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The Effect of The Availability of Essential Goods and Services in Quality of Life Variations Amongst Selected Local Communities

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the availability of essential goods and services, and it's impact on variations in quality of life amongst communities. To achieve its aim, two key objectives and a hypothesis was proposed. The study was conducted in fifteen (15) purposively selected communities in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Survey method was used to collect primary data; a questionnaire was administered on 120 respondents to illicit useful information. Both descriptive and statistical methods were utilized to analyse collected data. The outcome of descriptive analyses showed inadequacies in availability of essential goods and services in the communities, which impacts on quality of life. Also, results of the statistical analysis of a paired T-test showed that F-ratio calculated 5.520 was greater than tabulated value 1.1771 and also the P-value 0.000 was less than the significant 0.005; showing significant relationship between the availability of essential goods and services and quality of life. Similarly, the correlation of the paired sample variables of goods and services and quality of life with 0.853 coefficient indicated a high correlation between the two pairs. Consequently, we recommend that Government and development partners embark on rural infrastructure development programmes; provide health and educational facilities and other basic amenities; encourage the agricultural sector and train rural dwellers on vocations and capacity building initiatives to improve their quality of life and environmental sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Availability, Goods and Services, Variations, Quality of life, and Local communities.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural communities often face unique challenges, including inadequate infrastructure: healthcare and sanitation, education, portable water, electricity, road network, etcetera which can significantly impact their well-being. Small communities are often disadvantaged regarding QoL, as is the case with may oil/gas bearing communities. These communities are mostly at the bottom end of the hierarchy of settlements and inadvertently suffer the disadvantages of small population size because they often lack the threshold condition that attract investment and facilities that provide jobs and essential goods and services.

Akinyemi, Ononye, Popoola and Ilesanmi (2012) posited that the availability of social amenities has potentials to cause QoL variations in communities even within same geographic region. The authors further stated that QoL in a community with enormous basic social amenities presents a significantly different QoL compared to a sterile community. Likewise, Boroah, Dineen and Lynch (2011) reported that even within communities, it can be observed that variations in education and availability and access to basic amenities instigates difference in QoL. Furthermore, the authors posited that access to essential goods and services is an important determinant of QoL. However, these determinants are not found in every community, especially small communities like the study area. It is against this premise that this study is conducted with the aim to evaluate the role of the availability of essential goods and services and their impact on QoL variations in rural communities; and key objectives to:

i. Assess the relationship between availability and access to essential goods and services and QoL.
ii. Identify strategies for improving availability and access to essential goods and services

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Central Place Theory: The use of theories and concepts that support and inform research is a key aspect of research design (Offor, Epelle and Obiyai, 2017). This paper drew its theoretical framework from the central place theory (CPT) by Walter Christaller. The CPT discussed the size, hierarchy, spacing and functions of settlements and the link between size and functions of settlements, and the link between size and functions of settlements. The functions of settlements have implications for jobs, income and availability of essential goods and services; whereas, access to jobs, income and essential of QoL. The CPT states that central places supplying essential goods and services to surrounding areas from a hierarchy ranging from higher order to lower – order central places. The link between the hierarchy of settlements and the hierarchy of goods and services on the one hand, and the availability and access to goods and services on the other, is classified by two concepts on which the CPT is based, namely; threshold and range. As Knox and McCarthy (2005) observed, the threshold of a particular product or service is the minimum market size required to keep it on offer, and range is the minimum distance that consumers will generally travel to get the product or service.

Okafor (1989) noted that the big schools, hospitals department stores, postal offices, pharmacies, etcetera, all require threshold population and economics of scale, which are difficult to attain in lower-order centres. He further noted that, the spatial allocation of essential public and private goods and services depends on the population of the settlement. The large settlements have a big concentration of centralized goods and services, whereas, the smaller settlements provide a limited range of lower order goods and services according to the population in their service area. However, the author suggested that provision of basic goods and services should be governed by welfare rather than economic considerations. Though, while such stance is valid, threshold consideration cannot be completely ignored. Otherwise, government can end up providing grossly under-utilized essential goods and services in communities that lack the threshold condition, and they become moribund due to lack of economics of scale to support the existence of such goods and services that are critical in the attainment to enhanced QoL.

The Concept of QoL: There is no universally acceptable definition of QoL. **However,** the concept of QoL is a broad ranging one that incorporates in a complex way the individual physical health, psychological status, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of the environment. Bayode, Adewumi and Odunwole (2011) noted that the concept of QoL is a geographic variable condition as it varies not only between people, but also between places, basically due to the characteristics of people and places; and also stated that environment quality, social and economic conditions, as well as political atmosphere of any settlement affects the citizens quality of life.

Similarly, Kele (2012) noted that QoL is largely affected by certain factors, which include housing, leisure and recreation, economic stability neigbhour environment, job opportunities, public goods and services that adds to the desirability and livability of a community. Mahadee (2014) looked of the concept of QoL from the perspective of access to different resources and basic goods and services as strategic factors in the attainment of a better QoL in individuals and communities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP,1998), noted that QoL involves the fulfillment of basic needs which include health, education and standard of living, Boncinelli and Casini (2014) posited that the task of determining the level of QoL includes the identification of set of indicators, which include health, income, education, employment, politics, environment and infrastructure, and these determinants are not available in every community, are measured using the HDI approach. The authors stated that QoL is a subjective measure, and to empirically measure it, the best proxy is the Human Development Index (HDI).

The Human Development Index (HDI) initiated by the United Nations in 1990 is used to intake the development status of a country and measure different development indicators such as education level, life expectancy and standard of living. Majeed (2019) argued that income per capita is the best measure for QoL. Besides income, education is the major determinant of QoL, which was highlighted by Anand and Sen (1999). Education enhances QoL by increasing the knowledge and skills which support access to employment/jobs and enhances productivity (Majeed 2019). The author further noted that education also equips with the power to decide and the freedom to choose among options. Though, the relationship between education and quality of life can be complex and influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic status, access to resources and individual characteristics (Nussbaum, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area: The study area has a total of fifteen (15) communities, which comprised of ten (10) bearing communities in the Nun River oil field and five neigbouring communities, which are non-oil/gas bearing; all in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The local government has a total area of 2, 68 kilometers, with a population of about 319,413 according to NPC, 2006; and sampled communities a total population of 54,982. The geographical coordinate of the central point of the study area was latitude $4^{0}48^{1}17^{11}$ north and longitude $6^{0}04^{1}44^{11}$ East. The study area is nets in natural resources which include oil/gas with oil wells in most communities and projects crisis-crossing the area. The major economic activities of the area are agriculture,

including fishing, family, forestry/lumbering, gathering of wild forest products and tapping of palm wine and brewing of local gin are the primary economic activities is the areas. Allison – Oguru, Zuofa and Berepubo (1999).

Research Design: As earlier stated, the research covered ten (10) oil/gas bearing communities and five (5) neigbouring non-oil/gas bearing communities, totally fifteen (15) Communities, all in the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The total projected population of the research area was 103,608 and sample size for the study was 398, which was determined using the Taro Yamene formula for determining sample size. Consequently, a set of 398 structured questionnaires was administered to the selected respondents, who were mostly household heads. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was administered directly by hand to the respondents to fill and return same. Data obtained were analysed using both descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA), been adopted to test the only hypotheses which state that there is significant variation in QoL among the Nun-River oil/field communities and their neigbour. The research used mainly primary data and direct physical observation of available infrastructure amenities of communities.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSIONS

This section focuses on presentation of results which enlightens the reader on how the results of the research are presented to answer the research questions; objectives and hypotheses that were tested using appropriate statistical tools.

Analysis of Data: As earlier stated, a total of 398 questionnaires were administered to respondents who were heads of households, of which 340 representing 68% of the total number of questionnaires were retrieved, analysed. The results are presented in Tables, Charts (bars and pies) and etc.

Educational Qualification of Respondents.

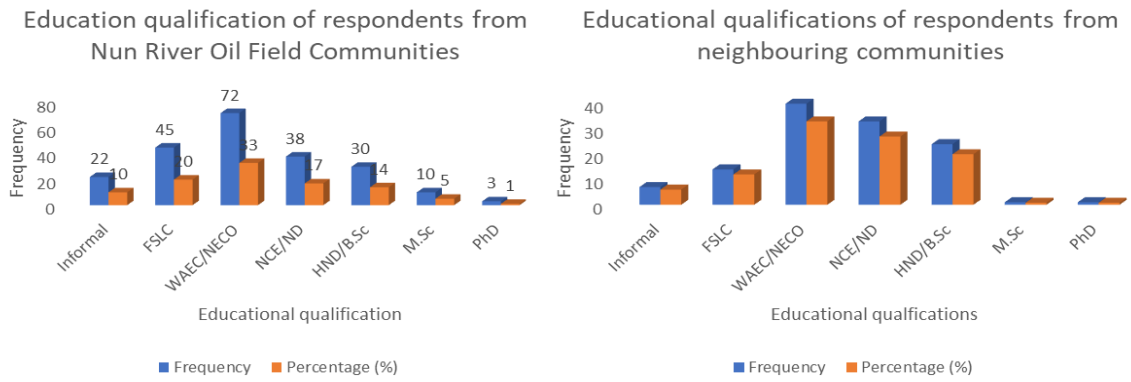


Fig 1: Educational qualifications of respondents from Nun River Oilfield Communities and their Neighbours. Source: Field Survey 2025

As shown in Fig 1, in the Nun River Oilfield Communities 22 (10%) of the respondent's highest educational qualification was informal education, 43 (20%) had FSLC, 72 (33%) had WAEC, 38 (17%) of the respondents had OND/NCE, 30 (14%) of the respondents had HND/B.Sc, 10 (5%) of the respondents had M Sc, and 3 (1%) of the respondents had PhD. On the other hand, in the Neighbouring Communities 7(6%) of the respondents had informal education, 14 (12%) had FSLC, 40 (33%) had WAEC, 33 (27%) had OND/NCE, 24 (20%) had HND/BSc, 1 (0, 8%) of the respondents had M.Sc and 1 (0.8%) of the respondents had PhD as their highest educational qualification.

The relationship between education and quality of life can be complex and influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic status, access to resources and individual characteristics (Nussbaum, 2011). Education enhances QoL by increasing the knowledge and skills which support access to employment/jobs, enhances productivity and access to basic amenities (Majeed 2019). In the opinion of Asongu (2013), QoL is improved through the availability and access to better facilities, such as health, education, employment opportunity as well as income.

Availability of Goods, Services and Utilities

The availability of essential goods and services is an important indicator of QoL. The researcher undertook an assessment of the availability of certain essential goods and services. The frequencies and percentage distribution of the respondents' access to essential goods and services in the Nun River Oilfield Communities and their Neighbours are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Availability of Goods, Services and Utilities

S/N	Essential goods and services	Nun field	River Oil Comm.	Neighboring Communities		All Communities	
	Variables	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%N**
1	**Electricity**						
	Not Available (NA)	120	55	56	47	176	52
	Available not in Use (ANU)	52	28	44	37	96	28
	Available, in use (AIU)	48	22	20	16	68	20
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
2	**Potable Water**						
	Not Available (NA)	125	57	57	48	182	54
	Available not in Use (ANU)	37	17	36	30	73	21
	Available, in use (AIU)	58	26	27	22	85	25
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
3	**Road Network**						
	Not Available (NA)	144	65	67	56	211	62
	Available not in Use (ANU)	13	6	9	8	22	6
	Available, in use (AIU)	63	29	44	36	107	32
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
4	**Communication Network**						
	Not Available (NA)	92	42	16	13	108	32
	Available not in Use (ANU)	10	5	11	9	21	6
	Available, in use (AIU)	118	53	93	78	211	62
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
5	**Market**						
	Not Available (NA)	142	65	72	60	214	63
	Available not in Use (ANU)	71	32	32	27	103	30
	Available, in use (AIU)	7	3	16	13	23	7
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
	Variables	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%N**
6	**Supermarket**						
	Not Available (NA)	216	98	115	98	331	97
	Available not in Use (ANU)	4	2	3	3	7	2
	Available, in use (AIU)	-	-	2	1	2	1
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
7	**Departmental Shops**						
	Not Available (NA)	201	91	110	96	331	91
	Available not in Use (ANU)	19	9	10	3	29	9
	Available, in use (AIU)	=	-	-	1	-	-
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
8	**Bread Bakeries**						
	Not Available (NA)	210	95	98	82	308	91
	Available not in Use (ANU)	7	3	18	15	26	7
	Available, in use (AIU)	3	2	4	3	5	2
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
9	**Water Factory**						
	Not Available (NA)	197	90	105	88	302	89
	Available not in Use (ANU)	15	7	10	8	25	7
	Available, in use (AIU)	8	3	5	4	13	4
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
10	**Tailoring Shops**						
	Not Available (NA)	120	55	89	74	209	61
	Available not in Use (ANU)	9	4	8	7	17	5
	Available, in use (AIU)	91	41	23	19	114	34
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
11	**Barbers/Hair shops**						
	Not Available (NA)	126	57	94	78	220	65
	Available not in Use(ANU)	4	2	7	6	11	3
	Available, in use (AIU)	90	41	19	16	109	32

	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
	Variables	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%N**
12	**Shoe Maker**						
	Not Available (NA)	178	81	99	83	277	81
	Available not in Use (ANU)	34	15	17	14	51	15
	Available, in use (AIU)	8	4	4	3	12	4
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
13	**Pharmacy**						
	Not Available (NA)	194	88	104	87	298	88
	Available not in Use (ANU)	21	10	12	10	33	10
	Available, in use (AIU)	5	2	4	3	9	2
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**
14	**Public Transport**						
	Not Available (NA)	139	63	25	21	164	48
	Available not in Use (ANU)	17	8	5	4	22	6
	Available, in use (AIU)	4	29	90	75	154	46
	Total	**220**	**100**	**120**	**100**	**340**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2025

Impact of Goods and Services on QoL

The impact of the availability of goods and services on QoL in all the sampled communities was undertaken, and the frequencies and percentage distributions of the impacts of goods and services on QoL in all sampled communities are presented:

Table 2: Impact of Goods and Services on QoL

SN	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**	**SN**	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**	**SN**	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**
1.	**Oporoma**			**6.**	**Bolou-Aguobiri**			**11.**	**Otuan**		
A	Disagree	24	36	A	Disagree	6	60	A	Disagree	40	64
B	Agree	33	49	B	Agree	2	20	B	Agree	11	17
C	Strongly Agree	4	6	C	Strongly Agree	-	-	C	Strongly Agree	3	5
D	Strongly Disagree	6	9	D	Strongly Disagree	2	20	D	Strongly Disagree	9	14
	Total	**67**	**100**		**Total**	**10**	**100**		**Total**	**63**	**100**
2.	**Onyoma**			**7.**	**Angiamagbene**			**12.**	**Oweikoroghe**		
A	Disagree	10	53	A	Disagree	5	83	A	Disagree	9	75
B	Agree	6	31	B	Agree	1	17	B	Agree	3	25
C	Strongly Agree	3	16	C	Strongly Agree	-		C	Strongly Agree	-	-
D	Strongly Disagree	-	-	D	Strongly Disagree	-	-	D	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Total	**19**	**100**		**Total**	**6**	**100**		**Total**	**12**	**100**
SN	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**	**SN**	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**	**SN**	**Comm.**	**F**	**%**
3.	**Angiama**			**8.**	**Igeibiri**			**13.**	**Anyama**		
A	Disagree	14	32	A	Disagree	10	42	A	Disagree	8	53
B	Agree	16	36	B	Agree	5	20	B	Agree	3	20
C	Strongly Agree	4	9	C	Strongly Agree	1	4	C	Strongly Agree	1	7
D	Strongly Disagree	10	23	D	Strongly Disagree	8	34	D	Strongly Disagree	3	20
	Total	**44**	**100**		**Total**	**24**	**100**		**Total**	**15**	**100**
4.	**Luduon**			**9.**	**Obololi**			**14.**	**Ondewari**		
A	Disagree	3	75	A	Disagree	7	70	A	Disagree	18	75
B	Agree	1	25	B	Agree	3	30	B	Agree	4	17
C	Strongly Agree	-	-	C	Strongly Agree	-	-	C	Strongly Agree	2	8
D	Strongly Disagree	-	-	D	Strongly Disagree	-	-	D	Strongly Disagree	4	17

	Total	**4**	**100**		**Total**	**10**	**100**		**Total**	**24**	**100**
5.	**Aguobiri**			**10.**	**Osokama**			**15.**	**Ozezebiri**		
A	Disagree	10	33	A	Disagree	4	67	A	Disagree	5	83
B	Agree	9	30	B	Agree	-	-	B	Agree	1	17
C	Strongly Agree	2	7	C	Strongly Agree	-		C	Strongly Agree	-	-
D	Strongly Disagree	9	30	D	Strongly Disagree	2	33	D	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	Total	**30**	**100**		**Total**	**6**	**100**		**Total**	**6**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2025

The results in Table 2 showed that in the Nun River Oilfield Communities, Oporoma 24 (36%) indicated Disagree, 33 (49%) Agree, 4 (6%) Strongly Agree and 6(9%) strongly Disagreed. For Onyoma 10 (53%) Disagree, 6 (31) Agree and 3 (16%) Strongly Agree. For Angiama 14 (32%) Disagree, 16 (36%) Agree, 4 (9%) Strongly Agree and 10(23%) strongly Disagreed. For Luduon 3 (75%) Disagree and 1 (25%) Agree and no respondent either strongly agreed or strongly Disagreed. For Aguobiri 10 (33%) Disagree, 9 (30%) Agree, 2 (7%) Strongly Agree and 9(30%) Strongly Disagreed.

In Bolou-Aguobiri community 6 (60%) Disagree, 2 (20%) Agree and no respondent Strongly Agree and 2(20%) strongly disagreed. For Angiamagbene 5 (83%) Disagree, 1 (17%) Agree, and no respondent either strongly agree or strongly disagreed. For igeibiri 10 (42%) disagree, 5 (20%) agree, 1 (4%) strongly agree and 8(34%) strongly disagreed. For Obololi community 7 (70%) disagree, 3 (30%) Agree, no respondent indicated either strongly disagree or strongly disagreed. In Osokama 4 (67%) disagree and no respondent either agree or strongly agree and 2(33%) strongly disagreed.

Table 2 also showed that in the Neighbouring Communities, particularly in Otuan 40 (64%) Disagree, 11 (17%) Agree, 3 (5%) Strongly Agree and 9(14%) strongly Disagreed. For Oweikoroghe 9 (75%) of respondents Disagree, 3 (25%) Agreed; no respondent either strongly Agreed or strongly Disagreed. In Anyama Ijaw 8 (53%) Disagreed, 3 (20%) Agreed, 1 (7%) Strongly Agree and 3(20%) strongly disagreed. In Ozezebiri community 5 (83%) of respondent Disagree, 1 (17%) Agree, no respondent either Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagreed. The researcher observed a general lack of essential goods and services in sample communities, except Oporoma perhaps because of its status as Local Government headquarters and infrastructural investments of SPDC as its host community.

Testing of Hypothesis

The study proposed a single hypothesis, which stated thus:

i. H_0: There is significant relationship between availability of essential goods and services and QoL.

Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test Analysis of the availability of goods and services and QoL

		Paired Differences				
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Lower	**Upper**	**t**	**Df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Pair	Essential goods and services – QOL	57.820	132.180	5.520	13	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table, since the t_{cal}= 5.520 is greater than the t_{tab}=1.771 and also, the P-value 0.000 is less than the Significant value 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between the availability of essential goods and services and QoL which also agrees with the correlation.

Table 4: Paired Samples Correlations of the T-Test Analysis of the availability of goods and services and QoL

		N	**Correlation**	**Sig.**
Pair	Good and Services & QOL	14	.853	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The correlation of the paired samples variables QoL and goods and services with 0.853 coefficients indicate a high correlation between the two pairs.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

On whether or not the availability of essential goods and services was responsible for the variation in QoL, Table 1. revealed that 65% of respondents in the Nun River Oilfield Communities and in the Neighbouring Communities and 83% of respondents in the neighbouring communities disagreed with the assertion that the availability of essential goods and services in their communities have had positive impact in QoL. Findings from the descriptive data revealed a general lack of basic goods and services in the study area, which may have informed the high percentage of dissatisfaction with condition of community. The dissatisfaction with the condition of their community expressed by respondents was not farfetched; the reason for the dissatisfaction with the condition of their community was largely the inadequate provision of basic goods and services. The position of Casini et.al (2011) is that the lack of goods and services offered to rural population leads to a widespread abandonment of these areas with far reaching consequences for improved QoL.

Similarly, Meyer (2016) asserted that the scarcity of basic amenities has negative impacts on Qol. The results of the Student's T-test on the relationship between the availability of goods and services and QoL in the study area revealed that there was correlation. The research revealed a general inadequacy of basic amenities in the study area which was evident in the high percentage of respondents that disagreed with the assertion that the availability of essential goods and services in their community has positive impact on QoL and that of the large percentage of respondents that rated QoL very low in their communities. This research confirmed the work of Mebuza et al (2010) who established a positive relationship between availability of basic amenities and improved QoL, and that of Senlier et al (2008) whose results showed a significant variation in QoL in the various cities covered by the study as well as that of Akinyemi et.al (2012) who concluded that QoL of one rural community vary from the QoL of another due to the availability of social or basic amenities amongst others.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that the availability and accessibility of essential goods and services play pivotal role in determining the quality of life in rural communities. By understanding the challenges and opportunities in these areas, stakeholders and policymakers would be able to develop targeted interventions to enhance the well-being or QoL of rural residents. Nonetheless, we recommend that government should invest in rural infrastructure, including road networks, healthcare and sanitation, food security, portable water and other basic facilities, utilities and services; support rural education initiatives and vocation trainings as well as engage with rural communities in development planning and implementation.

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