
THE ROLE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND CONSTITUENT DEVELOPMENT IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: Whilst there have been several studies investigating legislative oversight and its impact on constituents in different states in Nigeria, there appears to be a paucity of literature on this, with respect to Enugu State. This is why we examined legislative oversight's impact on constituent development in Enugu State, Nigeria. Drawing on a survey of 241 respondents/constituents, as well as a one-on-one in-depth interview with legislators of two constituent areas of Enugu East and Enugu South Local Government Areas, we analytically describe how legislative oversight impacts the day-to-day lives of constituents in Enugu State metropolis. The study reveals mixed findings of opinion between the legislators and their constituents. On one hand, the legislators strongly claimed that they carry out an oversight function by visiting and interacting with their constituents to know what they feel about government policies; constituents, on the other hand, strongly reject such a claim. However, there was a point of convergence in opinion between them as both groups agree that new projects/infrastructure have been instituted at the behest of legislators representing their constituents. Aggressive political education and sensitization are strongly recommended to

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ensure that constituents continue to hold their legislators to account, who in turn would hold the executive to account regarding policies and decisions affecting their constituents.

Keywords: Legislative oversight; constituents; Enugu State; Grassroots Development.

1. Introduction

State House legislators are elected representatives of the different constituencies in a State. State house legislators can also be referred to as State House of Assembly members or State legislature, and they are elected officials who serve in a state legislation (Odalonu, 2020). Twenty-four constituencies make up the Enugu State House of Assembly. In Enugu State, there are seventeen local government areas, and some of these local government areas have more than one person representing the constituencies. There are twenty-four seats in the Enugu State House of Assembly, making it twenty-four state house legislators. This is in accordance with Sections 90 and 91 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which states that in the composition of the House of Assembly, there shall be a House of Assembly for each of the States of the Federation, and a House of Assembly of a State shall consist of not less than twenty-four members and not more than forty members. State legislators play a crucial role in the governance of metropolitan areas by shaping the policies that guide grassroots development (Mohammed, 2023).

The legislative powers of Enugu State are vested in the Enugu State House of Assembly in accordance with CFRN, Section 4(6), 1999, (as amended). The collation of the views, demands, interests, and problems of constituents is the primary role of state house legislators with a view to harmonising and transforming them into policies for legislative policy proposals for the legislature (Back & Debus, 2024). Such policy proposals are now subject to the real legislative processes involving debates and committee inputs; after which the President assents to it (Mohammed, 2023). One of the crucial jobs of legislators is to ensure that funds earmarked for government agencies, ministries, and departments are utilised for the purpose they were allocated for to ensure that citizens get value for their money (Frolick, 2016).

Instructively, legislative oversight is conducted by legislators to monitor the executive organ of government and government agencies, which is germane to government actions (Lafenwa, 2009). The strategic objectives of legislative oversight functions are: programme evaluation and performance, prevent governmental waste and ensure proper utilisation of government resources, inform the general public, and ensure that executive policies reflect public interest, curtail abuse of power by the executive, protect constitutional rights and civil liberties, improve government efficiency and effectiveness, etc. (Eja, 2014). In Enugu state,

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the legislators equally have the power over budget, policy, and security, including the investigation and implementation of projects done within the State's metropolis. Essentially, these legislators serve as middlemen or go-betweens of the people and the government. They play critical roles in policy-making by holding the executive to account in the decisions they make. They do this by conducting checks to balance their functions of ensuring that government policies and programmes are carried out legally, efficiently, effectively, and promptly for their intended purposes (Onyekakie, 2022).

Over time, the people at the grassroots level have been given promises that ought to meet their yearnings and aspirations, but these promises turn out to be pipe dreams or completely unrealisable. The people make demands, voice out their needs, and even try to reach out to the elected representatives of their constituencies, but have received little or no attention. Some constituents do not know their entitlements, as they have little or no knowledge about the acknowledged rules of conduct that guide administrative decisions; nor do they know the roles of their elected constituency representatives at the grassroots level for grassroots development. This has brought about poor/sluggish development, disinterest, and dispassion in governance, arising from legislators not being held accountable for their actions, which is a fundamental factor to be considered. In view of this, it is evident that the legislative arm of government is not living up to its constitutional responsibilities in ensuring effectiveness to speed up development at the grassroots.

The study contributes to the debate on how the grassroots can develop importantly by focusing on both what the constituents and the legislators can do collaboratively to ensure uniform development within Enugu metropolis. While studies within Nigeria have focused on different states' legislative practices and how they contribute to development at the grassroots, this study shines a light on Enugu state, which hitherto has not been studied to the knowledge of the authors. This is why the study seeks to investigate the roles of state house legislators in grassroots development in Enugu State, Nigeria. One crucial objective of the study is to determine the effectiveness of legislative oversight functions and their impact on the constituents and grassroots development, by exploring legislator-constituent insights to determine grassroots development. After this introduction, the study conducted a review of related literature to determine the knowledge gap in this area within Nigeria. The next section discusses the methodology of the paper, followed closely by the presentation of results and findings. The discussion of findings was conducted to make sense of the results from the survey and interviews. Finally, the study

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concludes and makes recommendations, acknowledging certain limitations of research findings and results.

2. Literature Review

In a democratic sense, the legislature is an official body, chosen by the people through elections and invested with the power to make laws, change laws, and even repeal obsolete laws (Stoicu and Morostes, 2017). It equally represents the constituent units and checks the executive on their behalf (Eguavoen et al., 2022). For Okoosi-Simbine (2010), as the first estate of the realm, the realm of representation, the legislature is the true representation of the people, by expressing their will in policymaking. This could be unicameral or bicameral, elected by the people directly or indirectly. In a presidential system like the United States, where there is a separation of powers, Garuba and Oghuma (2018) note that the legislature plays a critical role in policy formulation. However, in a Westminster system, where the legislature is drawn from the executive branch, legislative powers are thoroughly weakened as they are obligated to support the executive in power. This is why the legislature in a presidential system, with full separation of powers, is regarded as the better of the two forms in a democratic sense. The fusion of powers of the legislature and the executive in a Westminster system blurs the line between executive and legislative powers.

Back and Debus (2024) argue that the legislative role and power seriously entail holding the executive to account in the area of budget approval and implementation through committees set up for such purposes. While this can be the case in a presidential system, the Westminster type may not have the operational leeway as its counterparts with full separation of powers (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019). As the backbone of a strong democratic system, the legislature is central to all policies made and executed in the state. This is why its positions are not to be trifled with in advanced democracies. Essentially, the persons elected to a legislative position are carefully scrutinised during campaigns and manifesto presentations to ensure they are the right fit for the job (Ngonadi et al, 2023; Adebola, 2016). To have a healthy society is to have an effective and efficient legislature because they are crucial to the realisation of the social contract for the people in a democracy (Bakare, 2023)

The creative and amendment powers of the legislature are well-revered. For Pogorelova (2021), the powers of the legislature are to create, amend, and repeal laws, which are essential for governance. Eisen and Katz (2025) assert that the power of the legislature entails safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process, which is crucial for preventing autocratic tendencies and ensuring democratic government. This explains why they conduct oversight functions to ensure the smooth and

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unbiased functionality and operations of the executive. Sarbaugh-Thompson (2016) notes this oversight sometimes manifests in legislative capacity to encourage, thwart, or compel actions of the executive on behalf of the people.

Fundamentally, the word 'Oversight' can be traced to Woodrow Wilson, who conceived it as a representative body whose duty is to diligently look into government affairs and report what they observed. This body, conducting 'oversight', is the eyes, ears, and voice of the constituents at the grassroots whose wills and wisdom they embody. It is just the way a legislative body holds the government accountable for its actions, especially its use or misuse of public funds through fraud detection, waste, and abuse of resources (Khmelko 2015). Thus, parliamentary monitoring and evaluation of the executive and the judiciary is key to helping people at the grassroots realise or partake in the dividends of democracy (Oke, 2025). The literature on legislative oversight foregrounding accountability as pivotal to constituents' development at the grassroots reveals a gap in the legislature-constituent interaction in Enugu State. Pikins (1967) political representation theory provides an explanatory lens to understanding this gap, and it can be filled. Essentially, Pikin's framework differentiates substantive representation of acting in constituents' interest involving aggregation of demands and transforming them into concrete policies, and then monitoring execution (Black and Debus, 2024; Eja, 2014) from symbolic ones for political optics. This aligns with tools of oversight like hearings and visits (Paulker-Sinime, 2024; Osunkoya & Bashiru, 2019). In the case of Enugu, the theory conceives the state legislative house as "middlemen", who translate the constituents' demands into infrastructure. In this regard, the theory bridges the literature gap through its mixed methods findings of partial substantive success in the midst of a response deficit by legislators. This, of course, helps in the examination of the fact that effective oversight addresses social contract concerns (Bakare, 2023) by recommending political sensitisation of constituents to strengthen accountability. When there is poor implementation of the social contract, it could lead to public disaffection and grievances.

However, aggrieved members of the grassroots can benefit immensely in a democracy through the power of legislative review of governmental actions that have injured them, in order to get a comprehensive picture of events (Fidalgo 2022). To do this, Paulker-Sinime (2024) documents the various tools used in legislative oversight to bring democratic dividends to members of the grassroots. These are the creation of inquiry commissions, plenary session hearings, oversight visits, ombudsman, auditors, questions, and committee hearings (public/investigative). Osunkoya and Bashiru (2019) reveal that legislators rely on various mechanisms to

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ensure legislative oversight, and they include hearings, calling the executive to account, resolutions of inquiry, special investigatory committees, and the confirmation process.

In addition, Saiegh (2014) notes that implementation of policies is a major concern rather than the formulation of policy, as the ordinary people cast their hope on the government for grassroots developmental projects and programs. After making a law, the legislature's main role is to see whether laws are effectively implemented and whether the laws capture not just the intent of their drafters, but also the wills and aspirations of the people to bring about general grassroots development.

The key takeaways from the above literature show that legislative oversight has a significant impact on grassroots development; this is because legislative oversight and grassroots development are interwoven. This interweaving is a guarantee for effective governance and allocation of resources at the local level, as legislative oversight plays a pivotal role in promoting accountability and transparency, including the implementation of policies and programs that are beneficial to grassroots development. The relationship between legislative oversight and grassroots development is felt in the allocation of funds and resource utilization to support community-driven initiatives, promoting participatory governance and holding the executive arm responsible for implementing laws or policies that benefit communities at the local level. The legislature can figure out lapses, corruption, inefficiencies, wastage, and promote service delivery to the public, which in turn encourages public trust, enhances governance, and fosters sustainable development at the grassroots level. This enables the government to make inclusive, responsive, and effective policies that address the needs of the local communities. Legislative oversight ensures that government agencies and policies align with public interests, which is imperative for grassroots development.

Theoretical Framework - Political Representation Theory

In a democratic environment, political representation refers to the process by which elected officials act on behalf of their constituents. These representatives make choices, write laws, and form policies that should ideally reflect the wishes and interests of the people they serve. Hanna Pitkin (1967) and her enormously influential discussion of the concept of political representation impacted the contemporary debate on representation, and it quickly became the standard reference for both normative theorists and empirical investigators. Pitkin (1967) addressed many perspectives on representation and advanced her own definition of substantive representation as "working in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (p. 209). The emphasis here is on substantive acts rather than authority to act. What should be represented are the interests of the represented, but

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representatives must avoid conflicts by considering their constituents' perspectives. Pitkin's (1967) definition of responsiveness is responding favourably to constituent demands, and Pitkin defined representation as acting substantively in the interests of the represented. In this idea, the interaction between residents and elected representatives is unidirectional; representatives should respond to citizens rather than the other way around. The contemporary constructivists' turn in the study of political representation (Saward 2010 and 2017; Disch 2011) highlights the constitutive aspect of political representation. In other words, the activity of representing has ontological ramifications because it not merely mimics but actively influences the identity and interests of those being represented.

This theory involves understanding how state house legislators represent their constituents' needs and interests, which rightly describes the circumstances in Enugu State. This theory emphasizes the role of state house legislators in pursuing the interests of the constituents and can be applied to their role in grassroots development by examining how they translate the needs of their constituents into actionable policies and developmental projects. The concept provided by Pitkin (1967) is simple. To represent is to "make present again." Accordingly, the process of making citizens' opinions, thoughts, and voices "present" in policy formulation is called political representation, as seen in Enugu State within the study area. The key ingredients of this political representation are: the represented party (constituents, clients or grassroots members in Enugu East, Enugu North and Enugu South local government areas), something being represented (interests, opinions, perspectives, etc of the constituents within the study area.); and where the representation activity takes place (parliament – Enugu State House of Assembly or its organised town halls). In a nutshell, political representation occurs when political actors advocate and speak on behalf of others in a political setting.

Political Representation theory gives an understanding of how state house legislators in Enugu State contribute to grassroots development through their roles, functions, and interactions within the system. This can help to assess how well Enugu State house legislators fulfil their mandate in advancing constituent development, and to find out areas for improvement in governance and policy implementation.

3. Methodology and Empirical Data

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data in order to achieve the research objectives. Given geographical constraints and

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participant availability, we developed an online instrument for data collection using Google Forms to gather more data.

3.2. Participants

We adopted a non-probabilistic purposive sampling method, which is meant to include participants using a predetermined set of criteria that suits the study objectives. The instrument was developed for targeted participants who are constituent members and legislators of the studied local government areas. The population of the study is 876,000, constituting the three local government areas of Enugu East, Enugu North, and Enugu South, according to the 2022 Nigerian census. A sample was drawn from the population that the research work was addressing, and this determined the appropriate sample size for this investigation. Taro Yamane's (1967) statistical procedure was adopted to determine the sample size of the study. We chose 0.05 as the error margin. From the 876,000 total population of Enugu city, 400 was the sample size as determined by the computation. However, only 241 people filled out the online Google form correctly.

3.3. Instruments and Ethical Considerations

We developed a survey instrument using the Google Online Form to collect data from constituent members of the local government areas studied. Also, a one-on-one semi-structured in-depth interview was developed for the legislators representing the constituents in the studied local government areas. The first part of the survey collected biographical data of the respondents, while the second part asked the constituents questions in line with the study objectives, using a 5-point Likert Scale. For the interview, a recording device was used to record the interviews conducted with two members of Enugu State House of Assembly, out of the proposed three to cover the three local government areas making up Enugu Metropolis. The invited participants for the interview were provided with consent forms, which specified the objectives of the interview and potential questions. Adding that if the interviewees were uncomfortable, they could opt out. This accounts for why only two of the three legislators representing the three studied local government areas were interviewed. Interviews were scheduled after the participants agreed to be interviewed, as they chose the day and time that would be suitable for them. The interviews lasted for an average of 10 – 15 minutes and were conducted in English, which was understood by the participants. To ensure anonymity, we coded the participants based on their Participant Number, Local Government Area, and constituency. For instance, a participant's code could be P1-ESC-Leg, where P1 stands for participant number 1, ESC stands for Enugu South Constituency, and Leg stands for Legislator. Secondary data were also collected from books, journals, internet sources, etc.

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3.4. Empirical Result and Analysis

Both survey and interview data were analysed descriptively. Data obtained was analysed descriptively using frequency and percentages for quantitative data. For the interview, the data was first transcribed using an online tool called Turboscribe, and then analysed to complement the quantitative data.

4. Survey and Interview Findings

Table 1. Demographics of Survey Participants

Variable	Category	Count (%)
Gender	Female	132 (54.7)
	Male	109 (45.2)
Age	21 – 30	40 (16.5)
	31 – 40	77 (31.9)
	41 – 50	76 (31.5)
	51 – above	48 (19.9)
Do you know your State House representative?	Yes	37 (15.3)
	No	204 (84.6)
How often do your representatives visit you?	Once a month	11 (4.56)
	Once every two months	18 (7.46)
	Once every three months	23 (9.54)
	Once every four months	28 (11.6)
	Once every five months	28 (11.6)
	Once in six months	42 (17.4)
Once a year	91 (37.7)	
Total Participant		241

Source: Authors based on field data (2025).

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*The Role of Legislative Oversight and Constituent Development in Enugu State, Nigeria***Table 2. Demographics of Interview Participants**

Variable	Category	Count (%)
Gender	Female	1 (50)
	Male	1 (50)
Local Government Areas	Enugu South	1 (50)
	Enugu East	1 (50)
	Enugu North	0 (0)
Total Participant		2

Source: Authors based on field data (2025).

Table 1 shows that 54.7% of the respondents, which represents 132, were females, while 45.2% of the respondents, which represents 109, were males. Respondents aged 21-30 were 16.5% (40), respondents within the age range of 31-40 were 31.9% (77), respondents within the age range of 41-50 were 31.5% (76), and respondents within the age range of 50 and above were 19.9% (48). This shows that the age ranges of 31-40 and 41-50 constitute the largest number of respondents who took part in this study. The table also shows that 84.6% of the respondents (204) do not know their representatives, while 15.3% (37) know their representatives. The implication is that many constituency members do not know the people elected into office to represent them, and if they have pressing needs/demands, may not have any idea of how to reach their representatives. Interestingly, it is evident that most of the Enugu state house representatives do not visit their constituents as they should. From the responses, 37.7% (91) believe that their representatives only visited once in every year, 17.4% (42) believe that their representatives visit once in six months, 11.6% (28) are of the view that their representatives visit once in four months and once in five months, 9.5% (23) had the impression that their representatives visit once in three months, 7.4% (18) are optimistic that their representatives visit once in two months and 4.5% (11) believe that their representatives visit only once a month. The implication of this could be that the constituents hardly know who their representatives are. This will also mean that they hardly have anyone in government to share their challenges and concerns with. In Table 2, there were two participants, one male, one female. These legislators represent Enugu East and Enugu South Local Government Areas within the Enugu State Metropolis, which has three local government areas. The last legislator for Enugu North local government was not available after repeated visits and calls to schedule an appointment for an interview.

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Table 3. participants' responses to question items on the effective legislative oversight functions among Enugu State house legislators and the impact on their constituencies

Items	N	Mean	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Decision
I see or hear of my representative visiting our community regularly	241	1.86	106 (41.5%)	72 (31.03%)	30 (12.9%)	20 (8.65%)	4 (1.73%)	Reject
The visit of my representative led to the development of a new project or infrastructure in my community	241	1.85	70 (25.9%)	82 (35.4%)	39 (16.8%)	18 (7.7%)	3 (1.3%)	Reject
I remember a time when a visit by my representative led to the repair of a critical infrastructure in my community	241	3.20	30 (8.6%)	36 (32.7%)	10 (4.3%)	102 (44.1%)	42 (18.1%)	Accept
My representative is very active in the community through the supervision of various projects	241	1.93	113 (44.5%)	67 (28.9%)	34 (14.7%)	22 (9.5%)	4 (1.7%)	Reject
I have zero awareness of legislative oversight functions by my representative	241	2.19	96 (37.2%)	68 (29.3%)	28 (12.1%)	34 (14.6%)	13 (5.6%)	Reject

Source: Authors based on field data (2025).

From table 3, in question item 1, the majority of respondents (72.5%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that they see or hear of their representative's visit to their community regularly, while about 10% strongly agreed or agreed. Meanwhile, in an interview with the legislator representing Enugu East constituency, he was asked about how often he visits his constituents and how this translates into positive outcomes for them. This legislator comments that:

I live with my constituents, I live with them, we stay together, we chat, we interact, we see ourselves, my door is open to all,

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just as you came in without any interruption, that's the same way
I run both office and my house.

In another interview with the legislator representing Enugu South constituency, with the following comment:

I am always in the midst of my people, I don't need to visit them, I am domiciled in my place, so it's not about how often do I visit them, we see almost all the time, we have interactions, the office is open, there is a constituency office also in place for some of them who will find it difficult to pay transport and come on the way to the complex, to the assembly complex, there's a constituency office where they can go and lodge their complaints or, you know, seek for anything they need, so, this has helped a lot in all aspects, every aspect.

In essence, while the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they see or hear of their representative's visit, the representatives defend their positions by saying that they see, interact with, and stay together with their constituents.

In question item 2, a majority of 61.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that the visit of their representative led to the development of a new project in the community, while 9% agreed or strongly agreed. On the other hand, in an interview with the representative of Enugu East constituency, he said, "*so, I started my constituency project, the last two years, when we started, I just think of where to start, I said, okay, I promise to assist in academics, starting from there, growing the youth, brightening their future*" This implies that the respondents disagreed with the representative on the development of new project in the community based on the representative's visit while the representative insists that his visit brought about constituency projects as an achievement while in office.

In question item 3, 62.2% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the fact that the visit by their representative led to the repair of a critical infrastructure in the community, with 41.3% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. The majority view on this item was strongly supported in the interview with the representative of Enugu East constituency, where the legislator commented that:

before now, prior to my coming as a house member, if you go to Abakpa, all the streets in Abakpa, you will be able to witness that many of the roads were not paved before now, today, over 30% of the roads have been paved, you can close your eyes and pass through it anytime, all these roads, I tell you that when we came in 2023, I made sure that all the roads were captured in the budget

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of Enugu State, this is what you can verify, you can check the budget of Enugu in 2023.

In question item 4, about 73% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that their representative is very active in the community through the supervision of various projects in the community, which is also in line with not seeing or hearing of their representative's visit to the community. Whereas about 11% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the question item.

In question item 5, 66.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with having zero awareness of the legislative oversight functions by the representative; whereas about 20% strongly agreed or agreed that they have zero awareness of the representative oversight function. These responses align with the comments of the representative of Enugu East constituency in an interview, thus:

If you have been following me, you will know that I engage in oversight functions, the last time I went was, there was a street called Atani Street in Abakpa, Atani was just adjacent to the popular St. Theresa Parish, when work is going on there, I went there early when they started, I have to go again on oversight function to evaluate what they are doing, to confirm the type of work they are giving to my people, I went there with the constituents, when I got there, the people from the streets, they all came out, we all celebrated ourselves, then during the time they were doing Nowas, Nowas to Abakpa, I also went there, it's on camera, it was on social media, I went there to check that was when I got to know the work they did, after that I went to the one that went up to Abakpa girls, on oversight. This is my constituency oversight, because we also have oversight in-house. I go for an oversight, I'm in a committee on works, so we also do oversight, every other place in Enugu, I'm telling you the one I'm doing on my own as a house member, the one I'm doing in my constituency, I do go on oversight with my people.

On the other hand, the representative of Enugu South constituency reiterates that she,

went together with an inspection team for an oversight, remember that oversight is done according to committees. I am not on the works committee, so I shouldn't have any business there. My business would be that if my constituents have or see something wrong, they report to me officially, and I will take it to the works committee.

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5. Discussion of Findings

Our research objective was to determine whether there are effective legislative oversight functions among Enugu State House legislators and their impact on their constituencies. Findings show that the respondents have a high perception of who disagreed and strongly disagreed that their representative conducts an oversight function. While survey finding aligns with the work of Titus and Oyewale (2024) in their study of legislative oversight, accountability and corruption in Osun State (2010-2022) whose results show that there is lack of legislative oversight in the state which has led to an increase in corruption and a lack of accountability; interview findings highlighting legislative support for repairs and new project and infrastructure development, although highly subjective, align with the Ngini and Okafor (2023), Jamila (2023) and Paulker-Sinime's (2024), which note that legislature's oversight function improved and contributed to the promotion of the community project program in Anambra State; and was very effective in monitoring the activities of MDAs in Kaduna State and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) respectively. But the effectiveness of legislative oversight function is limited by its reliance on the executive branch for funding (Nwaegbu, 2022), which was not admitted by the State House Legislators in our interview findings. Another limitation not admitted by our interviewees, perhaps, due to the subjective nature of interviews, was corruption, legislators' personal interests, bureaucratic procedure, and capacity deficiency, which are major stumbling blocks to effective legislative oversight functions in Imo State and the FCT (Nwaegbu, 2022; Paulker-Sinime, 2024). Survey findings also agree with Ajiboye (2023), who conducted research on the appraisal of legislative oversight on infrastructural development in Kwara State, showing that infrastructural development is highly affected by the monitoring and evaluation functions of members of the Kwara State House of Assembly.

6. Conclusions

The roles of state house legislators of Enugu State House of Assembly, unfortunately, are unknown to the public. The people know nothing beyond standing in the queue during the election to vote, cast their vote, and head to their respective homes/businesses. Whatever happens in the hallowed chambers is oblivious to them, and how to take their needs to their representatives, whom they voted into office, is seemingly strange to them because they hardly see or hear from their representatives. This makes democracy far from the people, as the dividends of democracy, which should have been seen in the grassroots development, are elusive. By combining both empirical and theoretical elements in this paper (like the combination of political representative theory and data from surveys and interviews), a methodological

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balance is created, which helps position abstract concepts within real-world situations, enhancing research depth and validity. The paper's theoretical value is evident by providing a conceptual lens that explains legislative oversight as "making present" the wills and aspirations of their constituents through consistent engagement. Our data tests this assumption of "presence" as we find that about 84.6% of constituents are unaware of their representatives, nor have they seen the supervisory work done for their constituents. In addition, given Nigeria's presidential form of government as contained in the 1999 constitution, the study could benefit countries like Kenya, Ghana, and Uganda, which practice a similar form of government where legislators hold the executive to account through oversight functions. Findings on low awareness of constituents in this study equally apply to some resource-poor countries where citizens are apathetic to government processes and activities, as they are only concerned with securing basic needs (Stapenhurst et al, 2016).

7. Recommendations

By way of recommendation, there is a need for constant political sensitization and education of constituent members at the grassroots in the political processes, so they can articulate their demands properly and hold their representative to account when the need arises. From the study, there is a sense of political apathy, which the political sensitization would help remedy in the short and long term. Beyond this, future research could focus on expanding to other local government areas in the state or undertake a comparative approach between states in Nigeria, using a multistage sampling technique, more interviews, and the use of panel data to enhance generalizability.

8. Study Limitations

Although the study adopted a mixed methods design, the authors were not able to interview one other legislator representing Enugu North constituency due to their unavailability caused by busy schedules, to represent the last constituency making up Enugu metropolis. However, the insights from the other two representatives were sufficient to mirror what the situation could be in Enugu North. Again, the geographical limitation of the study to Enugu state means that the study findings may not be generalizable to other states in Nigeria. However, it could shed light on some of the happenings in other states due to the fact that all legislative houses of assembly in Nigeria were established based on the 1999 constitutional provisions.

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Author Contributions

EKC and COA conceived the study and were responsible for the design and development of the data analysis. OIM, EKC, and COA were responsible for data collection and analysis, and also for data interpretation. EKC, OIM, and COA were responsible for the literature review section.

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