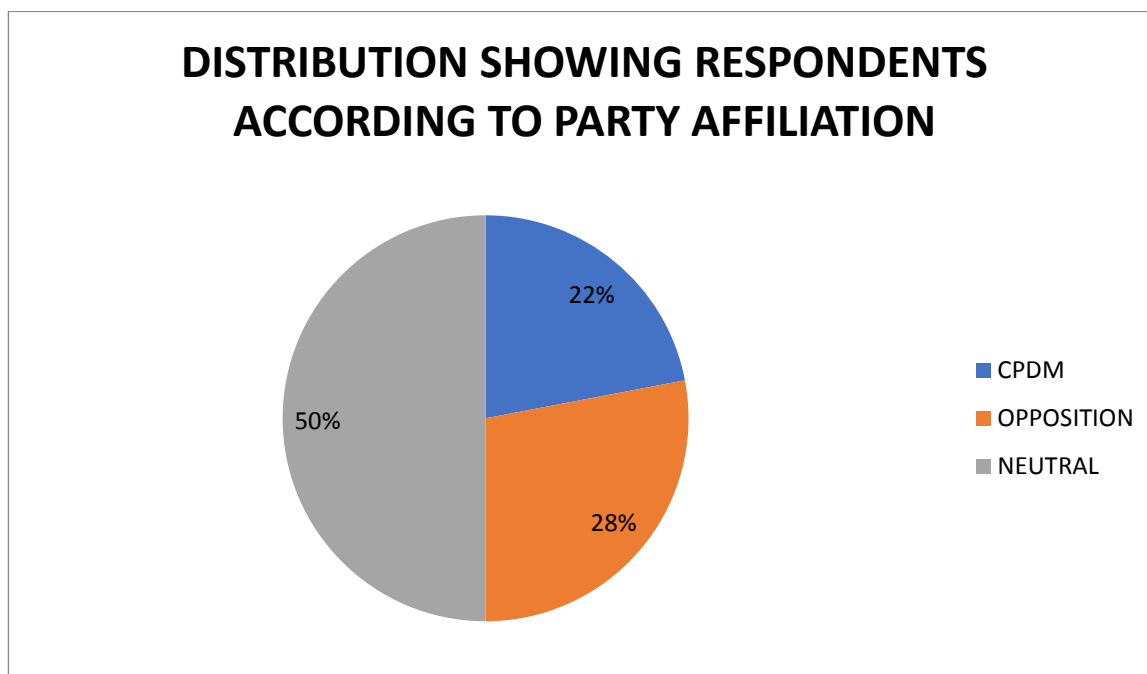
This section seeks to examine the level of political participation of respondents in the sample. This examination is know the level partisan and non-partisan respondents in the study are. The results on party affiliation are presented in table 6 and figure 5 below.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Party Affiliation

Party Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage%
CPDM	18	22
Opposition	23	28
Neutral	41	50
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Figure 5: Pie-chart Showing Distribution of Respondents According to Party Affiliation



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Results on Table 6 and figure 5 reveal that the sample was dominated by non-partisan respondents with 50% neutral, while 28% of respondents belong to the opposition parties and the ruling CPDM party had the least with 22% of the respondents. This reveals the sensitive nature of the study, as many of the study respondents did not want to take sides by identifying themselves in a

particular political party. There is moderate level of political participation of respondents in the study.

4.2 Presentation of Issues Raised in the Questionnaire

4.2.1 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Encourages Local Democracy

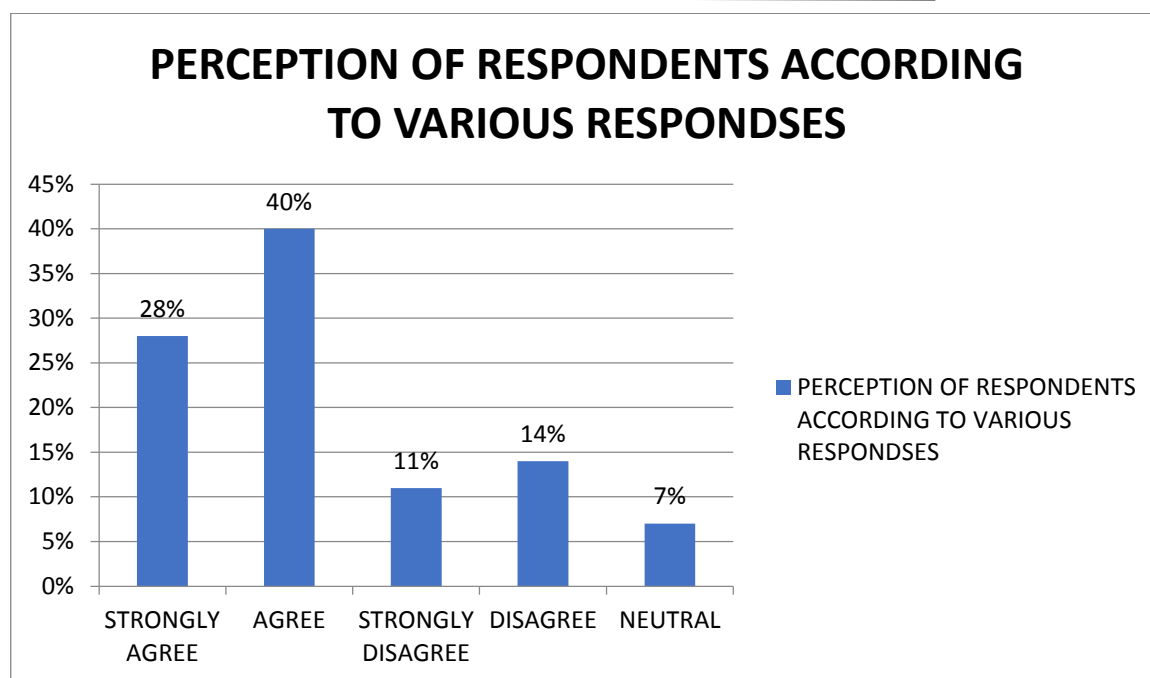
This section presents findings related to community participation in local government administration, and how their participation encourage democracy in the grassroots level.

Table 7: A Distribution Showing the Perception of Respondents on Issues Raised in the First Objective of the Study.

Issues Raised	Frequency F Percentage P	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Total
1. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that Community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy?	F	29	37	2	9	5	82
	P	35.4%	45.1%	2.4%	11%	6.1%	100%
2. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that a vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national level democracy?	F	23	27	7	15	10	82
	P	28%	33%	9%	18%	12%	100%
3. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that participation tends to enhance good relations among the citizens, building a community that is self-reliant and self-spirited?	F	22	39	5	10	6	82
	P	27%	48%	6%	12%	7%	100%
4. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that Community members are informed about the importance of their participation in decision making process in local gov't administration?	F	10	18	31	20	3	82
	P	12%	22%	38%	24%	4%	100%
5. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that community participation is not an end itself but rather a means to achieve better quality of life for the people?	F	31	43	1	4	3	82
	P	38%	52%	1%	5%	4%	100%
Grand Total		115	164	46	58	27	410
Percentage Total		140.4	200.1	56.4	70	33.1	500
Average Percentage		28%	40%	11%	14%	7%	100%

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Figure 6: A Bar-chart Showing total Perception of Respondents According to Various Responses



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

According to Table 7 and figure 6, the first objective of the study reveals that Community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy in Buea Municipality. This is backed by a high general agreement rate of 69% as opposed to general disagreement rate of 25% and 7% neutral of all the issues raised.

Beginning with the first issue raised by the researcher, a majority of the respondents in the sample (81%) agree to the fact that community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy, while 13% disagree and 6% neutral of the issue. Secondly, when the issue that a vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national level democracy was raised, 61% of the respondents in the sample agree while 27% disagree and 12% remained neutral of the issue. Thirdly, 75% of the respondents agree while 18% disagree and 7% neutral of the fact that participation tends to enhance good relations among the citizens, building a community that is self-reliant and self-spirited. Fourthly, when the issue that community members are informed about the importance of their participation in decision making process in local government administration was raised, 34% minority agree, while 62% majority disagree and 4% neutral of the issue. Finally, majority of the respondents, that is 90% agree that community participation in local government administration is not an end itself but rather means achieve better quality of life for the people and deepening democracy. A minority of the respondents in the sample (6%) disagree to this fact and 4% of the respondents remained neutral. From the above statistical analysis, it is clear categorically clear that a majority of the respondents in the sample accept the fact that community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy.

4.2.2 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Yields Strong Mechanisms of Accountability

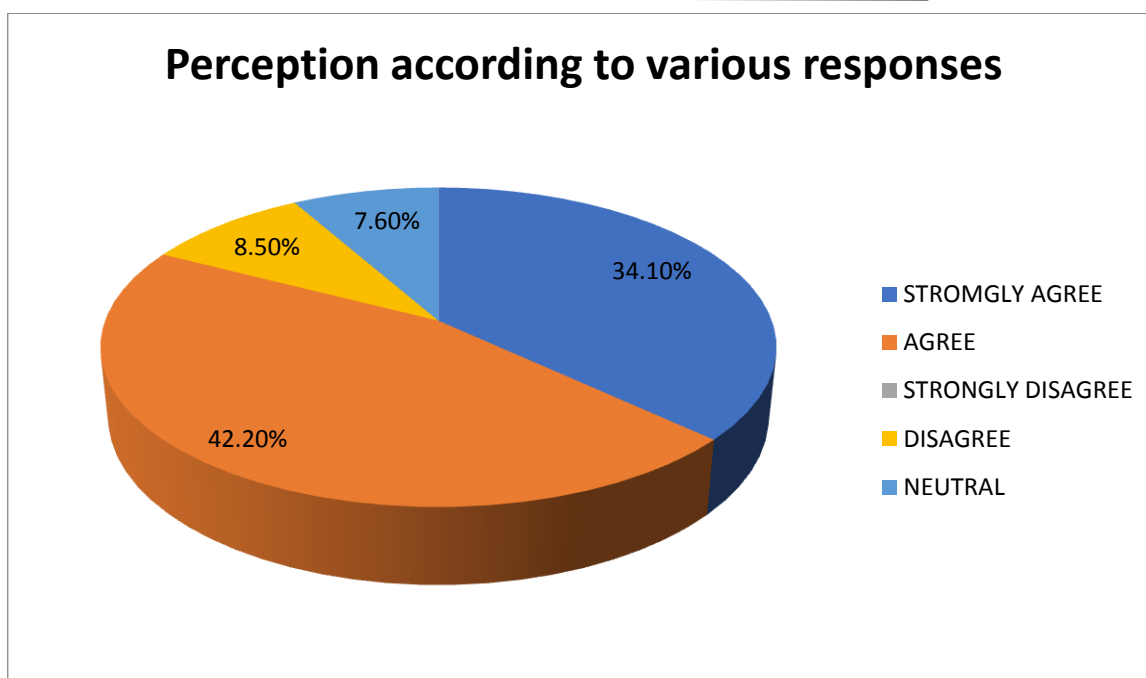
This section presents findings related to how community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability. Community participation in local government administration ensure downward accountability, which is an essential components in governance and the purpose of decentralization.

Table 8: A Distribution Showing the Perception of Respondents According to Issues Raised in the Second Objective of the Study.

Issues Raised	Frequency F	Strongly	Agree	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Total
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	Percentage P	Agree		Disagree			
6. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that Community participation in local gov't administration yields strong mechanisms of local accountability?	F	22	39	9	5	7	82
	P	26.8%	47.6%	11%	6.1%	8.5%	100%
7. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that accountability is one of the most essential components of good governance?	F	39	35	2	3	3	82
	P	47.6%	42.6%	2.4%	3.7%	3.7%	100%
8. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that Buea Council and other councils in Cameroon practice mostly the upward accountability because of the placement of local government under the Ministry of Decentralization and Rural Development?	F	27	33	5	10	7	82
	P	33%	40%	6%	12%	9%	100%
9. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that decentralization cannot achieve it stated arms if power decentralized to local institutions are not accountable to the constituencies but rather accountable to their superior authorities within the structure of government?	F	24	29	10	8	11	82
	P	29.3%	35.4%	12.1%	9.8%	13.4%	100%
10. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that accountability is the only necessary conditions in governance that helps to keep officials in check and ensure that misconduct and corruption are avoided?	F	28	37	5	9	3	82
	P	34%	45%	6%	11%	4%	100%
Grand Total		140	173	31	35	31	410
Percentage Total		170.7	210.6	37.5	42.6	38.6	500
Average Percentage		34.1%	42.2%	7.6%	8.5%	7.6%	100%

Source: *Field Survey April, 2025***Figure 7: Pie-chart Showing Total Perception of Respondents According to Various Responses**



Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Data presented for the second objective of the study on Table 8 and figure 7, reveals that Community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability. This revelation is backed by a high general agreement rate of 76% as opposed to general disagreement rate of 16% and 8% neutral of all the issues raised.

Beginning with the first issue raised, a majority (74.4%) of the respondents agree that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of local accountability. However, a minority of the respondents in the sample (17.1%) disagree and 8% neutral of the issue. Secondly, 90% agree while 6% disagree and 4% neutral of the fact that accountability is one of the most essential components of governance. Thirdly, when the issue that Buea Council and other councils in Cameroon practice mostly the upward accountability rather than the downward accountability because of the placement of local governments under the Ministry of Decentralization and Rural Development was raised, majority of the respondents that is 73% agree while 18% disagree and 9% neutral of the issue. The respond on the fourth issue are: 64.7% agreement rate, 21.9% disagreement rate and 13.4% neutrality rate of respondents that decentralization cannot achieve it stated arms if power decentralized to local institutions are not accountable to the constituencies or communities but rather accountable only to their superior authorities within the structure of government. Finally, majority of respondents in the sample (79%) agree that accountability is the only necessary conditions in governance that helps to keep officials in check and ensure that misconduct and corruption are avoided in the daily functions of the governments. A minority of the respondents in the sample, that is 17% disagree and 4% remained neutral of the issue. This statistical analysis clearly shows that majority of the respondents in the study sample accept the fact that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability.

4.2.3 The Challenges Faced by Community Participation in Local Government Administration in Buea Municipality

This section presents findings related to the challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. Challenges like: lack of sensitization campaigns, poor infrastructures, poor communication, low level of education and ignorant about Council's development programmes and projects.

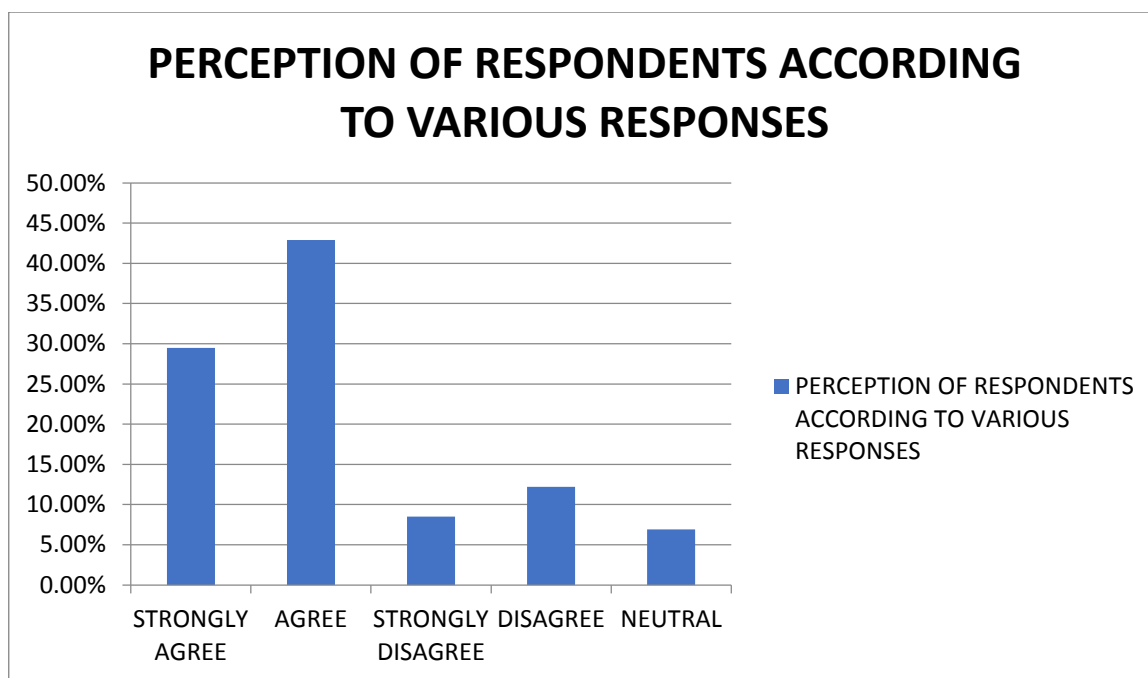
Table 9:A Distribution Showing the Perception of Respondents According to Issues Raised in the Third Objective of the Study.

Issues Raised	Frequency F Percentage P	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Total
11. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that the lack of sensitization campaigns is one of the shortcomings that keep community away from active participation in local gov't administration?	F	20	36	13	8	5	82
	P	24%	44%	16%	10%	6%	100%
12. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that poor Infrastructure and poor communication are key factor working against Community participation in local gov't Programmes ?	F	32	40	3	5	2	82
	P	39%	49%	4%	6%	2%	100%
13. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that the low level of education and lack of access to information about local gov't programs and services serve to keep the community away from active participation?	F	25	34	7	11	5	82
	P	30.5%	41.5%	8.5%	13.4%	6.1%	100%
14. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that the lack of transparency, local accountability and trust in local gov't programs are vices that hinder active community participation in local gov't programmes ?	F	28	41	2	8	3	82
	P	34%	50%	2%	10%	4%	100%
15. Do you agree or disagree to the fact that the lack of weak financial capacity of local gov't reduces its capacity to involve the community in dev't projects and further affects the local gov't ability to respond to the needs of the Community?	F	19	27	11	16	9	82
	P	23%	33%	13%	20%	11%	100%
16. Do you agree or disagree that the shortage of resources make local gov't to become victims to cumbersome conditions and requirements from donors and the central gov't in the end it becomes agents of the state and not of the citizens?	F	21	33	6	12	10	82
	P	26%	40%	7%	15%	12%	100%
Grand Total		145	211	42	60	34	492
Percentage Total		176.5	257.5	50.5	74.4	41.1	600

Average Percentage		29.5%	42.9%	8.5%	12.2%	6.9%	100%
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Source: *Field Survey April, 2025*

Figure 8: Bar-chart Showing Total Perception of Respondents According to Various Responses



Source: *Field Survey April, 2025*

Data presented for the third objective of the study on Table 9 and figure 8, reveal that there are challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. This is backed by a high general agreement rate of 72.4% as opposed to general disagreement rate of 20.7% and 6.9% neutrality rate of all the issues raised.

Beginning with the first issue raised by the researcher, 68% of the respondents in the sample accept the fact that the lack of community sensitization campaigns is one of the shortcomings that keep Community away from active participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality, 26% of the respondents in the sample disagree and another 6% remained of the issue. Secondly, 88% agree while 10% disagree and 2% neutral that poor infrastructure and poor communication are key factors working against community participation in local government programmes in Buea Municipality. Thirdly, when the issue that the low level of education and access to information about local government programmes and services serve to keep the community away from active participation was raised, 72% agree while 22% disagree and 6% stayed neutral of the issue. Fourthly, majority of the respondents in the sample (84%) agree while 12% disagree and 4% neutral about the fact that the lack of transparency, local accountability and trust in local government programmes are vices that hinder active community participation in local government administration. Fifthly, the weak financial capacity of local government reduces its capacity to involve the community in its development projects and further affects the local government ability to respond to the needs of the community issues was raised, 56% agree while 33% disagree and 11% neutral of the issue. Finally, 66% of the respondents in the sample agree while 22% disagree and 12% neutral of the fact that the shortage of resources make local government to become victims of cumbersome conditions and requirements from donors and the central government, in the end it becomes an agents of the state and not of the citizens.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Hypothesis One

Ho: U- Community Participation in local government administration do not encourage local Democracy.

H1: U- Community Participation in local government administration do encourage local Democracy.

The chi-square goodness-fit-test is used to calculate and verify the above hypothesis. This is done by employing the chi-square formula and distribution table to accept or reject the hypothesis.

Chi-square (X^2) = $\sum (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$,

Where X^2 = Chi-square, F_o = Respondents' Responses, F_e = Expected Frequency and \sum = Summation sign.

Table 10: A Chi-square Distribution Table Showing All the Perception of Respondents on all the issues raised in the First Objective of the Study.

No	Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² ÷fe
1.	R1C1	29	23	6	36	1.57
2.	R1C2	37	33	4	16	0.49
3.	R1C3	2	9	-7	49	5.44
4.	R1C4	9	12	-3	9	0.75
5.	R1C5	5	5	0	0	0.00
6.	R2C1	23	23	0	0	0.00
7.	R2C2	27	33	-6	36	1.09
8.	R2C3	7	9	-2	4	0.44
9.	R2C4	15	12	3	9	0.75
10.	R2C5	10	5	5	25	5
11.	R3C1	22	23	-1	1	0.04
12.	R3C2	39	33	6	36	1.09
13.	R3C3	5	9	-4	16	1.78
14.	R3C4	10	12	-2	4	0.33
15.	R3C5	6	5	1	1	0.2
16.	R4C1	10	23	-13	169	7.35
17.	R4C2	18	33	-15	225	6.82
18.	R4C3	31	9	22	484	53.78
19.	R4C4	20	12	8	64	5.33
20.	R4C5	3	5	-2	4	0.8
21.	R5C1	31	23	8	64	2.78
22.	R5C2	43	33	10	100	3.03
23.	R5C3	1	9	-8	64	7.11
24.	R5C4	4	12	-8	64	5.33
25.	R5C5	3	5	-2	4	0.8
						112.1

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Step 1: Compute the Expected Frequencies (Fe)

Following table 10, the researcher raised five issues as against five likert scale responses related to community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy in Buea Municipality. Therefore, to calculate fe, researcher multiplies row total by column total and divided by the grand total of all the frequencies.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Fe &= 115 \times 82 \div 410 = \mathbf{23} \\
 &= 164 \times 82 \div 410 = \mathbf{33} \\
 &= 46 \times 82 \div 410 = \mathbf{9} \\
 &= 58 \times 82 \div 410 = \mathbf{12} \\
 &= 27 \times 82 \div 410 = \mathbf{5}
 \end{aligned}$$

Step 2: Compute the Derivation (fo-fe) for each frequency

$$\begin{aligned}
 Fo-fe &= 29-23=6 \\
 &= 37-33=4 \\
 &= 2-9=-7 \\
 (Fo-fe)^2 &= (6)^2=36 \\
 &= (4)^2=16 \\
 &= (-7)^2=49 \\
 (Fo-fe)^2 \div fe &= 36 \div 23=1.57 \\
 &= 16 \div 33=0.49 \\
 &= 49 \div 9=5.44
 \end{aligned}$$

Step 3: Add all the values to Compute

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= \sum (fo-fe)^2 \div fe \\
 &= 1.57+0.49+5.44+.....0.8 \\
 &= \mathbf{112.1}
 \end{aligned}$$

Step 4: The degree of freedom in the table is calculated from the formula

$$DF = (r-1)(c-1),$$

Where DF= Degree of freedom, R= Row, and C= Column.

$$= (5-1)(5-1)=(4)(4)=\mathbf{16}$$

Step 5: Look up the critical values of X2 for 2 Df at certain level of Significance

In the table and calculations above, the calculated $X^2=112.1$ while the table value or critical $X^2=22.13$ at $DF=16$, at 0.05 significance.

By comparison, the calculated X^2 (112.1) is greater than the table value (22.13) at 0.05 significance. Consequently, the first research alternate hypothesis (H_1) has been accepted while the null or statistical hypothesis (H_0) has been rejected. This means that Community participation in local government administration do encourage local democracy in Buea Municipality.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two

H_0 : U-Community Participation in Local Government Administration Yields to weak Mechanisms of Accountability.

H_2 : U-Community Participation in local Government Administration Yields to Strong Mechanisms of Accountability.

The chi-square goodness-fit-test is used to calculate and verify the above hypothesis. This is done by employing the chi-square formula and distribution table to accept or reject the hypothesis.

$$\text{Chi-square } (X^2) = \sum (fo-fe)^2 \div fe,$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square, F_o = Respondents' Responses, F_e = Expected Frequency and Σ =Summation sign.

Table 11: A Chi-square Distribution Table Showing All the Perception of Respondents on all the issues raised in the Second Objective of the Study.

No	Cell	F_o	F_e	$F_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 \div f_e$
1.	R1C1	22	28	-6	36	1.29
2.	R1C2	39	35	4	16	0.46
3.	R1C3	9	6	3	9	1.5
4.	R1C4	5	7	-2	4	0.57
5.	R1C5	7	6	1	1	0.17
6.	R2C1	39	28	11	121	4.32
7.	R2C2	35	35	0	0	0
8.	R2C3	2	6	-4	16	2.67
9.	R2C4	3	7	-4	16	2.29
10.	R2C5	3	6	-3	9	1.5
11.	R3C1	27	28	-1	1	0.04
12.	R3C2	33	35	-2	4	0.11
13.	R3C3	5	6	-1	1	0.17
14.	R3C4	10	7	3	9	1.29
15.	R3C5	7	6	1	1	0.17
16.	R4C1	24	28	-4	16	0.57
17.	R4C2	29	35	-6	36	1.03
18.	R4C3	10	6	4	16	2.67
19.	R4C4	8	7	1	1	0.14
20.	R4C5	11	6	5	25	4.17
21.	R5C1	28	28	0	0	0
22.	R5C2	37	35	2	4	0.11
23.	R5C3	5	6	-1	1	0.17
24.	R5C4	9	7	2	4	0.57
25.	R5C5	3	6	-3	9	1.5
N=RxC						27.48

Source: Field Survey April, 2025

Step 1: Compute the Expected Frequencies (F_e)

Following table 11, the researcher raised five issues as against five likert scale responses related to how Community Participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of local accountability. Therefore, to calculate f_e , the researcher multiplies row total by column total divided by grand total of all the frequencies, as seen below.

$$F_e = 140 \times 82 \div 410 = 28$$

$$= 173 \times 82 \div 410 = 35$$

$$= 31 \times 82 \div 410 = 6$$

$$= 35 \times 82 \div 410 = 7$$

$$= 31 \times 82 \div 410 = 6$$

Step 2: Compute the Derivation ($F_o - f_e$) for each frequency

$$F_o - f_e = 22 - 28 = -6$$

$$= 39 - 35 = 4$$

$$=9-6= 3$$

$$(Fo-fe)^2= (6)^2= 36$$

$$=(4)^2=16$$

$$=(3)^2=9$$

$$(Fo-fe)^2 \div fe= 36 \div 28= 1.29$$

$$=16 \div 35= 0.46$$

$$= 9 \div 6= 1.5$$

Step 3: Add all the Values to Compute

$$X^2 = \sum (fo-fe)^2 \div fe$$

$$= 1.29+0.46+1.5+.....+1.5$$

$$=27.48$$

Step 4: the Degree of freedom in the table is calculated from the formula

$$DF= (r-1)(c-1)$$

Where DF= Degree of freedom, R=Row, and C= Column.

$$=(5-1)(5-1)= (4)(4)= 16$$

Step 5: Look up the Critical Value of X² for 2 Df at Certain level of Significance

In the table and calculations above, calculated X²= 27.48 while the table value or critical X²= 16.57 at df 16 at 0.05 significance.

By comparison, the calculated X² (27.48) is greater than the table value (16.57) at 0.05. Consequently, the second research alternate hypothesis (H₂) has been accepted while null or statistical hypothesis (H₀) has been rejected. This means that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability in Buea Municipality.

4.3.3 Hypothesis Three

H₀: U-There are no Challenges Faced by Community Participation in Local Government Administration in Buea Municipality.

H₃: U-There are Challenges Faced by Community Participation in Local Government Administration in Buea Municipality.

The chi-square goodness-fit-test is used to calculate and verify the above hypothesis. This is done by employing the chi-square formula and distribution table to accept or reject the hypothesis.

$$\text{Chi-square } (X^2) = \sum (fo-fe)^2 \div fe$$

Where X²= Chi-square, Fo= Respondents' Responses, Fe= Expected Frequency.

Table 12: A Chi-square Distribution Table Showing All the Perception of Respondents on all the Issues Raised in the Third Objective of the Study.

No	Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² ÷fe
1.	R1C1	20	24	-4	16	0.67
2.	R1C2	36	35	1	1	0.03
3.	R1C3	13	7	6	36	5.14
4.	R1C4	8	10	-2	4	0.4
5.	R1C5	5	6	-1	1	0.17
6.	R2C1	32	24	8	64	2.67

7.	R2C2	40	35	5	25	0.71
8.	R2C3	3	7	-4	16	2.29
9.	R2C4	5	10	-5	25	2.5
10.	R2C5	2	6	-4	16	2.67
11.	R3C1	25	24	1	1	0.04
12.	R3C2	34	35	-1	1	0.03
13.	R3C3	7	7	0	0	0
14.	R3C4	11	10	1	1	0.1
15.	R3C5	5	6	-1	1	0.17
16.	R4C1	28	24	4	16	0.67
17.	R4C2	41	35	6	36	1.03
18.	R4C3	2	7	-5	25	3.57
19.	R4C4	8	10	-2	4	0.4
20.	R4C5	3	6	-3	9	1.5
21.	R5C1	19	24	-5	25	1.04
22.	R5C2	27	35	-8	64	1.83
23.	R5C3	11	7	4	16	2.29
24.	R5C4	16	10	6	36	3.6
25.	R5C5	9	6	3	9	1.5
26.	R6C1	21	24	-3	9	0.38
27.	R6C2	33	35	-2	4	0.11
28.	R6C3	6	7	-1	1	0.14
29.	R6C4	12	10	2	4	0.4
30.	R6C5	10	6	4	16	2.67
N= RxC						38.72

Source: *Field Survey April, 2025***Step 1: Compute the Expected Frequencies (Fe)**

Following table 12, the researcher raised six issues as against five likert scale responses related to the challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. Therefore, to calculate fe, the researcher multiplies row total by column total divided by grand total of all the frequencies. These figures obtained here were spread throughout the Fe row.

$$Fe = 145 \times 82 \div 492 = \mathbf{24}$$

$$= 211 \times 82 \div 492 = \mathbf{35}$$

$$= 42 \times 82 \div 492 = \mathbf{7}$$

$$= 60 \times 82 \div 492 = \mathbf{10}$$

$$= 34 \times 82 \div 492 = \mathbf{6}$$

Step 2: Compute the Derivation (fo-fe) for each frequency

$$Fo-fe = 20-24 = \mathbf{-4}$$

$$= 36-35 = \mathbf{1}$$

$$= 13-7 = \mathbf{6}$$

$$(Fo-fe)^2 = (-4)^2 = \mathbf{16}$$

$$= (1)^2 = \mathbf{1}$$

$$= (6)^2 = \mathbf{36}$$

$$(F_o - f_e)^2 \div f_e = 16 \div 24 = \mathbf{0.67}$$

$$= 1 \div 35 = \mathbf{0.03}$$

$$= 36 \div 7 = \mathbf{5.14}$$

Step 3: Add all the values to Compute

$$X^2 = \sum (f_o - f_e)^2 \div f_e$$

$$= 0.67 + 0.03 + 5.14 + \dots + 2.67$$

$$= \mathbf{38.72}$$

Step 4: The Degree of freedom in the Table is calculated from the formula

DF = (r-1)(c-1), where DF= Degree of freedom, R= Row and C = Column.

$$= (6-1)(5-1) = (5)(4) = \mathbf{20}$$

Step 5: Look up the Critical Value of X² for 2 Df at Certain level of Significance

In the table and calculations above, calculated $X^2 = 38.72$ while the critical X^2 or table value = 18.15 at df 20 at 0.05 significance.

By comparison, the calculated X^2 (38.72) is greater than the table value (18.15) at 0.05. Consequently, the third research alternate hypothesis (H₃) has been accepted while the null hypothesis (H₀) has been rejected. This means that there are challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Encourages Local Democracy

Data collected and analysed for the first objective of the study reveals that community participation in local government administration do encourage local democracy in Buea Municipality. This is backed by a high general agreement rate 68% as opposed to the general disagreement rate of 25% and 7% neutrality rate of all the issues raised. 'Just like a tree cannot grow without roots underground, so also is national democracy.' A vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national level democracy.

4.4.2 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Yields Strong Mechanisms of Accountability.

Data collected and analysed for the second objective of the study reveal that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of local accountability in Buea Municipality. This is backed by a high general agreement rate of 76% as opposed to general disagreement rate of 16% and 8% neutrality rate of all the issues raised. Accountability remains one of the most essential components of good governance, and if decentralization in Cameroon is to make any impact, especially as far it stated arms are concerned, power decentralized to local institution must be accountable to the constituencies or communities not to the superior authorities within the structure of government in Cameroon.

4.4.3 The Challenges Faced by Community Participation in local Government Administration in Buea Municipality.

Data collected and analysed for the third objective of the study reveal that there are challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality. This is backed by a high general agreement rate of 72.4% as opposed to the general disagreement rate of 20.7% and 6.9% undecided of all the issues raised. Community Participation in local

government administration in Buea Municipality faced enormous challenges such poor infrastructure, poor communication, lack of sensitization campaigns, low level of education, lack of transparency, local accountability and trust in local government administration. These vices are enormous and alarming in Buea Municipality. These vices couple with corruption have hindered active community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Community Participation in local Government Administration Encourages Local Democracy

A vigorous local democracy is the basis for a healthy national level democracy, because practice at local level make perfect at the national level. This is very essential because men learn much through experiences, to be void of experience in democracy is to be void in knowledge of it as well. Community Participation even though it is not an end, but a means to achieve better quality of life and deepen democracy at the local level, is very essential as far as moulding the Country's future leaders. An investigation into this problem reveals that of all the five issues raised, there is 68% general agreement rate as opposed to general disagreement rate of 25% and 7% neutrality rate of all the issues raised. A Calculated $X^2=112.1$, greater than the table value 22.13 at 0.05, the first research alternate hypothesis (H1) has been accepted which stipulates that community participation in local government administration do encourage local government in Buea Municipality, found in the South West Region of Cameroon. From the above statistical analysis, it is clear that majority of the respondents accept the fact Community participation in local government administration encourages local democracy in Buea Municipality. With this fact, it can therefore be said that this specific research objective of this study has been attained.

5.1.2 Community Participation in Local Government Administration Yields Strong Mechanisms of Accountability.

Accountability remains one of the most essential components of good governance, because accountability is the only necessary conditions in governance that helps to keep officials in check and ensure that misconduct and corruption is avoided in the daily functions or routines of the government. An investigation into this problem reveals that of all the five issues raised, there is 76% general agreement rate as opposed to the general disagreement rate of 16% and 8% neutrality rate of all the issues raised. With a calculated X^2 (27.48), greater than the table value (16.57) at 0.05 level of significance, the second research alternate hypothesis (H3) has been accepted which means that community participation in local government administration yields strong mechanisms of accountability in Buea Municipality. It can be said with certainty that this second specific research objective of the study has been attained

5.1.3 The Challenges Faced by the Community Participation in Local Government Administration in Buea Municipality.

There are many challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality some of these challenges identified are lack of sensitization campaigns, poor infrastructures, poor communication, local level education, ignorant about local government development programmes and projects among others. An investigation into this problem reveals that of all the six issues raised, there is 72.4% general agreement rate as opposed to the general disagreement rate of 20.7% and with a calculated X^2 (38.72), greater than the table value (18.15) at 0.05, the third alternate hypothesis (H3) has been accepted which stipulates that there are challenges faced by community participation in local government administration in Buea Municipality.

5.2 Conclusion

From the study, it is seen that there is limited awareness of local government activities (development programmes and projects), as a result, there is limited community participation in local government activities in Buea Municipality. Although the community seems to be aware of the existence of local government, they do not seem to be interested in local government administration. Information gathered from the respondents' of this study reveal that they rarely participate in the affairs of the local government, due to so many challenges like limited knowledge, lack of sensitization campaigns, transparency, accountability and trust or just lack of interest to participate.

It is further reveal that, community members do not have a strong hand in the operations of local government administration in Buea Municipality, simply because they think that local government is absolutely the extent of the central government to the periphery/ grassroots, and as such, the leaders are not competent enough to understand their local needs and respond to them accordingly. Some of the respondents in the study sample see local government officials as those who rigged elections because of their connection with the central government, they are where they are today and for this reason they (Community members) feel no sense of belonging and ownership to the local government.

Corruption and inefficiency among local government officials are also highlighted as major barrier to community participation in local government activities. Local government connection with the central government, coupled with the fact that some of the officials do not have the necessary skills to operate such offices, community members found it embarrassing to get involved and end up doing nothing especially as far as participation is concerned.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations are made in order to improve or strengthen Community Participation in local government administration.

5.3.1 Organisation of Sensitization Campaigns

There is need for sensitization of the community on the existence of local government administration, so that they become part of it. The local government should also make itself available and open to the community, by mobilizing them in identifying problems and suggesting clear and achievable solutions to them.

5.3.2 Creation of Structures of Mass Participation

There is also need to create structure in local government that involves the masses at all levels. These structures should begin at the grassroots and then move upward to the national level. The central government should recognize these structures and support them.

5.3.3 Enforcement of the Law (the rule of law)

It is common practice especially in Cameroon for laws and policies to be progressive on papers. The laws and policies are too void of implementation/ application. Therefore, these laws and policies need to be enforced or put into practice. To do this requires that the agencies responsible for the enforcement of these laws should be strengthened and empowered to do their job effectively. For laws enforcement is an indicator of good governance, and is lacking in Cameroon. Other indicators of good governance that are recommendable is transparency

5.3.4 Transparency

Transparent governance should be encouraged at both local and national levels, since giving accounts to those represented and in elections bring trust in governance. There should be transparency in the electoral system, so as to regain the trust and confidence of the population.

When elections are free and fair, the people take responsibility for their choice of representatives. This increases their level of participation and commitment which depicts a true politically decentralized system which is lacking in Cameroon since its existence. There is need therefore to create more open and transparent political environments in which citizens can actively participate in the democratic process.

5.4 Suggestions For Further Research

The study on local government administration is too broad; the researcher had to narrow it down to community participation, with Buea Municipality as case study. Since the study was limited to Buea Municipality, a similar study could be carried out to cover all the other Municipalities within the South West Region of Cameroon.

A further research on local government administration could be carried out, which read thus: “ the benefits of Community Participation in local government administration in Cameroon: Case Study of Buea Municipal Community.”

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