

Roles of Public Administrators in Local Community Development

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Abstract- The role of public administrators is considered most significant in changing society and administration, however, an efficient, responsive, transparent and accountable public administration is of principal importance for the appropriate functioning of a local community, besides, it is a core part of democratic governance and the elementary means through which government strategizes to accomplish the implementation of its amalgamation objectives. Obviously, local community development today should reflect the changing and competitive nature of national and international strata and the new administrative climate. Nonetheless, it is common knowledge that public administrators play crucial roles in the government provision of essential services such as healthcare, transportation, utilities etc. to the local communities. However, the specific roles played by public administrators in local community development through engagement of citizens, enhancement of technical expertise, mobilization of resources, economic development, consensus building, and development of managerial and executive capacity for sustainability, etc. is still not yet comprehensive. Therefore, this research paper portrays the major roles public administrators play in the local community that lead to local community development.

Index Terms- administration, roles, policy, local, community, conflict, development, resource, allocation, distribution, culture, sustainability, planning, economic, happiness, justice, equity, governance, zoning, arbitration, technology, education, trust.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public administration, according to Marx, could be viewed as a systematic ordering of activities and the planned use of resources geared towards the achievement of a set out goals and objectives, thus, it entails action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose (Juneja, 2015). Land defined public administration as the arrangement and maintenance of human and fiscal resources with the purpose of attaining group goals (Juneja, 2015). Moreover, Negro views public administration as a cooperative effort in action and covering the three branches of government and as well a political process (Juneja, 2015). While in White views, public administration comprises all those operations with the sole aim of fulfilling and enforcing public policy (Juneja, 2015).

Local community development here is a procedure involving public administration in the collective action and generation of answers to mutual community problems for improvement of their wellbeing and their economic, social,

environmental and cultural etc. benefits ("PeerNetBC", 2018). Thus, it is about balancing the need of the primary challenges of community development by proffering durable solutions with the daily realities that need immediate decision-making and short term action ("PeerNetBC", 2018). The International Association for Community Development (IACD) which is the global network of community development practitioners and scholars define community development as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that encourages participatory democracy, economic opportunity, social justice, sustainable development, rights and equity, through the organization, education and empowerment of people their communities, be it of locality, identity or interest in rural and urban locations ("PeerNetBC", 2018).

Obviously, it is widely believed that public administrators play essential roles in the federal, state, and local government levels, however, issues of public administration in local governance and participation are seen to play a crucial role in predominant issues of development (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597) locally and nationally. Moreover, local community development and local governance structures and public administration (as evidence through public administrators) remains important enablers of the state's capacity to make good its political promises, and as well perform particular functions, thus, the mechanism adopted and enacted at local levels and the public administrators comprising these systems are the passage through which policy becomes action, and by which functions and services of the state that some eventually reached the local communities are apportioned (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597).

This research paper in portraying the specific roles of public administrators in local community development will assist public administrators and end users to the understanding of the specific roles of public administrators play to bring about local community development and how to work with individuals and local community members to affect communities positions within the context of larger social institutions ("PeerNetBC", 2018).

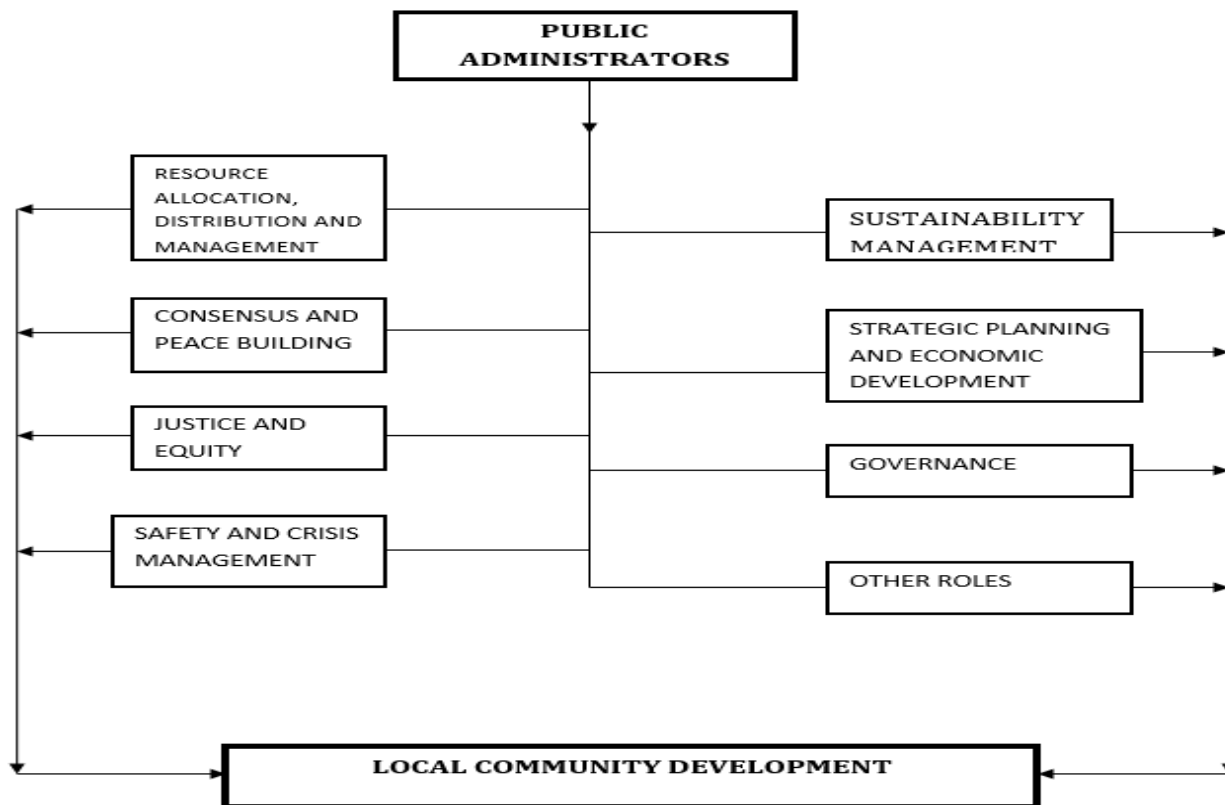
II. DISCUSSION

Public administrators cannot easily be wished away in issues involving local community development because local development is the pillar of national development without which they cookie crumbles irrespective of the efforts being put in place. The local communities are the cornerstones of the state or federal strata. The importance of public administrators in local community development was echoed in the declaration of the

Social Development Summit, a conference that mentioned: a) poverty alleviation, b) generation of productive employment, and c) achievement of social integration especially of the disadvantaged sections such as women, indigenous and the extremely poor, as goals that must be achieved by the nations of the world for the improvement of the quality of life (Copenhagen, 1995, as cited in Mizanur, 2015). Therefore, administrators' responsibilities of working in closer alliance and more systematically with government and the local communities to achieve these objectives should be noted. With this mandate more responsibilities are placed on the shoulders of public administrators to empower individuals and groups with the knowledge and skills they require to effect change within the communities, through the formulation of social working groups for a common agenda, so, understanding the roles of public administrators become more pertinent ("PeerNetBC", 2018). Usually citizens especially those at the local communities keep their eyes on government, examine and judge government performance, and change preferred of level of acceptance and

bureaucratic discretion accordingly (Brennan, Cooper & Knotts, 2008, pp. 459-461). Moreover, the local community members are conscious of the public administrators' efforts towards social change, accordingly, the success of community demands that public administrators develop institutional frameworks and infrastructure that support community decision-making reached through collaboration over time (Carnall, 1995; Denhardt & Denhardt, 1999; Greiner, 1967; Kotter, 1995, as cited in Lebrede, Van Wart & Wang, 2014, pp. 340-355).

The impact of public administration are felt in major local community development element areas such as resource allocation, distribution and management; sustainability management, conflict management, diversity management, consensus and peace building, good governance, strategic planning, economic development, social equity, safety and crises management (Norwich University Online, 2017). The chart below shows the representation of the essential roles played by public administrators in local community development.



Resource allocation, distribution and management

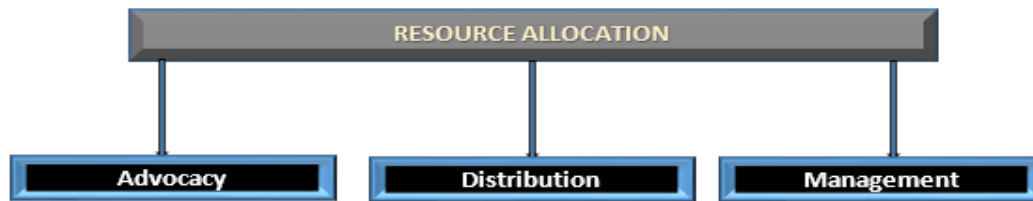
Resource allocation is the process of the division of and distribution of available, limited resources such as human resources, financial resources, material and equipment, to competing alternative uses that satisfy unlimited wants and needs for the attainment of specific objectives for the development of the local communities (Abdel-Aziz & Shugair, 2015). However, due to the fact that resources are innately scarce, it is unusual to satisfy every want and need with available resources, therefore, prudent choices have to be made. Moreover, the achievement of equitable resource distribution depends wholly on the incorporation of the

public in the decision making concerning the process of allocation, however, this incorporation allows the available resources to be integrated specifically where they are needed for best outcomes, and also allows local resources detected and perhaps combined for local usage (Abdel-Aziz & Shugair, 2015).

Public administrators as the middlemen between the government and the local communities advocate for the allocation of resources for the local communities in need, they assist in convincing the government and policy makers on the importance of allocating resources to the most important communities

especially those in dire need (Bland, 2007, pp. 2-130). They frequently communicate community needs to their superior to ensure that they were not left out in the allotment of

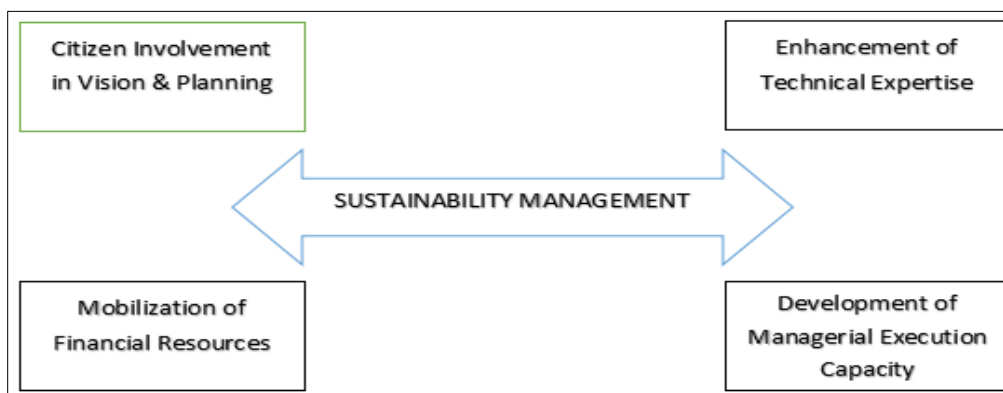
basic resources such as food, medicine, water, money and shelter, or even establishments (Bland, 2007, pp. 2-13).



Public administrators occasionally work directly with local community members and during resources allocation and distribution to ensure even sharing, besides, they work in cooperation with private agencies or organizations in creating processes and procedures for equitable resource sharing (Kent State University, 2002). In the case of scarcity of resources, public administrators has the discretion on the best and conflict free way to distribute available resources. Accordingly, Teaster asserts that public administrators are Surrogate Decision Makers in that they make essential services decisions not necessarily based on a regular pattern but based on the natural occurrence of an event such as a new ward entering into the system, wards becoming ill, or other factors that might come up (Brăgaru, 1989, pp. 887-888). Public administrators assist in the management of available human, natural and financial resources (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597) to prevent slacks, mismanagement and corruption, besides, they help in the location of available resources, determination of level of funding and planning available in the event of emergencies (Barăgaru, 1989, pp. 887-888). Public administrators assist to ensure that responsibilities are matched to resources and to results which is necessary as the most preferred means to capacitate the public service to respond to its local development needs, and in building managerial platform for regular interaction with residents, communities, civil society and the private sector (Barăgaru, 1989, pp. 887-888).

engagement in policy efforts to include local communities, development of organization capacity, and the encouragement of broad adoption (Lebrede et al., 2014, pp. 340-355) of sustainability initiatives. Public administrators pursue public awareness in the local communities and make them sensitive to recognize need for change in environmental deterioration and natural resource depletion, and they enable various local communities to come together for the provision of solutions that are suiting to local conditions and opportunities, and to make it feasible for the sustenance of administrative practices over the long-term (Lebrede et al., 2014, pp. 340-355).

In sustainability public administrators' roles also encompass the involvement of community members and/or citizens in visioning and planning, the development of technical expertise and implementation, mobilization of financial resources, and the development of managerial execution capacity (Lebrede, et al., 2014, pp. 340-355). More so, public administrators assist in sustainability through engagement of local community members and other relevant stakeholders, utilization of insights and best practices of technical experts (Lebrede, et al., 2014, pp. 340-355), that will result to improved implementation of sustainability practices and indirectly lead to positive sustainability outcomes (Lebrede, et al., 2014, pp. 340-355). More so, they assist local community members and groups in discovering sustainable ways of meeting social, economic and material wants for the improvement of their lives (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597). Furthermore, they oversee the stewardship of lands, mineral and



III. SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

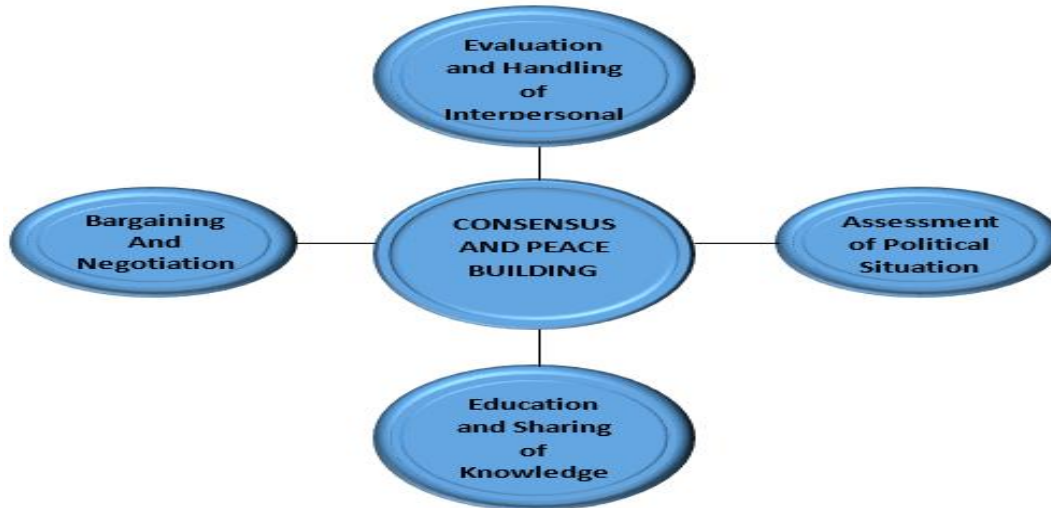
Sustainability is the promotion of a range of concrete environmental, economic and social practices, overtime, by a broad selection of actors with differing mutually supporting beneficial outcomes in communities (Lebrede, Van Wart & Wang, 2014, pp. 340-355). Besides, sustainability management involves

natural resources, infrastructures, health system and delivery procedures etc. to ensure their effectiveness and stability, for example, public administrators were the first to raise the issue of environmental concerns that later led to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (Norwich University Online, 2017).

IV. CONSENSUS AND PEACE BUILDING

Quintin (2012) defined consensus building as a community process where stakeholders build consensus on actions to address public policy problems. Public administrators assist in leading the local community and elected officials in vision processes - a process where members of the community build consensus on the explanation of the community's preferred future and on measures for the attainment of the future goals (Quintin, 2002), through public discussions, public hearings, deliberations and training to appreciate and promote participation (Nalbandian & Oliver, 1999; Ryan, 2007, pp. 2-13). Nonetheless, they are involved with assisting in local community participation, development of

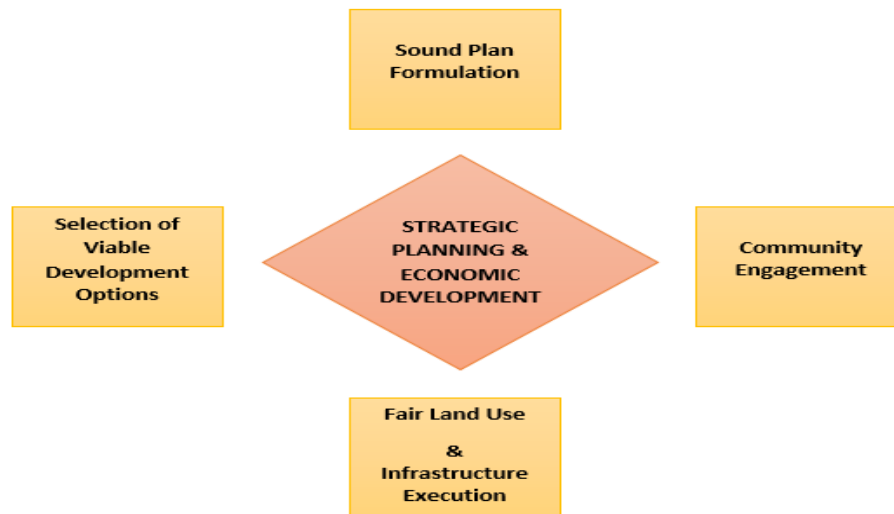
partnerships, representation and equity, however, the involvement in their process of consensus building comprises; a) the evaluations and handling of interpersonal relations, b) bargaining and negotiation, c) analysis of community's political situation, and c) education and sharing of knowledge (Bland, 2007, pp. 2-13). Public administrators act as pivot to individuals that require it, however, they act as guardian or conservator particularly for vulnerable populations that have no person or family to speak for them (Kent State University, 2002) to ensure that they are not left out in the cold in community benefits. Besides, they communicate local community needs and as well initiate policy proposals directed towards local community development (Bland, 2007, pp. 2-13).



Peace is essential for the attainment of any community development initiative because without peace there will only be diffusion of ideas, chaos and anarchy, crisis and conflict and erratic conditions. Obviously, peace is the pillar of every community building plan and it is important for the deliverance of political promises along with the desirable public goods such as welfare, healthcare, education, security and infrastructure (Peace Building Initiative, 2008). Accordingly, there is the likelihood that fragility could arise because of the state's incapacity to deliver services or government decisions viewed as unfavorable by a segment of local community that could result to tensions within the local communities, therefore, public administrators help to ensure that tensions can be mediated through peaceful processes (Peace Building Initiative, 2008) devoid of violence and protracted bickering. The reign of peace in the local communities facilitates the establishment of mechanisms of political involvement and general policies, the effective provision of elementary services and goods, free, fair and transparent elections, anti-corruption activities, promotion of local governance and the nurturing of a widely accepted democratic culture (Peace Building Initiative, 2008).

V. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategic planning is predicting a desired future, and the translation of this vision into generally defined goals, outlining a series of steps to accomplish them (Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111). Undoubtedly, due to dwindling public resources coupled with the paradigm in the responsibility for economic development from state to local levels, there is intensified competition for private sector jobs and investment, therefore, strategic planning enable communities to concentrate on the development options of their choice (Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111) for optimum outcome. Nonetheless, public administrators help many local community leaders to clarify their roles in economic development by formulating plans frequently using strategic planning approaches – which are set of methodical techniques that assists an organization to advantageously position itself in competitive and changing environment, as it provides the organization with the needed framework to study its environment, establish missions and goals, identify stakeholders, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, for the development of action oriented implementation plans (Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111).



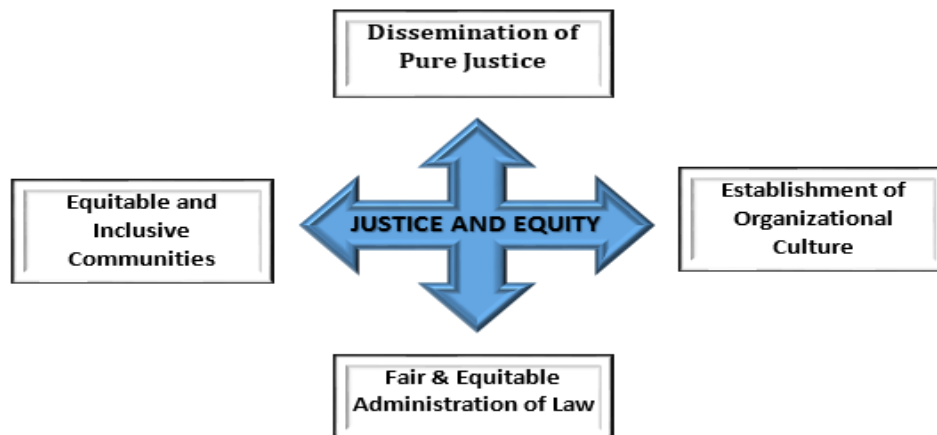
Public administrators encourages the engagement of community members in the strategic planning process, accordingly, a study of Oregon’s program indicates that local strategic planning can help communities adjust to social and economic transformations (Kissler et al., 1998; as cited in Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111). Moreover, in the study of six different strategic planning programs in Nebraska found that strategic planning is a function of the degree of local implementation process, however, effective citizen participation demands for continuous and high levels of local commitment (Gilat & Blair, 1997; as cited in Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111).

Public administrators help local communities to involve in economic development through a methodological use of various efforts geared towards the simulation of private investment in order to enhance employment, diversify the area’s economy, broaden the tax base and improve the quality of life (Blair, 2004, pp. 102-111). Furthermore, public administrators where concerned in the creation of jobs by the private sector in the local communities, can play a part by making sure that the jobs are created fairly and with equal opportunity to various stakeholders (Kent State University, 2002). Moreover, they are occasionally responsible for determining fair land use in a local community, or

for developing a workforce organization solution, or leading infrastructure development execution that will ensure a safer, more productive workforce (Kent State University, 2002).

VI. JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Obviously, societal members and citizens normally expect the resolution of conflicts involving them and within groups to be decided in accordance with the rules accepted within the given domain (Hampshire, 2000, as cited in Spicer, 2014, pp. 449-459), and they expect such resolution to be on the dissemination of pure justice without fear or favor. Besides, when individuals in a particular setting are given equal treatment without regard to race, gender, religion, culture or ethnic origin, etc. they become friendlier, agreeable and produce their best with optimum performance and as well become more accustomed to the environment (Hampshire, 2000, as cited in Spicer, 2014, pp. 449-459). Thus, “creating equitable and inclusive communities with opportunity for all can lead to a level playing field where everyone has a chance to succeed” (Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5).



Public administrators assist local communities in the creation of an organizational culture that accepts, welcomes, and

encourages sincere dialogue, and the cultivation of a question behavior by encouraging community members to challenge the

traditions and actions of the body (Hampshire, 2000, as cited in Spicer, 2014, pp. 449-459), necessary for the promotion of justice and equity. Certainly, injustice and inequality undermines trust in the community, and disintegrates social bonds, erodes, friendship, diminishes civic participation, and weakens trust in government, moreover, they promote status competition, social divisiveness, and weakens the will of the majority for organizing and defending common interest against the specialized interests of the few (Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5).

Apparently, the role of public administrators in local community justice and equity when viewed from a larger perspective seem to be more significant because of the negative impact of injustice and inequality in the local community. Because when feelings of injustice and exclusion pervade a culture, the community shows reduce levels of trust, weaker community connections, lower quality of social relationships and cooperation, and feelings of disrespect between individuals-all of which may trigger violence and jeopardize economic and political stability (Wilkinson, 2011; as cited in Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5). Certainly, injustice and inequality within a local community context could have spill-over effects into other areas, even encroaching wider nationally and perhaps internationally, examples are regional conflicts in certain parts of Africa, Asia, and America (Buss & Ahmed, 2011; as cited in Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5). More so, research has found that negative psychosocial effects of toxic stress, psychotic symptoms, and depression are directly proportional to the level of inequality in the society (Piff & Wilkinson, 2014; as cited in Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5).

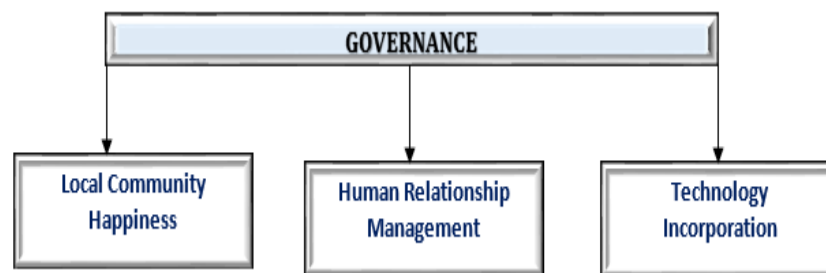
Consequently, public administrators consolidate their civic duties within the local communities by assisting to ensure that laws are administered fairly and equitably, and that equity is promoted through the maintenance of a diverse workforce with equal opportunities to all members and provision of moral leadership and inspiration of all members and citizens to behave fairly (Sharfrit & Russel, 2007; as cited Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5). Public administrators helps to usher in justice and equity in the local communities through collaboration with the media, reports to officials, public statements, and other activities, that emphasize justice and equity, continuously raising awareness on the unfavorable impact of inequity, thereby giving local

community members and stakeholders the knowledge and tools to normalize attention equity issues and as well embed equity within policy considerations (Bilharz & Wooldridge, 2018, pp. 2-5).

VII. GOVERNANCE

Good governance is the soil nutrient that nourishes all local community development efforts and initiative, good governance is the soil that grows the plants green without which all efforts both by public administrators and community members, might become futile. Truly, good governance is essentially for meaningful socio-economic development and the erecting of a harmonious society free from the turbulence of violence and terror, and for the establishment and sustenance of justice and fair play nourished by mutual understanding and cooperation's of community members, citizens, government and the relevant government agencies (Mizanur, 2015). Bad governance can result to heightened level of unhappiness that could degenerate to the point of leading local community members to embrace violence and conflict on the basis of religious, communal, ethnic and cultural differences, just as it happened and still happening since the 1990s in different states of Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Central Asia (Mizanur, 2015).

Public administrators' as agents of governments help increase the happiness level of the local community by taking steps that will make them happy by assisting them to make appropriate choices and choose favorable options, and nudge them in the right direction (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2016, pp. 198-202). In addition, public administrators equipped with the appropriate skill set, help local communities to acquire new methods of managing human relations in a diabolizing society, and to develop and apply essential skills to halt the spread of violence and conflict arising because of ethnic, cultural or religious differences in a heterogeneous community (Mizanur, 2015). Furthermore, public administrators help local communities' members to "attain greater happiness without paternalism, only by helping people make better and informed choices" (Thaler & Sustein, 2008; as cited in Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2016; pp. 198-202), and by promoting the course of direct democracy.



In some local communities public administrators have been identified to play expanded roles in the incorporation of technologies in public services through affiliation with notable banks and development agencies to bring development to the recipients local communities, for instance World Bank Broadband Internet has significantly improved medical services at Vaiola Hospital, Tonga; the reconstruction of a village at *Yogyakarta, Indonesia* (Robinson, 2015, pp. 4-15), and there has been an

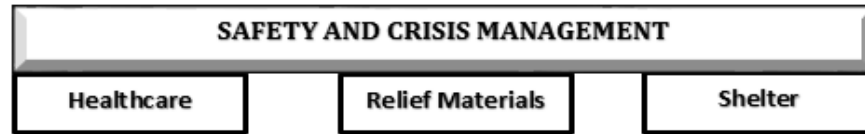
increase in the provision of cycles on rent to communities as a means of public transport (Robinson, 2015, pp. 4-15).

Safety and crisis management

Public administrators and local community health officials cooperate to ensure adequate healthcare provisions and/or coverage at a lower cost, however, they ensure that doctors and hospitals adhere to the relevant federal and state laws , and they

are responsible for oversight of doctors and healthcare professionals to ensure that they are following regulations at all times (Ohio University, 2019). Furthermore, they are responsible for Social Determinants of Health (SDH) thus addressing the fundamental of poor health before health problems occur, however, in furtherance of their healthcare efforts they facilitate

free food lunch programs that offers students access to at least one healthy meal each day, provide expanded access to local markets with emphasis on locally obtained foods and engages in clean water initiatives that enhances community health (Ohio University, 2019).



Some public administrators are trained to possess the ability to forecast and plan impending disaster in the event that they come to fruition (Norwich University Online, 2017). Moreover, public administrators have the civic responsibility of reassuring local community members and residents to be less panicky of any foretold imminent disaster, and to provide effective crisis management in the event of the occurrence of major crisis or disaster by taking measures that reduce the economic and health effect of the calamity (Norwich University Online, 2017). They assist in the distribution of relief materials such as food, medicine, water, and shelter, and the rescue of trapped individuals or families, and they organize efforts to improve communications between public administrators, safety officials and local residents (Norwich University Online, 2017) with the spirit of fairness, equity and sincerity, an example is the remarkable roles public administrators played in the post-Katrina - a reconstruction effort that ignored creed, ethnicity, sex, religion, racial character and elitism (Reed, 2016, pp. 260-273).

VIII. OTHER ROLES

Conflict management has been identified as another area where public administrators has a felt impact on. There is the likelihood for conflict to occur in a local community setting due to different reasons such as resource allocation and/or sharing, distribution of basic needs, location of facilities, welfare, etc. that might have unfavorable consequences. Thus, public administrators help in marshaling the procedures of effective conflict management structured to placate every dissenting voice and replace brute force, domination and tyranny (Spicer, 2014, pp. 449-459). Besides, where applicable they assist in the training of community leaders on the methods and techniques of conflict management because often lack of conflict management skills contribute to the escalation of conflict and even the application of force and violence in their resolution (Zagar, 2006; as cited in Klinec & Radivojevic, 2015, pp. 108-114).



Public administrators also help to foster the spirit of *trust* among community, thereby expanding their willingness to accept government and authority (Kim, 2005; Ruscio, 1997; as cited in Brennan et al., 2008, pp. 459-461). According to some scholars, trust can resolve the tensions between accountability and flexibility by broadening local community members/citizens wiliness to accept authority (Kim, 2005; Ruscio, 1997; as cited in Brennan et al., 2008, pp. 459-461). Moreover, the work in collaboration with local community members in reaching a zoning formula accord, avoiding expensive and length litigation because zoning has always been a source of conflict within the government, accordingly, zoning decisions affect the ways in which communities develop (Oliver, 2001, as cited in Brennan et al., 2008, pp. 459-461).

IX. LIMITATIONS

This research paper was done using mostly online resources, therefore, it lacks qualitative empirical evidence in the form of sample outcomes based on respondents' responses to buttress some of its findings on the public administrators' roles in local community development, to ascertain that they are in line with the research findings of other scholars who may have done a study in the role of public administrators in local community development. Moreover, more literature review may be needed to understand what is lacking in other peers studies in the role of public administrators in local community development. Also due to time constraint, this research paper has a limited focus on the role of public administrators' in local community development in

the underdeveloped and developing countries that may operate differently from those of the developed countries.

X. CONCLUSION

Understandably, public administrators play distinct roles in local community development, facilitating shared responsibility and pursuit of mutual benefit among members and citizens, and the interaction between different private groups, individuals and entities in the provision of essential services to the local community (Juneja, 2015). Obviously, public administration serves as a fulcrum to almost all the local community development efforts, as it helps in the building of community capacity in order to take care of important issues and as well take advantage of development and growth opportunities, find common solution and balance competing interest ("PeerNetBC", 2018). The role of public administrators are in line with Goodsell views of playing crucial roles in the intrinsic satisfaction of local community members by engaging in activities that brings about social services leading to the provision of shelter to the homeless, food stamps to those in hunger, clothing to those without, jobs for the acutely unemployed and disenfranchised (Brăgarau, 1989, pp. 887-888). Actually, public administrators facilitate community engagement, social capital, nonviolent direct action, asset-based community development and community organizing etc. and work with community members, citizens and groups within the community to discover sustainable ways of meeting their social, economic and material needs and to improve the standard of their lives, build their communities, protect their environment, improve personal safety and eliminate poverty (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597). More so, public administrators through their promotion and cultivation of partnerships that involve local community responsibilities and its relationship with other organizations, associations, and groups, they act as facilitators and alliance builders (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597). Besides, they build the needed managerial platform that frequently interacts with local community members and residents, civil society and private sector in order to facilitate response to the local development mandate (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597).

Certainly, local community development remains an important condition of guaranteeing the geographical spread of human development; therefore in the future public administrators will continue to be bestowed with the responsibilities [at least in part] of striking a balance between traditional approaches of oversight and efforts and prevention through environmental factors (Ohio University, 2019). The technological, societal, political, and economic changes require broader public administrators' involvement in local communities by laying more emphasis on cultural diversity, people consciousness in identity, meaning and relationships, political representation, participation, openness and local community involvement in decision making to deal with these changes (Universiteit Leiden, 2007).

Furthermore, public administrators challenge of the 21st century is vitalization of political progression through the establishment of an efficient system of leadership and governance by redesigning local community organizations, creating processes for better human interaction and relationships, and the expansion of conditions for dialog, change, and problem solving (Universiteit Leiden, 2007). Therefore, the development of capacity for cognizant learning and undergoing change through a critical

reflection upon their actions, and continuous engagement in renewal by active participation in the local and national environmental setting is expected from public administrators (Universiteit Leiden, 2007).

Although public administrators have been involved to a certain extent in the complementarity of digital governance with a revitalized approach to the co-production of public services that identifies its potential to generate genuine user and citizen engagement in public service delivery (Osborne, Rador and Nasi, 2013; Robinson, 2015, pp. 4-15) within specific local communities, there is need to adopt and adapt to e-government as one of the best method of improving the quality of public services to local communities while cutting the costs in the public administration, therefore, public administrators must have the capacity to offer local community members and enterprises with quality public services through information communication technology (Adisa, 2017, pp. 595-597), however, this strategy of governance through public service delivery enhances transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

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