Abstract
The study examines the effect of State joint local government account practices on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. This study adopted descriptive survey design using primary data collected using structured five point likert scale type of questionnaire. The data generated was presented and analyzed using tables and F-test, while the hypotheses formulated were tested using the binary logistic regression technique. Findings of the study had it that the timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils significantly affects the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. Equally, that non-interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account significantly affects the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. The findings further had it that fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account significantly affects the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. The study recommended that Ebonyi State government should entrench in the fiscal relation, the enabling environment that would pave way for timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils if local government areas must witness positive performance and rapid development in the country. Government should not only put in place the enabling laws that would ensure equitable and fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account but also ensure strict and proper implementation of such laws if it is actually interested in the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

Keywords: State Joint Local Government Account, Timely Release, Fair Distribution, Non-Interference, Performance

1. Introduction
Local government system in Nigeria emerged as result of an attempt to bring governance closer to the grass root. The emergence of the local government system of course, can be linked to the advent of colonial era during which indirect rule was introduced by Lord Lugard precisely, in 1914 (Uhummwungho and Aibieyi, 2013). This indirect rule made use of traditional institutions to govern the people at the locality through Traditional Chiefs, Emirs and Obas as was and currently observed in the Northern and Western part of the country. In the Eastern region, warrant Chiefs were appointed by the British colonial officers. In 1955 local government ordinances was enacted
which was replaced by 1950 Local Government ordinance. The ordinances granted little local financial autonomy to the native authorities at the regional and local levels (Oladimeji et al, 2015).

Arising from the local government reform of 1976, local government as a third tier of government in Nigeria is given a mandate of seeking through the development of the local government areas in Nigeria. It is in this perceptive that Agbakoba (2004) argues that local government councils are the closest Government to the people in rural areas which occupy position as the promoters of grassroots mobilization, rural development and transformation. Local government acts as a vehicle for harnessing both human and material resources within its reach to facilitate sustainable grassroots development through improved standard of living, provision of rural health service delivery, Education, Employment opportunity and provision of infrastructural facilities at the rural area (Odalonu 2015).

The State and Local Government Council ensures rural development due to their closeness to the grassroots than the Federal Government and as such 1999 constitution, section 8 ensures the establishment, structures, composition and finance of the councils. The 1999 constitution, section 7(6B) made provision for statutory allocation of revenue to the Local Government Councils in the 36 States of the federation from the federation Account. Subsequently, Section 162 (6) established the State Joint Local Government Account system into which all Allocations to the local government Councils of the State are paid from the federation account and revenue accruing from the State grant. The section 162 (7) stipulates that the federal and State government shall pay proportion of its total revenue respectively to the local government councils as may be prescribed by the National Assembly. On the legislative oversight function, section 162 (8) of the 1999 constitution States that the amount standing to the credit of local government councils of a State government shall be disbursed among the local government councils of the State on the conditions and manner that may be prescribed by the State House of Assembly. Section 162 (8B) of the 1999 constitution in the same manner further prescribed direct allocation to the councils under the supervision of every State government. As posit by Ojugbeli and Ojoh (2014), the operation of State Joint Local Government Account came into place in 1979 arising from the 1976 local government reform.

The practice of States’ local government Joint Account in Nigeria is made more functional with the enactment of Local Government Revenue Allocation Monitoring Act of 2005. The Act among others that each State of the federation shall establish a body to be known as the State Joint Local Government Account Committee as chaired by the commissioner or any other officer charged with the responsibility for local government in the State, a commissioner of Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission provided that the commissioner shall not serve in his own State, all chairmen of the local government councils in the State, the Accountant-General of the Federation, and a representation of the State Revenue Board.

The establishment of the Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) and State Joint Local Government Allocation and Account Committee (JAAC) by the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria aptly intended to position the local government as third tier of government and as well for the aggregation and distribution of local government revenue among local government areas in a particular State (Agbani and Ugwuoke 2014).

To this end, the thinking of every average Nigerian is that implementation of the State joint local government and the 2005 local government revenue monitoring Act would have enhanced the
performance of local government operations in Nigeria. Empirically, this perception is yet to be proved in light of the current realities in the local government system in Nigeria, hence this study.

The practices of State joint local government account have in recent times generated controversial issues with regards to the performance of Local Government Councils in Nigeria. Part of the contentions is that State governments have failed in providing the necessary leadership required to manage State joint local government account in various States. Of course, State governments are required to supervise the activities of the local government councils in their various areas of jurisdiction with a view to ensuring probity and accountability in the management of local government revenue; effective grassroots development and transformation; and enhanced service delivery in the local government, but the extent to which these expectations are achieved are not known (Ukonga, 2012).

It was in the light of this that Agu (2007) States that one of the problems of local government in Nigeria is not funding by the Federation Account and States’ contributions but, those funds do not get to local government council instead, diverted by the State government in the name of Joint Account. For instance, Nnamani was arrested and prosecuted for diverting local government funds in the State in the year, 2007 and over ₦75million allocated to Ibaji local government of Kogi State in December 2008 was neither used for payments of salaries or implementation of any meaningful projects (Agba, Akwara and Idu, 2013).

Similarly, in Ebonyi State for instance, ₦21.21billion was allocated to local government council between January to June 2014, ₦4.1 billion in December 2013, and between 2007 to 2011, a total of ₦161,052,742,398 was allocated to Ebonyi State while in January 2015, ₦2.3 billion was allocated (FAAC, 2007-2015).

Expectedly, joint local government account is to turn around the fortunes of people at the local government areas, but the extent to which these have been achieved in terms of enhanced health care service delivery, improved educational service delivery, improved rural road maintenance services and the general improved living standard of people concerned are quite uncertain in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular. It was in view of this uncertainty of the performance of the joint account that Ukiwo (2006) criticizes and alleges that 31 out of 36 Governors have diverted local government councils’ funds in the pretence of managing the joint account.

To this extent, local governments in Nigeria (Ebonyi State inclusive) appeared to be robbed of their financial capacity to provide basic social services that capable of transforming rural communities and bring government closer to the people. As such, far reaching complaints and reservations in the local governments in Ebonyi State indicates that the State joint account practices are rather not supporting proper disbursement of fund required for execution of essential services by the local government such as health care service delivery, educational service delivery and rural road maintenance services etc. Again, there are serious concerns on the timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils; the level of interference by the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account and the way of distribution of monies at the balance of the State joint local government account, as all these could have grave consequences on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. It is against these controversies that this study embarks on the examination of the effect of joint account practices on the performance of Local Government Councils in Ebonyi State. Hence, the study is set to answer the following questions:
i. To what extent does the timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State?

ii. To what extent does non-interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State?

iii. To what extent does fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State?

The broad objective of the study is to examine the effect of joint account practices on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. The specific objectives include:

i. To ascertain the effect of timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

ii. To ascertain the effect of non-interference by the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

iii. To ascertain the effect of fair distribution of monies at the balance of the State joint local government account on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

In line with the research questions and objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated in null form:

H₀₁ The timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

H₀₂ Non-interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

H₀₃ Fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

It is expected that the empirical findings of this study would at a large extent aid researchers to gain more knowledge and ideas on issues concerning State joint local government Account. More also, the outcome of the study would guide government to adopt more practicable approach of operating joint account in order to enable local government councils attain its statutory duty of developing their rural Areas. Above all, the findings of the study would fill the gap identified in this study. Likewise, the Ebonyi State local government Council could find it as valuable materials that could guide their actions in the course of discharging their statutory functions of fund disbursement. Of course, accounting students and other related disciplines would also find the Study a vital document for study of related topics thereby adding to the research work on the subject matter.

2. Review of Related Empirical Studies

Empirically, few studies have been conducted in the area of State local government joint account, especially in Nigeria. For instance, Ojugbéli and Ojoh (2014) had a study on the joint Account...
system in Nigeria: problems and prospects which observes that the financial policy experienced challenges as various State governments turned it into money making ventures. The study which employed descriptive survey made use of face-to-face interview and questionnaire to generate data. The finding of the study further shows that the joint account was made to forestall possible manipulation, misappropriation and security of fund for the Local Government, but the good intention of the policy formulators of the joint account has been defeated due to wrong implementation by the State governments.

All monies to be distributed to local government within a State is paid to the State into an account known as “State Joint Local Government Account” upon the receipt of monies the State government is to distribute it to Local Government Council (Abubakar and Ahmad 2013). These funds are required to be paid directly into the special account which is the State joint local government account and each State is required in section 162 of 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to add its own contribution to the Local government Councils for its operations in such manner prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State. Eme, Izueke and Ewuim (2013) posited that the “Act establishing the State joint local government Account provided for the modalities of its operations so as to ensure financial discipline and also limits State government degree of interference as the supervisory body”.

Aliyu, Afolabi and Akinwande (2013) observed that the irregularities found in State joint local government account, that the account has been abused by the State government at the detriment of the local government council. The reason for federal government for paying monies into the State joint account is to make State government a trustee and ensure that local government are directly control and supervise. Unfortunately, State government instead of acting as a trustee to local government council has diverted the entrusted monies meant for local government into State account and making the statutory allocation made to local government council a major source of revenue for the State government thereby releasing little statutory allocation from the federation account to local government council (Aghayere 1997).

Statutory allocation is the portion of the statutory revenue from federation account that is allocated to the local government council by the federal and State government which covered by the revenue allocation act of 1989 as amended. Although, statutory allocation has been generating a lot of controversies as there is increase in agitations for more allocation from the federation account, the major concern lies on the State joint account practices in almost all the States in Nigeria Aliyu, Afolabi and Akinwande (2013). The federal government fulfils its own parts by releasing funds to local government through statutory allocation. Unfortunately State governments are known to have contributed to the poor performance of local government councils in their State. This is caused by the abuse of the operations of the State joint local government account by the State government through unnecessary deduction, interference and intimidation on local government councils thus depriving the local government councils the opportunity to engage on accelerated rural development in their areas (Ekpo 2003). In every State in the country, Nigeria, a body known as the State Joint Local Government Account Allocation Committee was established to ensure equitable distribution of the statutory allocations to Local Government from the Federation Account and 10% of the internally generated revenue of the State Government is shared in accordance with the 1999 constitution (ICAN 2014). The practice of Joint Local Government Account face a lot of challenges in Nigeria as the State governments see this as an opportunity for
diverting the local government statutory allocation into their own uses carefully hidden under mandatory deductions.

Revenue allocation is in most cases used in conjunction with terms such as fiscal federalism, resource control, and fiscal decentralization. Generally, it has been conceived to mean the allocation of tax powers and the revenue sharing arrangements among the three tiers of government (Olowononi, 1998) cited in Murana (2015). To this end, fiscal federalism is a system of taxation and public expenditure in which revenue-raising powers and control over expenditure are vested in the various tiers of government within a nation, ranging from the national government to the last tier of government (Agba, Stephen, and Nnamani, 2014).

It is generally held that the important issue in fiscal federalism is revenue allocation formula, sharing of the national revenue among various tiers of government (vertical revenue sharing) as well as the distribution of revenue among States (horizontal revenue allocation). According to Ekpo (2003), revenue allocation is a mechanism in which relations arising from the political decentralization of the public sector functions and responsibilities are resolved. The term deals with the allocation of resources among the three tiers and units of government and institutions for the discharge of responsibilities assigned to each jurisdictional authority.

The Nigerian constitution has provided for external sources of revenue to Local government to include: 20% of Federal Government Statutory Allocation, 10% of Internally Generated Revenue of the State, VAT – Value Added Tax, Loans and Advances, Special capital grants, Financial Aid and Assistance from individual and organization. The Local Government Councils (LGCs) have very little influence on their receipts from Federal Allocation/Excess Crude and VAT unless they improve on their infrastructural developments (roads, portable water, health centers, hospital beds/cots) and school enrollments. Grants rarely come and when they do its impact is not well noticed.

Following the provisions of the Public Procurement Act or Law Loans can only be taken by the LGCs subject to the approval of the State Government and limited to certain level of the total public debts charges of each LGC. LGCs are therefore limited by huge unpaid gratuities or pensions. The 10% State IGR can be enhanced if the IGR of the State goes up, which LGCs can assist by prompt payment of statutory deductions and ensuring that persons dealing with them present Tax Clearance Certificates as a pre-requisite. The only source that is elastic is the IGR of each council depending on the economic (industries, trading/business) activities.

Nwogwugwu and Olusesi (2015) carried out study on operation of State local government joint account and financial autonomy of local government in Nigeria’s fourth republic. The study observes that the wrong arrangement of funds to local government is as a result of quasi-federal political system which characterized domination of lower government by the superior. The study made use of descriptive survey design. The finding of the study further shows that there was evidence of undue access and mandatory deduction from the joint account by the State government. The study concludes that for effective financial autonomy to be achieved in the local governments, the 1999 constitution should be amended.

Agbani and Ugwoke (2014) investigated on the State Joint Local Government Account System: Challenge on Rural Development in Nigeria. It reveals that the arrangement served as a means of
making mandatory deductions from revenue accruing to the Local Government Councils from Federation Account to the coffers of State Governments. The study adopted survey design in addition to the usage of chi-square test to analyze the hypotheses. The finding of the study further shows that mandatory and excessive deduction of funds from the Local Government Statutory Allocation by the State Government has made rural sustainable development a nightmare. The study concludes that the present method adopted in the JAAC system in Nigeria encourages mandatory deduction from State joint local government account by the State government. The study further recommends that granting of financial autonomy to the local government councils through the amendment of the conflicting clauses in the 1999 constitution will reduce unnecessary interference to the local government joint account by the State government.

Bello (2013) carried out a study on the State/local Government Joint Account and the Challenges of Service Delivery in Kaduna State between 1999 and 2007 with a view to ascertaining how the management of the State local government Joint account influences the service delivery functions of the selected local governments in Kaduna State during Chief Olusegun Obasanjo administration as president of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007. The study employed mainly secondary data in the contents analysis. The findings of the study among others unveil that the Joint account posed very serious challenges to the selected local governments during the democratic eight years period of the fourth republic as the State government mismanaged the federal allocations to the these local governments. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the 1999 constitutional review currently going on in the National Assembly should abolish or review the provisions of the State Joint Local Government Account system to enable local government access their federal allocations directly.

Eme, Izueke and Ewuim (2013) carried a study on Local Government and Fiscal Autonomy for Local Government in Nigeria. It observed that for many years now, local government allocation has been hijacked by the various State governments because of absence of a truly local government system in our practice of democracy. The study employed descriptive survey method using Regression analysis to analyze the data generated. The finding revealed that the extent local government allocation has been jostled due to lack of financial autonomy has weakened the councils from carrying out its statutory duty at the grass root level. The study concludes that lack of independence of the local government is as a result of lack of autonomy which occasioned the duplicity of decentralization and inter-governmental relations in Nigeria. The study recommends that the 1999 Nigeria constitution should be amended to grant autonomy to the local government councils in Nigeria.

Odalonu (2015) opined on the challenges confronting local government administration in efficient and effective social service delivery: The Nigerian experience. The study aims at ascertaining the challenges confronting local government in providing effective and efficient social service delivery at the grass root in Nigeria. Secondary data was used for data analysis while regression analysis was used for hypothesis testing. The finding of the study revealed that lack of funds and interference of State government are the major constraints to local government service delivery. The paper recommends that there must be measures to ensure efficient and effective social service delivery at local level which includes constitutional reforms to ensure financial autonomy of Local Government.
Murana, (2015) examined the Local Government Finance in Nigeria: A Case Study of Iwo Local Government Area of Osun State with the purpose of examining the effects of Local Government Financing in Nigeria using Iwo Local Government as a Case Study. The study noted that the current level of financing Local Government Councils in Nigeria has mounted pressure for increase in allocation of finance for Local Governments Administration in Nigeria. Data was generated mainly from secondary sources. However, the data collected was subjected to descriptive statistics (simple percentage) and content analysis. Findings from the analysis show that financial transfers from federal government (Statutory Federal Allocation) are the most viable and reliable source of local government revenue and that without Federal Allocation no capital project can be embarked on. Therefore, to arrest this financial situation that local government find itself, that is over dependence on federal allocation, the study recommended that local government should increase their revenue base by laying more emphasis on the internal revenue sources, especially those areas that are hitherto neglected or not been fully exploited.

The studies reviewed above confirm the deficiency of the Joint Account Allocation system in Nigeria. Particularly, the works of Ojugbeli and Ojoh (2014), Nwogwugwu and Olusesesi (2015) and Agbani and Ugwoke (2014) highlighted the frictions cause by the overwhelming influence of State governments in this allocation system, which appear to have defeated the constitutional provisions of the joint account introduction. In like manner, other works reviewed confirm that there are cases of suppression of the local government system and the constraint inherent in the level of autonomy granted to local governments in Nigeria. Noting the peculiarities of States in Nigeria opening up a gap, this study strives to link the joint account allocation system to the performance of local governments in Ebonyi State considered to be one of the newly created and least developed local governments in Nigeria.

The theory upon which the study is anchored is the Efficiency Service Delivery theory which was propounded by William Mackenzie in 1954. The proponent of this theory was of the view that the principal focus of Local Government should be the provision of efficient services to the people at the rural areas and it must be judged by its success in providing services up to a standard measured by a national inspectorate.

William Mackenzie States that the service delivery to the local government is expected to pre-occupy the resources of the Local Government. Local Government is the closest to grassroots and should provide certain service for more efficiently than the State or federal government. The brain behind the State Joint Local Government Account is to provide Basic Avenue through which Local Government will access the statutory allocation accruing directly from Federation Account in order to provide some services to the rural people. And the performance of Local Government Councils depends on the Federal Allocations and State Governors for the release of funds from State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGAs), grants and Internal Generated Revenues (IGR) for efficient satisfaction of the needs of the rural dwellers but the funds meant for Local Government Councils have diverted to other projects by the State government which was not originally planned, left with little money to execute projects that would boast efficient service delivery to the people at the locality.

The relevance of this theory to this study is that it will provide an insight in understanding that, the traditional aim of creating Local Government Joint Account needs to be properly practiced, so as to financially empower Local Government Councils in providing efficient service delivery in
the area like health, education, infrastructural facilities, social and basic amenities to the rural dwellers.

3. Methodology and Data

This study adopted descriptive survey design in view of the nature of the study which among other things sought the opinions of respondents through the administration of questionnaire instrument. A five point likert type instrument was used to extract relevant data from the respondents. The questionnaire is structured into: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The study covered six selected local government areas in Ebonyi State which include: Abakaliki, Ebonyi, Ikwo, Ezza North, Ivo, and Afikpo North LGA. This was to ensure that the three geo-political Zones in Ebonyi State were covered by the study. The Population of the study therefore, was made up of 801 (eight hundred and one) employees of the six selected local government areas, which is made up of the senior staff only. Below is the presentation of the population of the study as shown on the Table 1:

Table 1: Accessible Population of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGAs</th>
<th>Admin</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Agric</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Edu &amp; Soc Welfare</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>PR &amp; S</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abakaliki</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikwo</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivo</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afikpo N.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezza N.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>801</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ebonyi State Local Government Service Commission, 2017

The study made use of 267 respondents as a sample size which was determined using simple random sampling technique through the application of Taro Yamani formula. To ensure validity and reliability of research instrument, face and content validity was applied in the validation process of the instrument. Besides, the questionnaire was subjected to a scrutiny of the experts in the field of study for validity test. More also, in a bid to ensure reliability and reasonable degree of consistency of the instrument, test-re-test approach was adopted.

The data generated for the study was presented and analyzed using tables, F-test, while the hypotheses formulated was tested using the binary logistic regression technique. The logistic model is presented as follows:

$$\text{PLGC}_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TMSJLGA}_t + \beta_2 \text{NIMSJLA}_t + \beta_3 \text{FDMCSJLGA}_t + e_t$$
Where, \( b_0 - b = \) Coefficient
\( \text{TMSJLGA} = \) Timely release of monies from the State joint local government account
\( \text{NIMSJLA} = \) Non-interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account
\( \text{FDMCSJLGA} = \) Fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account
\( \text{PLGC} = \) performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.
\( e = \) Error terms
\( t = \) period

4. Results and Discussion

The result in table 2 below suggested that the respondents strongly agree that government releases on regular basis from the joint account the amount due for each local government in Ebonyi State; the timely release of monies from the joint account is sometimes hindered by late receipts of inflows from various statutory sources; there is always no delay in making available the State government’s contributions to joint account in Ebonyi State; and paucity of revenue in a particular month does not necessarily delay the distribution of monies from the joint account to local government councils in Ebonyi State. These have the weighted mean values of 4.3819, 4.2563, 4.2211, and 4.1106 respectively. Given the moderate standard deviations of 1.04682, 1.13246, 1.11977, and 1.13611 respectively, it follows that the responses of the respondents did not vary greatly on timely release of monies from the State joint local government account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timely Release of Monies</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government releases on regular basis from the joint account the amount due for each local government in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.381</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The timely release of monies from the joint account is sometimes hindered by late receipts of inflows from various statutory sources.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.256</td>
<td>1.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is always no delay in making available the State government contributions to joint account in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.221</td>
<td>1.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paucity of revenue in a particular month does not necessarily delay the distribution of monies from the joint account to local government councils in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.111</td>
<td>1.136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Analysis, 2017
The result in table 3 below suggests that the respondents agree that the State government has no overbearing influence in the operations of the Joint Account; all the allocations due for each local government from federation account in addition to the percentage from the State gets to the local government councils completely; there is no arbitrary transfer of monies from the joint account to State government account or to any local government account; and deductions of charges from the joint account in Ebonyi State are based on the express Nigeria constitutional provisions with weighted mean values of 4.2312, 4.2111, 4.1558, and 4.1608 respectively. Given the moderate standard deviations of 1.18357, 1.12172, 1.15507, and 1.06091 respectively, it indicated that the responses of the respondents did not vary greatly on the assertions that the State government has no overbearing influence on the operations of the Joint Account; all the allocations due for each local government from federation account in addition to the percentage from the State gets to the local government councils completely; there is no arbitrary transfer of monies from the joint account to State government account or to any local government account; and deductions of charges from the joint account in Ebonyi State are based on the express Nigeria constitutional provisions.

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Non-Interference of the State Government on the Monies at the Credit of the State Joint Local Government Account**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Interference of the State Government on the Monies</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The State government has no overbearing influence in the operations of the Joint Account.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.231</td>
<td>1.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the allocations due for each local government from federation account in addition to the percentage from the State gets to the local government councils completely</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.2111</td>
<td>1.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no arbitrary transfer of monies from the joint account to State government account or any local government account.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.156</td>
<td>1.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deductions of charges from the joint account in Ebonyi State are based on the express Nigeria constitutional provisions.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.161</td>
<td>1.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Analysis, 2017

The mean of 4.1960, 4.1508, 4.0101, and 4.0302 as shown on table 4 below suggest that the respondents agree that the monies at the credit of the State joint account are fairly distributed to all local government councils in Ebonyi State; distribution of monies from the State local government account is based on horizontal sharing principles in Ebonyi State; the State government does not make any unauthorized deduction from the joint account; and local government(s) with special challenge in a given month is being given special consideration in the distribution of monies from the joint account respectively.

From the low standard deviations of 1.17928, 1.10891, 1.10092, and 1.06794, it indicates that the responses of the respondents did not vary greatly on the assertion that the monies at the credit of the State joint account are fairly distributed to all local government councils in Ebonyi State; distribution of monies from the State local government account is based on horizontal sharing principles in Ebonyi State; the State government does not make any unauthorized deduction from
the joint account; and local government(s) with special challenge in a given month is being given special consideration in the distribution of monies from the joint account respectively.

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Fair Distribution of Monies at the Credit of the State Joint Local Government Account.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair Distribution of Monies</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The monies at the credit of the State joint account are fairly distributed to all local government council in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.196</td>
<td>1.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of monies from the State local government account is based on horizontal sharing principles in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.150</td>
<td>1.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State government does not make any unauthorized deduction from the joint account.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.010</td>
<td>1.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government(s) with special challenge in a given month is being given special consideration in the distribution of monies from the joint account.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.030</td>
<td>1.068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Analysis, 2017

The aggregate of mean of 4.3869, 4.3065, 4.3015, and 4.2764 as shown on table 5 below suggests that the respondents agree that rural road network in the local governments has improved in Ebonyi State; portable water supply at the local government areas in Ebonyi State has improved due to the allocations from the State joint local government account; there are improved health facilities in the local government areas of Ebonyi State; and local government councils in Ebonyi State do embark on empowerment programmes and youth development in Ebonyi State.

From the relatively low standard deviation of 1.10373, 1.14658, 1.07757, and .99443, it indicates that the responses of the respondents did not vary greatly on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

**Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Performance of Local Government Councils in Ebonyi State.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance of Local Government Councils</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural road network in the local governments has improved in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.386</td>
<td>1.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable water supply at the local government areas in Ebonyi State has improved due to the allocations from the State joint local government account.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.306</td>
<td>1.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are improved health facilities in the local government areas of Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.301</td>
<td>1.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government councils in Ebonyi State do embark on empowerment programmes and youth development in Ebonyi State.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.276</td>
<td>0.994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Analysis, 2017
However, in good attempt to further verify with utmost certainty, the study in addition to
descriptive analysis applied binary regression and linear regression as presented below on table 6-
11. With binary regression, the table 6 below depicts the “model” without the inclusion of the
independent variable made of FDMCSJLGA, TMSJLGA, and NIMSJLG. This model predicts the
category that occurred most in the data set of the study. The table showed that the null model
guesses that one hundred and sixty nine (169) respondents had it that joint account practices in the
State do give room for performance in the local governments of Ebonyi State. The prediction of
this model is 84.9% correct as shown in the overall percentage row.

**Table 6: Classification Table for block 0**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>PLGC</th>
<th>Percentage Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 0</td>
<td>PLGC 0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PLGC 1.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Percentage: 84.9

a. Constant is included in the model.
b. The cut value is .500

Source: Empirical Analysis, 2017

Likewise, table 7 below showed that the null model predict performance of local government
councils in Ebonyi State is statistically significant as p value is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05) though,
the accuracy of the null model prediction is only 84.9% of the time.

**Table 7 Variables in the Equation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.729</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>76.13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Empirical Analysis, 2017

The omnibus tests of model coefficients as presented on table 8 below shows that the base model
has improved due to the inclusion of independent variables (FDMCSJLGA, TMSJLGA, and
NIMSJLG). This is because the chi-square is highly significant (chi-square=168.758, df=3, p=0.000) hence, the new model is significantly better.

**Table 8: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>168.758</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block</td>
<td>168.758</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the model summary shown on table 9 below, it was observed that R is 0.956, R Square equal to 0.914 and Adjusted R Square equal to 0.913. Judging from the adjusted R square, it suggested a good model representation on the indication that the performance of local government councils are influenced by the independent variables (FDMCSJLGA, TMSJLGA, NIMSJLG) which account for 91% while the remaining 9% are accounted by other factors.

Table 9: Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.956&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.914</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>0.10601</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), FDMCSJLGA, TMSJLGA, NIMSJLG

Source: Empirical Analysis, 2017

The ANOVA summary as presented on table 10 below shows that the outcome is statistically significant with p-value < 0.05 and the F value of 690.620.

Table 10 ANOVA summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>23.286</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.762</td>
<td>690.620</td>
<td>.000&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>2.192</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.477</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: PLGC

<sup>b</sup> Predictors: (Constant), FDMCSJLGA, TMSJLGA, NIMSJLG

Source: Empirical Analysis, 2017

From table 11 below, it is observed that TMSJLGA, NIMSJLG, and FDMCSJLGA had P-values of 0.000, 0.000, and 0.000. Since the P-values (0.000, 0.000, and 0.000) are less than 0.05, it suggests that all the outcomes are statistically significant. Thus, leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses which had it that timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State; Non- interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State; and fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account does not significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. In view of the rejection of the null hypotheses, the alternate hypotheses were accepted, thus, the timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. Likewise, it further suggest that non- interference of the State
government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. Above all, fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account significantly affects the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. These outcomes were also supported by tolerance statistics level, VIF, and t-statistics as there are no multi-co-linearity problems among the explanatory variables in the study and as such affirming that State joint local government account practice has significant influence on the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

Table 11: Correlation Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>-0.671</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>-0.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMSJLGA</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIMSJLG</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDMCSJLGA</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: PLGC
Source: Empirical Analysis, 2017

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
From the literature review, it is evident that the current practice in administration of State joint local government account in Nigeria and Ebonyi State government in particular does not support the constitutional intents and provisions which aim at checkmating possible recklessness of local government financial management. The literature further supports that good practices in managing the State joint local government account in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular has potentials of turning around the service delivery and general performance of local government areas in Ebonyi State.

From the outcomes of the analysis and tests, it was established that State joint local government account practices have significant influence on the performance of local government areas in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular. Specifically, this study affirmed that the timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. Equally, it was further observed that non-interference of the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account significantly affect the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State. Above all, the findings had it that fair distribution of monies at the credit of the
State joint local government account significantly affects the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

Based on the outcomes, this study recommended that:

i. Ebonyi State government and Nigeria government at large should entrench in the fiscal relation, the enabling environment that would pave way for timely release of monies from the State joint local government account to local government councils if local government areas must witness positive performance and rapid development in the country.

ii. Nigerian government should come up with stringent laws that would criminalize unnecessary interference by the State government on the monies at the credit of the State joint local government account if it is actually desirous of causing positive effect on the performance of local government councils in the country (Ebonyi State inclusive).

iii. Government should not only put in place the enabling laws that would ensure equitable and fair distribution of monies at the credit of the State joint local government account but also ensure strict and proper implementation of such laws if it is actually interested in the performance of local government councils in Ebonyi State.

References


