

Effect Of Political Independence On The Autonomy Among States In Nigeria

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Abstract : *The study examined the effect of Political Independence on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: examine the effect of Political Centralization on the Autonomy Among States, evaluate the effect of Fiscal Policies on the Autonomy Among States and assess the effect of governance structures on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire design a five-point Likert scale was used to collect primary data for the study. The collected were then coded and entered into SPSS 28.0. The data was then analyzed using descriptive specifically frequencies to describe the data. Meanwhile, Simple linear regression analysis was used to ascertain the outcome of the hypothesis. The regression statistical measures were significant and acceptable if falling within $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. The result revealed that Political Centralization has a significant effect on the Autonomy Among States with the p-value ($0.001 < 0.05$). Fiscal Policies have a significant effect on the Autonomy Among States with the p-value ($0.001 < 0.05$). Governance structures have a significant effect on the Autonomy Among States with the p-value ($0.001 < 0.05$) in Nigeria. The study concluded that political independence has significant effect on the autonomy of states in Nigeria. The study recommended among other that implement constitutional reforms that promote greater political decentralization. This includes devolving more powers to state governments, allowing them to make independent decisions on governance, resource management, and local development.*

Keywords: *Autonomy Independence Political States*

1.1 Introduction

Political independence refers to the process by which a nation or territory gains sovereignty and self-governance, free from external control or colonial rule (Akinola, 2019). It marks a significant shift from dependence on foreign powers to autonomous decision-making in political, economic, and social affairs. Political independence is often achieved through diplomatic negotiations, armed struggle, or political movements advocating for self-rule (Bird, & Vaillancourt, 2019). The attainment of political independence is a crucial milestone in a nation's history, as it allows for the establishment of indigenous governance structures, national identity, and policies tailored to the needs of its people. However, independence does not automatically guarantee stability or development; newly independent states often face challenges such as political instability, economic dependence, weak institutions, and struggles in defining national unity (Faguet, 2024).

Many African nations, including Nigeria (1960), Ghana (1957), and Kenya (1963) gained independence in the mid-20th century following years of colonial rule. While independence granted these nations the ability to govern themselves, it also came with challenges such as political transition, economic restructuring, and the need to build sustainable institutions. The degree of success in post-independence governance varies from country to country, depending on factors like leadership, economic policies, and external influences (Follesdal, 2018).

Nigeria gained political independence from British colonial rule on October 1, 1960, marking the beginning of self-governance and the restructuring of its political and administrative systems. One of the key expectations of independence was the establishment of a federal system that granted substantial autonomy to the constituent states (Heller, (2021). However, the extent to which political independence has translated into true state autonomy remains a subject of debate. Political independence brought about constitutional federalism, aiming to distribute power between the central government and the regional (now state) governments. Initially, the 1963 Republican Constitution provided a relatively high degree of autonomy to the regions, allowing them to control resources, enact policies, and manage governance structures independently. However, subsequent military interventions, constitutional amendments, and centralized governance structures have significantly weakened state autonomy (Köllner, 2024).

In post-independence Nigeria, state autonomy has been shaped by economic dependence on federal allocations, political interference from the central government, and constitutional constraints. The discovery of oil and the centralization of revenue collection have further limited the financial independence of states, making them reliant on federal disbursements rather than internally generated revenues (Weinstock, 2021). Additionally, political party structures, electoral processes, and security control are largely influenced by the federal government, further restricting the independent decision-making power of states.

This study explores the evolution of state autonomy in Nigeria since independence, assessing the impact of political centralization, fiscal policies, and governance structures on the ability of states to function independently. It also examines how reforms, constitutional changes, and advocacy for restructuring could enhance or hinder true federalism and state autonomy in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Political independence was expected to grant Nigeria full sovereignty and enable its constituent states to exercise a high degree of autonomy within a federal system. However, more than six decades after independence in 1960, the extent to which Nigerian states operate autonomously remains a contentious issue. Despite constitutional provisions for federalism, the structure of governance has become increasingly centralized, with significant political and economic power concentrated at the federal level.

A major challenge is the financial dependence of states on federally allocated revenue, primarily derived from oil. This dependence has limited states' ability to generate and control their own resources, reducing their financial autonomy and making them susceptible to federal influence. Additionally, constitutional and institutional constraints—such as the control of security forces, the centralization of major infrastructure projects, and the dominance of national political parties—have further weakened state-level decision-making.

The lingering effects of military rule, constitutional amendments, and political interference have eroded the original intent of Nigeria's federalism, creating a situation where states struggle to function independently. This lack of autonomy affects governance efficiency, economic development, and the ability of states to implement policies tailored to their unique needs.

This study seeks to examine the extent to which political independence has influenced state autonomy in Nigeria, identifying key challenges and proposing recommendations for strengthening federalism and governance at the state level.

1.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of Political Independence on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the effect of Political Centralization on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of Fiscal Policies on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.
- iii. Assess the effect of governance structures on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

- i. Political Centralization has no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.
- ii. Fiscal Policies have no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.
- iii. Governance structures have no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

Political Independence

Political independence is a critical concept in political science, international relations, and history, as it addresses the autonomy of states to govern themselves without external control. The foundation of political independence can be traced to the emergence of the modern state system, particularly following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which established principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity. According to Krastev (2017), this treaty marked a paradigm shift in how states interacted, emphasizing non-interference in domestic affairs. The Enlightenment era further contributed to the discourse on political independence, with philosophers such as John Locke advocating for self-determination and the social contract (Locke, 1689). These ideas laid the groundwork for independence movements, particularly during the American and French Revolutions, where the concepts of liberty and democracy became central to the pursuit of political independence.

Political independence can be understood through several dimensions: legal, economic, and cultural. Legally, a politically independent state possesses the authority to create and enforce laws without external interference. Crawford (2006) emphasizes that legal sovereignty is a cornerstone of statehood and is recognized by international law. This legal perspective is critical to understanding how states navigate international relations and assert their autonomy on the global stage. Economically, political independence involves the control of a state over its resources and economic policies. Economic dependency can undermine political independence, as seen in post-colonial contexts where states often find themselves reliant on foreign aid or multinational corporations. Vreeland (2007) discusses how the conditions imposed by international financial institutions like the IMF can limit a nation's policy choices, thereby compromising its sovereignty.

This economic dimension raises important questions about the nature of independence in an interconnected world. Culturally, political independence is linked to the assertion of national identity and heritage. Smith (2000) argues that cultural independence is often intertwined with political movements, as marginalized groups seek recognition and autonomy. The resurgence of indigenous rights and local cultures highlights the ongoing struggle for cultural autonomy within the broader framework of political independence.

Political Centralization

Political centralization refers to the concentration of political power and decision-making authority within a central government, as opposed to being distributed among various levels of government or local authorities. This concept has been extensively studied in the context of its implications for governance, accountability, urban development, and federalism. One significant area of research examines the relationship between political centralization and urban development. A study focusing on the United States and Canada highlights how different patterns of political centralization have influenced urban agglomeration, particularly in capital cities. The findings suggest that the national capital effect on population has grown over time, with a more pronounced effect in the United States compared to Canada. This divergence is attributed to the historical evolution of federalism in both countries, where the U.S. has maintained a tradition of states' rights while Canada has favored provincial rights, impacting urban development dynamics.

- i. Another important aspect of political centralization is its effect on government accountability. Research indicates that centralization can enhance accountability by streamlining decision-making processes and reducing the complexity of governance structures. For instance, Boffa, Piolatto, and Ponzetto (2012) discuss how centralization can lead to more effective implementation of policies, such as those related to environmental regulation, by minimizing the fragmentation of authority across multiple jurisdictions (Heller, 2021). However, this centralization can also raise concerns about the potential for reduced responsiveness to local needs and preferences, as centralized authorities may prioritize broader national interests over localized issues.
- ii. The comparative analysis of political centralization in different countries, such as Australia, further illustrates the impact of institutional frameworks on urbanization patterns. In Australia, the balance of power between federal and state governments has shaped urban development, with state capitals often experiencing significant population growth due to their political status. This phenomenon is similar to trends observed in Canada and the United States, where the strength of subnational governments influences urban primacy and development outcomes (Heller, 2021).

Fiscal Policies

These are government measures designed to influence the quantum and allocation of revenue and expenditure with the aim of achieving internal and external economic balance, as well as sustainable development. For optimum results, fiscal policy must have a handshake with monetary policy to achieve the primary goal of welfare maximization for the citizenry, which is facilitated by internal and external economic stability as well as sustainable development. Taxes and government expenditure are the primary tools of fiscal policy, though in some jurisdictions, grants and aid constitute significant complementary tools. Fiscal policy is composed of a suite of revenue and expenditure policies/actions (Alade, 2017). Fiscal policy describes changes to government spending and revenue behavior to influence economic outcomes. The government can impact the level of economic activity (often measured by gross domestic product [GDP]) in the short term by changing its level of spending and tax revenue. Expansionary fiscal policy—an increase in government spending, a decrease in tax revenue, or a combination of the two—is expected to spur economic activity, whereas contractionary fiscal policy a decrease in government spending, an increase in tax revenue, or a combination of the two is expected to slow economic activity. When the government's budget is running a deficit (when spending exceeds revenues), fiscal policy is said to be expansionary.

When it is running a surplus (when revenues exceed spending), fiscal policy is said to be contractionary. From a policymaker's perspective, expansionary fiscal policy is generally used to boost GDP growth and the economic indicators that tend to move with GDP, such as employment and individual incomes. However, expansionary fiscal policy also tends to affect interest rates and investment, exchange rates and the trade balance, and the inflation rate in undesirable ways, limiting the long-term effectiveness of persistent fiscal stimulus. Contractionary fiscal policy can be used to slow economic activity if policymakers are concerned that the economy may be overheating, which can cause a recession. The magnitude of fiscal policy's effect on GDP will also differ based on where the economy is within the business cycle whether it is in a recession or an expansion, (Weinstock, 2021). The rationale for fiscal policy is threefold: to promote macroeconomic stability, improve resource allocation, and address distribution disparities.

Governance Structures

Governance structures refer to the frameworks and processes that guide decision-making, accountability, and the distribution of authority within organizations. These structures are critical in various contexts, including nonprofit organizations, corporate governance, and public administration. The literature on governance structures highlights several key themes, including the importance of transparency, accountability, and the adaptability of governance models to specific organizational needs.

Key Themes in Governance Structures

- iii. **Transparency and Accountability:** Good governance is often characterized by transparency and accountability, which are essential for building trust with stakeholders. In nonprofit organizations, for instance, effective governance practices are crucial for fostering trust within the community and among stakeholders (Heller, 2021). This is echoed in the context of

scholarly communication and open research infrastructures, where governance structures must empower diverse community stakeholders to influence strategic planning and management (Köllner, 2024).

- iv. **Adaptability of Governance Models:** There is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance structures; rather, the choice of governance model should be tailored to the specific context and needs of the organization. This adaptability is particularly important in the face of changing internal and external factors that can impact governance effectiveness (Köllner, 2024). For example, the governance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often requires alternative mechanisms outside traditional board structures to address unique challenges and resource constraints (Heller, 2021).
- v. **Decentralization vs. Centralization:** The literature also discusses the balance between centralized and decentralized governance structures. Centralized governance can streamline decision-making and enhance accountability, but it may also lead to a disconnect from local needs. Conversely, decentralized governance can foster local engagement and responsiveness but may result in fragmented decision-making processes (Heller, 2021).
- vi. **Informal Governance Mechanisms:** In the context of SMEs, informal governance mechanisms play a significant role in addressing resource shortages and facilitating growth. These mechanisms can include informal partnerships, advisory boards, and collaborative networks that provide essential support and expertise (Köllner, 2024). The recognition of these informal structures highlights the need for a broader understanding of governance beyond formal board configurations.
- vii. **Community-Led Governance:** The importance of community-led governance is increasingly recognized, particularly in the realm of open research and scholarly communication. Establishing organizational structures that promote decentralized decision-making and community involvement is essential for fostering trust and accountability (Köllner, 2024). This approach aligns with principles of commons governance, which emphasize intentional, rule-based governance that operates across multiple layers (Heller, 2021).

Autonomy Among States in Nigeria

Autonomy among states in Nigeria is a critical aspect of the country's federal structure, which has been shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. The concept of autonomy in this context refers to the degree of self-governance and independence that states possess over the federal government. This literature review explores various dimensions of state autonomy in Nigeria, including the historical evolution, constitutional provisions, and contemporary challenges.

Historical Context

The historical evolution of state autonomy in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial period, where the British indirect rule system established a framework for local governance that was heavily influenced by traditional institutions. This system created a hierarchical structure of governance that often undermined the autonomy of local authorities and states (Heller, 2021). Post-independence, the Nigerian federal system was designed to accommodate the diverse ethnic and cultural groups within the country, leading to the creation of states with varying degrees of autonomy.

Constitutional Provisions

The Nigerian Constitution delineates the powers and responsibilities of the federal and state governments, providing a legal framework for state autonomy. However, the allocation of powers has been a subject of contention, with many scholars arguing that the central government retains significant control over state affairs. For instance, local governments, which are crucial for grassroots governance, operate under the authority of state governments, leading to debates about their autonomy and effectiveness (Köllner, 2024). The ongoing discussions about local government autonomy reflect broader concerns regarding the distribution of power within the federal system.

Contemporary Challenges

Contemporary challenges to state autonomy in Nigeria include issues of political centralization, resource allocation, and intergovernmental relations. The centralization of power at the federal level has often resulted in tensions between state and federal authorities, particularly regarding the management of resources and revenue generation. States have expressed grievances over their limited fiscal autonomy, which hampers their ability to effectively govern and respond to local needs (Henderson, 2023). Additionally, the relationship between state governments and local governments remains fraught with challenges, as local governments often depend on state legislatures for their operational mandates and funding.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Understanding the relationship between political independence and state autonomy involves several theoretical frameworks. Below is a key theories that elucidate this relationship, particularly in the context of federal systems like Nigeria.

Federalism Theory

Federalism theory examines the division of powers between central and regional governments. Johannes Althusius (1557-1638) is often considered the "father of modern federalist thought" for his 1603 work, *Politica Methodice Digesta*, which laid the groundwork for the theory of federalism. The theory posits that political independence can enhance state autonomy by allowing states to exercise self-governance and make decisions that reflect local needs. However, the effectiveness of this autonomy is often contingent on the constitutional framework and the political will of the central government. In Nigeria, while states gained independence, the federal structure has often led to a concentration of power at the national level, undermining regional autonomy.

In the 17th century, German Calvinist, Johannes Althusius (1557-1638) wrote his classic book titled: *Politica Methodice Digesta* (1603) which some scholars have labelled as the "first comprehensive published theory of federalism" (Elazar, 1995). "Althusian federalism consists of a set of associations, beginning with the smallest association, namely the family, spiralling out into the most encompassing association, namely the commonwealth or realm (empire). Between the family and the empire are collegia, the cities and provinces, with the ecclesiastical associations also forming a distinctive part of the larger encompassing constitutional order. The order is built up from below, that is, from the smallest to the most encompassing entity, [and] not the other way around" (Malan, 2017). For his contribution to the study of federalism, Althusius is often regarded as the 'father of modern federalist thought' (Follesdal, 2018) though, Mogi (1931) stated that the honour of being the first advocate of modern federalism goes to Jean Bodin followed by others like Otto Cosmanus, Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf who viewed federalism as a voluntary form of political union, either temporary or permanent, of independent authorities, for special common purposes such as defence against foreign powers, for the interest of trade and communications or other reasons (cited in Dare, 1979).

In the 18th century, the French political thinker, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), in his book *L'esprit des lois* (1748), laid the theoretical foundation for modern confederation. Equally, to have penned his thoughts on federalism during the Enlightenment Age is the Frenchman, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Though the manuscript of what could have been his book on federalism was destroyed during the French Revolution (1789-1799), Rousseau considered federalism to be a vital aspect of a popular government. Fragments of his thought on federalism can be found in his book: *Du Contrat Social* (1762) (Elazar, 1987). The philosophy of federalism in the 18th century will be incomplete without mentioning the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In his essay, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophic Sketch* (1795), Kant expounded the idea that perpetual peace on the international plane is possible when there is a "Federation of Free States" (Mahmoudi, 2008). These Free States will have one thing in common i.e. their civil constitution will be republican (Kant 1795 as cited in Fidler, 1996).

In the 19th century, the Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, in his book titled: *Democracy in America* (1835), "examined the complex interaction of liberty, equality and mass democracy that he had witnessed first hand in the young emergent American society of the early 1830s...He believed that the republican form of government depended for its vitality and permanence upon the durability of the federal system and that the federalism in the federation – America's enduring social diversity – sprang directly from the local communities, townships and provincial assemblies" (Burgess, 2006). Succinctly, "...Tocqueville's contribution to the intellectual debate about federalism and federation was to acknowledge the significance of what he called the 'social condition' of the Anglo-Americans'..." (Burgess, 2006). Like Tocqueville who identified the social condition of the Anglo-Americans, the British philosopher, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) in his book: *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), identified three conditions that are necessary before a federation is advisable. Firstly, there should be a sufficient amount of sympathy among the populations. Secondly, the separate states are not to be so powerful that they rely on their individual strength for protection against foreign encroachment and lastly, there should not be a very marked inequality of strength among the contracting states (Mill, 2010).

2.3 Empirical Review

Fiseha, (2011). Conducted research on the Autonomy and Political Centralization in Ethiopia: An Ethnic Federalism Perspective. Ethiopia's federal system, based on ethnic federalism, has faced significant challenges regarding political centralization. This review explores how the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has centralized power while ostensibly promoting ethnic autonomy. Despite constitutional guarantees for regional autonomy, the central government's control over military and economic resources has greatly undermined the autonomy of regional states.

Köllner, (2014), Conducted a study on Political Centralization and State Autonomy in Germany: A Federal System Perspective. The study explores the impact of political centralization on state autonomy in Germany, focusing on the post-reunification period. The

review finds that political centralization, particularly in fiscal and administrative control, has reduced the capacity of the Länder (states) to implement policies independently. However, constitutional protections and a strong federal tradition still allow states to exercise some autonomy, especially in areas such as education and cultural policies.

Köllner, (2024), fiscal policies have been a key factor in determining the autonomy of the Länder (states). This study finds that the federal government's increasing control over tax revenues and national economic policies has reduced the Länder's fiscal independence. Despite this, Germany's strong federal system and legal protections for states help maintain a degree of political and policy autonomy for the Länder.

O'Malley, (2024). The study investigates the role of fiscal transfers in shaping state autonomy in South Africa. The study reveals that the central government's control over the allocation of revenue to provinces has diminished provincial autonomy, particularly in service delivery and welfare policy. However, the review also highlights how provinces like Western Cape have managed to retain some autonomy through effective political leadership and negotiations with the central government.

Ebel, & Vaillancourt, (2022). Conducted a study on India's governance system, a quasi-federal structure with significant centralization, which affects the autonomy of its states. This empirical review examines how the governance model in India, particularly in the context of the national party system and economic planning, has shaped the autonomy of states. While states have some degree of autonomy, the central government's dominance in fiscal and foreign policy reduces the ability of regional governments to shape their destinies in key areas such as economic development and welfare programs.

Faguet (2024). The review investigates the governance structure in Spain, specifically focusing on the autonomous communities (regions). Spain's quasi-federal structure has allowed for significant regional autonomy, particularly in regions like Catalonia and the Basque Country. The study discusses how governance structures that provide for regional representation in national institutions (e.g., Senate) and substantial fiscal powers contribute to the autonomy of regions. However, recent fiscal and political centralization has reduced the autonomy of these regions, particularly following the 2008 financial crisis.

3 Methodology

A descriptive survey design was utilized for the study. This research design is concerned with the description of data and characteristics of a population. The population of this study includes state government officials, lawmakers, judicial officers, policy analysts, academics in political science and public administration, civil society organizations (CSOs), and representatives of political parties. This diverse group ensures a comprehensive understanding of how political independence influences state autonomy in Nigeria. The population is made up of 1638 participants. The sample size of 321 was determined using the Yamane (1973) formula. The structured questionnaire design with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data for the study. The data was then analyzed using descriptive specifically frequencies, to describe the data. Meanwhile, Simple linear regression analysis was used to ascertain the outcome of the hypothesis.

4. Result

The study population consisted of 321 respondents. Approximately 307 questionnaires were returned, indicating a return rate of 95.6%, which was acceptable. Descriptive and correlation measures were used to analyze the data. Pilot tests on 47 questionnaires were performed and found a Cronbach's alpha of 0.812, which was satisfactory. The results were presented in tables, as detailed below.

Table 4.1: Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of items
0.812	0.812	18

As indicated in Table 4.1 above, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.812, and shows a high level of internal consistency in the piloted sample. All the Cronbach's alpha items were to be deleted if below 0.70, implying that all the 18 questions were internally consistent in the survey questionnaire.

4.2 RESULTS

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 307)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-28yrs	22	7.0%
29-39yrs	78	25%
40-50yrs	102	33%
51-61yrs	56	18%
>61yrs	49	16%
Gender		
Male	178	58%
Female	129	42%
Marital Status		
Single	94	31%
Married	186	61%
Widowed/Divorced	27	9.0%
Educational Qualification		
SSCE or Equivalent	09	3.0%
ND/NCE	45	15.0%
HND/Degree	176	57%
PGD/Masters	52	17%
PhD	25	8.0%

Table 4.2 is the demographic profile of the respondents. The age distribution of respondents indicates that the majority fall within the 40-50 years category (33%), followed by 29-39 years (25%) and 51-61 years (18%). This suggests that most of the participants are in their mid-career or advanced career stages, which is beneficial for the study as they likely have significant experience in governance, policymaking, and state autonomy issues. The youngest group (18-28 years) represents only 7%, while those above 61 years make up 16%, highlighting the presence of both emerging professionals and senior experts in the study. In terms of gender, the data reveals that males constitute 58% of the respondents, while females make up 42%. This suggests a higher representation of men in the study population, which could reflect the gender composition of political and governance-related roles in Nigeria. The marital status distribution shows that 61% of the respondents are married, 31% are single, and 9% are widowed, indicating that a significant portion of participants have family responsibilities, which may influence their perspectives on political and governance issues. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of respondents hold a Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's degree (57%), followed by Postgraduate Diploma/Master's degree holders (17%), and PhD holders (8%). This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents have advanced education levels, which is critical for informed opinions on state autonomy. The presence of participants with SSCE (3%) and ND/NCE (15%) also ensures representation of individuals with varying educational backgrounds, which could contribute to diverse perspectives in the study.

4.3 Simple Regression Analysis

H₀₁: Political Centralization has no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Simple Linear Regression Table

Model 1	Beta	Std. Error	t-Statistic	P-value
Political centralization	0.697	0.045	15.407	0.000
Constant	9.418	0.939	10.025	0.000
F-Stat	237.384 (0.000)			
Adj R ²	0.718			

Source: SPSS version 28.0

The above table 4.3 is the simple linear regression table showing the result of the regression analysis for hypothesis one. This result was tested at a 5% level of significance and shows that all the predictor variables have a significant effect on the outcome variables. This is further explained in the hypothesis below.

4.4 Hypotheses of the study

4.4.1 Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Political Centralization has no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

The result of the regression analysis is summarized above, Table 4.3 specifically shows that the model for the autonomy among states and political centralization is

$$AUT = 9.418 + 0.697(PC) + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

This reveals that Political centralization (PC) affects the autonomy among states in Nigeria. Furthermore, the p-value <0.001, which indicates a statistically significant influence at the 5% level of significance. The coefficient of determination, which is 0.718, reveals that approximately 71.8% of the variation observed by the dependent variable is caused by the independent variable. The F value and the p-value (237.384, <0.001) in the table show that these regression results are significant. Conclusively, it is obvious that there is a statistically significant and positive effect of Political centralization (PC) affects the autonomy among states in Nigeria.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Fiscal Policies have no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

Table 4.4: Simple Linear Regression Table

Model 1	Beta	Std. Error	t-Statistic	P-value
Fiscal policies	0.748	0.048	15.519	0.000
Constant	6.362	1.124	5.659	0.000
F-Stat	240.832 (0.000)			
Adj R ²	0.721			

Source: SPSS version 28.0

The result of the regression analysis is summarized above, Table 4.4 specifically shows that the model for the autonomy among state and fiscal policies is

$$AUT = 6.362 + 0.748 (FP) + \mu_i \quad (2)$$

Fiscal policies (FP) is statistically significant and have an impact on the autonomy among states in Nigeria, with a p-value <0.001, which indicates a significant impact at the 5% level of significance. The coefficient of determination, which is 0.721, reveals that approximately 72.1% of the variation observed by the dependent variable is caused by the independent variable. The F value and the p-value (240.832, <0.001) show that these regression results are significant.

4.4.3 Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Governance structures have no significant effect on the Autonomy Among States in Nigeria.

Table 4.5: Simple Linear Regression Table

Model 1	Beta	Std. Error	t-Statistic	P-value
Governance Structure	0.962	0.072	13.340	0.000
Constant	1.342	1.442	0.931	0.354
F-Stat	177.952 (0.001)			
Adj R ²	0.655			

Source: SPSS version 28.0

The result of the regression analysis is summarized above, Table 4.5 specifically shows that the model for the autonomy among state and government structure is

$$AUT = 1.342 + 0.962(GS) + \mu_i \quad (3)$$

This reveals that the government structure (GS) influences the autonomy among states in Nigeria, with a p-value <0.001, which indicates a statistically significant influence at 5% level of significance. The coefficient of determination, which is 0.655, reveals that approximately 65.5% of the variation observed by the dependent variable is caused by the independent variable. The F value and the p-value (177.952, <0.001) show that these regression results are significant.

5. Conclusion

The effect of political independence on the autonomy of states in Nigeria is profoundly influenced by several interrelated factors, including political centralization, fiscal policies, and governance structures. Political centralization has emerged as a significant barrier to state autonomy. Despite gaining independence, the concentration of power within the federal government has often led to a marginalization of state authorities. This centralization restricts states' ability to make independent decisions, undermining their capacity to govern effectively and respond to local needs. Moreover, fiscal policies play a crucial role in shaping state autonomy. The federal government's control over revenue allocation and resources has limited states' financial independence. This reliance on federal transfers constrains their ability to implement localized policies and develop economically, further eroding their autonomy. Effective fiscal decentralization is essential for empowering states, allowing them to manage their resources and fiscal responsibilities.

Additionally, governance structures significantly impact state autonomy in Nigeria. The existing framework often favours centralized decision-making, which can stifle local governance and diminish the responsiveness of state governments. Strengthening governance mechanisms that promote accountability and local participation is vital for enhancing state autonomy. In summary, while political independence theoretically provides states in Nigeria with the opportunity for greater autonomy, political centralization, restrictive

fiscal policies, and existing governance structures collectively undermine this potential. Addressing these challenges through reforms aimed at decentralization, equitable resource allocation, and improved governance frameworks is essential for fostering true autonomy among states in Nigeria. The study concluded that political independence has significant effect on the autonomy of states in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To enhance the autonomy of states in Nigeria and effectively leverage the benefits of political independence, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Implement constitutional reforms that promote greater political decentralization. This includes devolving more powers to state governments, allowing them to make independent decisions on governance, resource management, and local development.
- ii. Develop and implement fiscal policies that ensure equitable revenue sharing between the federal and state governments. This should include increasing the financial autonomy of states by allowing them to retain a larger share of their generated revenues, particularly from natural resources.
- iii. Enhance the capacity and effectiveness of local government structures by providing them with more autonomy and resources. Empower local governments to engage directly with citizens, fostering accountability and responsiveness to local needs.

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