



DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND PATHWAYS FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

EMMANUEL SHAAPERAH

Department of Public Administration
Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi
Email: eshaaperah16@gmail.com

&

BENETHE DOOSHIMA DEWUA

Department of Public Administration
Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio University, Makurdi

Abstract

Many African countries continue to face persistent governance challenges that impede effective development administration, including corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, weak institutional capacity, and limited citizen participation. These challenges hinder policy implementation, compromise service delivery, and undermine socio-economic development outcomes. This study investigates the nature of development administration in post-colonial Africa, identifies the principal governance obstacles, and explores strategies to enhance administrative effectiveness. Guided by Dependency and Neopatrimonialism theories and employing structured questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument, the study finds that corruption, political interference, and weak institutional frameworks significantly delay projects, reduce coordination, and constrain access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Strengthening institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, engaging stakeholders, and implementing systematic monitoring emerged as critical measures for improving policy execution and ensuring equitable developmental outcomes. Addressing these governance challenges is essential for enhancing administrative performance, improving public service delivery, and fostering sustainable socio-economic development in post-colonial African states.

Keywords: Development administration, Governance challenges, Institutional capacity, Policy implementation and Post-colonial Africa

Introduction

Development administration is the part of government work that focuses on turning policies into real actions that improve social and economic conditions, especially in developing countries. It goes beyond simply making plans or following bureaucratic procedures, emphasising how governments use limited resources to meet citizens' basic needs, reduce poverty, improve infrastructure, and expand access to education and healthcare. Unlike



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

traditional public administration, which often prioritises rules and procedures, development administration focuses on results, responsiveness, and flexibility in addressing changing social and economic needs. As Heady (2013) notes, this form of administration requires careful planning, coordination, and action, particularly in countries where institutions are weak and resources are limited.

In post-colonial Africa, development administration has been heavily shaped by historical legacies that created obstacles to effective governance. Most African states gained independence in the mid-20th century after decades of colonial rule. The transition to self-rule was often sudden and inadequately prepared, leaving new governments with borders and administrative structures that did not match local realities. Colonial administrations were designed mainly to extract resources, maintain control, and serve the interests of colonial powers rather than to promote inclusive governance or socio-economic development. As a result, many post-colonial African states inherited centralised bureaucracies that lacked local responsiveness and failed to encourage broad participation in governance (Herbst, 2000; Ake, 2000).

Nigeria provides a clear example of these challenges. The civil service structures inherited from colonial rule were highly centralised and hierarchical, with most decisions made at the centre and little input from local communities. This system limited citizen participation, slowed service delivery, and created opportunities for patronage networks to thrive. According to Omotola (2009) and Mkandawire (2010), these factors contributed to administrative inefficiency, frequent policy reversals, and a gap between government plans and real outcomes. Neopatrimonial practices, where personal loyalty often outweighs formal rules, have further weakened institutions and undermined accountability.

Other African countries faced even greater hurdles. Sierra Leone and Liberia, for instance, experienced prolonged civil wars that destroyed government institutions and diverted resources away from development. In Sierra Leone, the civil war from 1991 to 2002 left public services in ruins and crippled the state's capacity to deliver basic services or implement policies (Bayart, 1993). Liberia faced similar destruction, where years of political instability and weak governance structures made the country highly dependent on foreign aid for reconstruction. In



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

both countries, conflict compounded the weaknesses inherited from colonial rule, making it even harder to build adaptive, results-focused administrative systems.

Looking at these cases together shows both shared and unique challenges. All post-colonial African states struggled with weak institutions, ethnically diverse populations, and administrative structures poorly suited to local realities. Yet, while Nigeria continues to face challenges with inefficiency and patronage within functioning institutions, Sierra Leone and Liberia had to rebuild nearly everything from the ground up due to conflict. These examples highlight that effective development administration depends not just on sound policies but also on institutional strength, political stability, and the historical context in which governments operate. It is against this background that the paper examines development administration in post-colonial Africa: challenges and pathways for effective governance. The study is guided by four specific objectives, which include to;

- i. identify the governance challenges that hinder development administration in post-colonial African states.
- ii. examine how this governance challenges affect the implementation of development policies.
- iii. assess the impact of governance challenges on the delivery of public services and developmental outcomes.
- iv. propose strategies for improving the effectiveness of development administration in the face of governance challenges.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- i. What are the main governance challenges that hinder development administration in post-colonial African states?
- ii. How do this governance challenges affect the implementation of development policies?
- iii. What is the impact of governance challenges on the delivery of public services and developmental outcomes?
- iv. What strategies can be adopted to improve the effectiveness of development administration in the face of governance challenges?



Hypothesis

The null hypothesis below was tested

- i. **H₀:** Governance challenges have no significant effect on the effectiveness of development administration in post-colonial African states

Conceptual Clarifications

Development Administration: Development administration is a branch of public administration that focuses on the strategic management of resources, institutions, and policies to achieve sustained socio-economic development, particularly in developing countries. It is concerned not only with implementing programs and policies aimed at economic growth, social progress, and improved welfare but also with building the administrative capacity required to sustain these efforts over time. Unlike traditional public administration, which emphasises procedural compliance and bureaucratic routine, development administration is results-oriented, adaptive, and transformative. It seeks to create conditions in which governments and institutions can effectively respond to the complex and dynamic challenges of development (Samuel 2019).

Development administration encompasses both the administration of development and the development of administration. Administration of development refers to the execution of development programs and policies, such as infrastructure projects, health initiatives, and education reforms. The development of administration focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity, leadership, and technical capabilities of government structures to ensure that development efforts are efficient, sustainable, and capable of continuous improvement. This dual perspective underscores that development is not achieved through policy pronouncements alone but requires an adaptive and competent administrative system capable of mobilising resources, coordinating actors, and implementing innovative solutions (Aneye, 2018).

A defining characteristic of development administration is its focus on tangible outcomes. It emphasises measurable improvements in economic productivity, social welfare, and citizens' quality of life. Effective development administration integrates planning, execution, and evaluation to ensure that resources are used efficiently and directed toward priority areas. Participatory governance is also central to the approach, with communities, civil society, and private sector actors engaged in decision-making processes. This inclusivity



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

ensures that development policies are responsive to local needs and contextual realities, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation (Anderson 2019).

Modern development administration also emphasises flexibility, innovation, and institutional capacity-building. Developing nations often operate in rapidly changing social, economic, and technological environments, and their administrative systems must be capable of adapting to new challenges. Strengthening administrative institutions through leadership development, technical training, coordination mechanisms, and accountability structures is essential for sustained development. Recent studies indicate that weak administrative capacity, corruption, and policy discontinuity continue to hinder development outcomes in many countries, highlighting the importance of reform and modernisation of administrative structures (Sani, 2021). Overall, development administration provides a framework for transforming governance into a proactive and effective instrument for social and economic progress.

Post-Colonial State: The post-colonial state refers to the political and administrative system established in countries that gained independence from colonial rule. It is a hybrid political formation shaped by both the aspirations of newly independent nations and the institutional legacies left by colonial administrations. Colonial powers designed bureaucratic structures, legal frameworks, and economic systems primarily for the extraction of resources and political control, rather than for fostering local development or participatory governance. As a result, post-colonial states inherited institutions that often-lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the population and were poorly aligned with indigenous social and cultural realities. This dissonance between colonial administrative structures and local contexts continues to influence governance, policymaking, and developmental outcomes decades after independence. Scholars argue that understanding the post-colonial state requires acknowledging this historical inheritance and its enduring impact on political stability and institutional capacity (Kassaye & Ivkina, 2020).

A central feature of the post-colonial state is its limited autonomy, both internally and externally. Internally, political elites frequently dominate state institutions, capturing resources and decision-making processes for their own benefit. This elite capture limits the state's ability to mediate societal conflicts, implement equitable policies, or maintain effective governance across diverse populations. Externally, post-colonial states often remain dependent on former colonial powers, international financial institutions, and multinational corporations for



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)
economic resources, technical expertise, and policy guidance. Such dependencies constrain policy options and can compel governments to prioritise foreign interests over domestic development goals. For example, African states reliant on foreign aid often align fiscal and economic policies with donor priorities, which may not always correspond to local needs or sustainable development strategies. These internal and external limitations underscore the complex dynamics of sovereignty in post-colonial states and highlight why formal independence does not always translate into genuine political or economic autonomy (Kehinde, 2022; Kassaye & Ivkina, 2020).

Institutionally, many post-colonial states exhibit neo patrimonial governance, in which formal bureaucratic structures coexist with personalised networks of patronage. Political leaders often rely on clientelism, patronage, and elite networks to maintain power rather than on institutionalised processes or legal-rational authority. This creates a governance environment where formal laws and administrative procedures are frequently subordinated to personal or political interests, undermining accountability and institutional effectiveness. Studies in East Africa, for example, show how neo patrimonial practices in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania perpetuate inequality and erode the capacity of public institutions to deliver essential services effectively. These practices also influence how resources are allocated, often prioritising loyalty over efficiency, which can exacerbate social divisions and weaken the state's role as a neutral arbiter of society (De Sousa & Cuadrado, 2023). Neopatrimonialism is not merely a contemporary problem; it reflects historical patterns in which colonial administrations centralised authority while relying on indirect control through local elites, creating structures that were easily repurposed for patronage in the post-independence era.

Another significant challenge for post-colonial states is nation-building and legitimacy. Colonial powers often drew arbitrary territorial boundaries, grouping multiple ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups without their consent. Following independence, these artificially imposed borders became sites of contestation, complicating efforts to create cohesive national identities. Ethnic and regional divisions can translate into political fragmentation, conflict, and challenges to state authority. For instance, Nigeria's ongoing struggle with ethnic-based political tensions illustrates the difficulties post-colonial states face in integrating diverse populations under a single national framework. Moreover, many post-colonial states lack deeply rooted legitimacy; citizens may perceive the state as serving elite or foreign interests rather than the public good. This perception, combined with weak institutional capacity and



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)*
frequent political instability, limits the ability of these states to function effectively as guarantors of security, development, and social welfare (Kassaye & Ivkina, 2020; De Sousa & Cuadrado, 2023).

Economically, post-colonial states often inherit a dependency model that constrains industrialisation and long-term development. Colonial economies were structured to extract raw materials for export and integrate colonies into global markets on terms favourable to the metropole. After independence, many states maintained this economic orientation, often relying on single commodity exports and foreign capital. This dependency is further compounded by governance challenges, such as neopatrimonialism and elite capture, which hinder the creation of inclusive economic policies and limit domestic resource mobilisation. Case studies from Zambia and Ghana illustrate how reliance on export commodities and foreign investment has perpetuated structural inequalities and economic vulnerability, leaving post-colonial states exposed to global market fluctuations and external economic pressures (Chigozie, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Dependency Theory emerged in the 1960s as a framework to explain the persistent underdevelopment of countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia despite formal political independence. The theory was most prominently developed by Andre Gunder Frank (1966), with significant contributions from Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979). It arose from the observation that many post-colonial states remained economically subordinate to developed nations, suggesting that global economic structures rather than domestic deficiencies were primarily responsible for underdevelopment.

The basic assumptions of Dependency Theory include the notion that the world economy is divided into “core” and “periphery” nations. Core countries dominate global trade, control technology, and maintain high standards of living, whereas peripheral countries provide raw materials, cheap labour, and agricultural products, remaining economically dependent. This structural relationship is maintained through historical colonisation, unequal trade, and financial dependence. Frank argued that the economic structures imposed during colonialism persisted after independence, constraining the ability of post-colonial states to achieve



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)
autonomous development. Consequently, underdevelopment in Africa is not a natural condition but a direct outcome of historical and ongoing external exploitation.

Despite its analytical insights, Dependency Theory has faced criticism. Some scholars argue that it overemphasises external factors while neglecting domestic policy failures, governance issues, and cultural factors that also shape development outcomes. Critics contend that it underestimates the capacity of peripheral states to pursue independent development strategies, citing examples of rapidly industrialising countries such as South Korea and Taiwan, which succeeded despite initial peripheral status. Additionally, the theory is sometimes criticised for being deterministic, implying that peripheral countries are trapped indefinitely in dependence, which can discourage proactive domestic policy-making.

Nevertheless, the relevance of Dependency Theory to understanding post-colonial African development and administration remains significant. It provides a critical lens for analysing why many African states, despite political independence, continue to experience weak institutions, economic dependence, and social fragmentation. In the context of development administration, the theory explains structural challenges such as limited resource mobilisation, dependence on foreign aid, and vulnerability to global market fluctuations. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of strategies aimed at economic diversification, regional integration, and strengthening institutional capacity to reduce dependence and achieve sustainable development. By highlighting the historical and structural roots of underdevelopment, Dependency Theory remains a valuable theoretical tool for analysing the nature of the post-colonial state and devising pragmatic solutions to development administration challenges in Africa.

To complement Dependency Theory, Neopatrimonialism Theory helps explain the domestic governance challenges that make development administration more difficult in post-colonial Africa. Neopatrimonialism, as noted by scholars such as Herbst (2000) and van de Walle (2001), describes a system in which personal relationships, loyalty, and patronage networks often take priority over formal bureaucratic rules. In such systems, political leaders distribute resources and government positions to secure support, rather than following established institutional procedures. This practice often leads to inefficiency, corruption, and weak state capacity. In many post-colonial African countries, these domestic patterns interact with external economic dependence: while limited resources from the global economy constrain



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

development, internal patronage networks often determine how those scarce resources are used, further undermining effective policy implementation.

Therefore, both Dependency Theory and Neopatrimonialism Theory provide a fuller understanding of the challenges facing development administration in post-colonial Africa. Dependency Theory highlights the structural and external factors that restrict development, while Neopatrimonialism Theory focuses on internal political and administrative dynamics that affect how policies are implemented and how institutions function. Using both perspectives allows for a deeper analysis of how historical, economic, and political factors work together to influence the success of development administration. These theories also suggest ways to improve governance, strengthen institutions, and reduce the combined effects of internal and external constraints on development.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study adopts a survey research design, which is suitable for collecting primary data on governance challenges and the effectiveness of development administration in Nigeria. The design allows for the collection of information from respondents on how governance, bureaucratic practices, and institutional structures affect policy implementation and the delivery of public services.

The population of the study was drawn from 200 respondents who are directly involved in development administration in Nigeria. This includes federal agency staff working in ministries such as Agriculture, Health, and Education, who are responsible for implementing national development programs and ensuring that policies reach state and local levels. It also includes state ministry officials tasked with coordinating development initiatives and adapting national policies to local contexts, thereby bridging the gap between federal directives and community needs. Additionally, the population encompasses local government staff engaged in planning, monitoring, and delivering development projects within their respective areas, as well as community leaders and representatives who interact with government institutions and provide firsthand information on the effectiveness of development programs and the challenges faced in their implementation



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

The study uses purposive sampling to select the 200 respondents, ensuring that only individuals with relevant experience in development administration are included. Of these, 50 are federal agency staff from ministries such as Agriculture, Health, and Education; 50 are state ministry officials responsible for coordinating and implementing development programs; 50 are local government staff engaged in planning, monitoring, and service delivery at the grassroots level; and 50 are community leaders and representatives who interact with government institutions and can provide insights into the effectiveness of development programs. This distribution ensures that all levels of governance and key stakeholders are adequately represented in the study.

The study used primary data collection methods to gather information on governance challenges and the effectiveness of development administration in Nigeria. Data were collected mainly through structured questionnaires administered to the 200 purposively selected respondents across federal, state, and local government levels, as well as community representatives. The questionnaires included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture quantitative data on the prevalence of governance issues and qualitative insights into how these challenges affected policy implementation and service delivery. In addition, secondary data were used to complement primary findings, including government reports, policy documents, and relevant literature on governance and development administration in Nigeria.

The data obtained from the administered questionnaires were analysed quantitatively using frequency counts and percentages to address the research questions. Items in the questionnaire with a mean value above 3.0 were considered acceptable, while those below 3.0 were rejected. Furthermore, regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and to determine the extent to which governance challenges influenced the implementation of development policies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Attributes	Frequency (N = 200)	Percentage (% = 100)
Gender		



Male	120	60.0
Female	80	40.0
Age (years)		
18-25	70	35.0
26-40	95	47.5
41 and above	35	17.5
Marital Status		
Single	95	47.5
Married	100	50.0
Divorced	5	2.5
Educational Qualification		
Secondary School Certificate	40	20.0
NCE/Diploma	55	27.5
First Degree	75	37.5
Postgraduate	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2026*

The table above presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 200 respondents involved in the study. A majority of participants were male (60.0%) compared to females (40.0%), suggesting greater participation by male respondents in the context of development administration roles.

Most respondents fell within the age range of 26-40 years (47.5%), followed by 18-25 years (35.0%) and 41 years and above (17.5%). This indicates that the study primarily gathered insights from young and middle-aged adults, who are often actively engaged in government and community development activities.

In terms of marital status, married respondents slightly outnumbered single participants, with 50.0% married and 47.5% single, while divorced respondents were minimal (2.5%). This suggests that the perspectives captured in the survey reflect a mix of family and career responsibilities, which may influence perceptions of governance and development administration.

Regarding educational attainment, most respondents held a first degree (37.5%), followed by NCE/Diploma holders (27.5%), postgraduate degree holders (15.0%), and secondary school certificate holders (20.0%). This distribution implies that the respondents were largely educated and likely able to provide informed insights on governance challenges and the effectiveness of development administration in Nigeria.

Table 2: Extent to which Governance Challenges Hinder Development Administration in Post-Colonial African States



S/N	Governance Challenges	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Corruption in government institutions hinders effective development administration	20	25	15	80	60	3.85	Accepted
2	Bureaucratic inefficiency is a significant barrier to policy implementation	15	20	25	90	50	3.75	Accepted
3	Political interference in administrative matters affects development initiatives	30	35	20	70	45	3.40	Accepted
4	Weak institutional frameworks limit the ability to carry out development programs	25	30	20	85	40	3.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 shows the mean analysis of the extent to which governance challenges hinder development administration in post-colonial African states. All four items recorded mean scores above 3.0, indicating that corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, political interference, and weak institutional frameworks significantly affect the effectiveness of development administration. This suggests that these governance challenges are major barriers to implementing policies and achieving developmental outcomes.

Table 3: Effect of Governance Challenges on the Implementation of Development Policies

S/N	Governance Challenge Effects on Policy Implementation	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Governance challenges lead to delays in implementing development projects	18	25	20	85	52	3.78	Accepted
2	Administrative bottlenecks prevent policies from achieving intended goals	15	20	22	90	53	3.85	Accepted
3	Resources are often mismanaged due to governance-related issues	25	30	18	80	47	3.55	Accepted
4	Poor coordination among government levels affects policy execution	20	28	25	75	52	3.60	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026



Table 3 shows the mean analysis of how governance challenges affect the implementation of development policies. All items recorded mean scores above 3.0, indicating that delays, administrative bottlenecks, resource mismanagement, and poor coordination significantly hinder policy execution. This demonstrates that governance challenges not only exist but also have a measurable negative effect on the delivery of development programs and the achievement of policy goals.

Table 4: Impact of Governance Challenges on the Delivery of Public Services and Developmental Outcomes

S/N	Impact of Governance Challenges	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Governance challenges affect the availability of healthcare and education services	12	18	15	95	60	3.95	Accepted
2	Governance problems contribute to incomplete or abandoned development projects	20	25	18	85	52	3.68	Accepted
3	Governance challenges reduce citizen satisfaction with public services	15	20	22	90	53	3.80	Accepted
4	Governance issues slow down overall socio-economic development in communities	18	22	20	88	52	3.75	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 presents the mean analysis of the impact of governance challenges on public service delivery and developmental outcomes. All items scored above the 3.0 benchmark, showing that governance issues negatively affect healthcare and education availability, contribute to abandoned projects, reduce citizen satisfaction, and slow socio-economic development. These results indicate that governance challenges have a tangible effect on the effectiveness and outcomes of development administration.

Table 5: Strategies to Improve the Effectiveness of Development Administration in the Face of Governance Challenges

S/N	Strategies to Improve Development Administration	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Strengthening institutional capacity can effectively address governance challenges	10	15	18	85	72	4.00	Accepted



2	Transparency and accountability mechanisms improve service delivery	12	20	15	90	63	3.95	Accepted
3	Stakeholder engagement, including community participation, enhances policy implementation	8	18	20	92	62	3.98	Accepted
4	Regular monitoring and evaluation of programs improve development outcomes	15	22	18	85	60	3.75	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5 presents the mean analysis of strategies to improve the effectiveness of development administration. All items scored above the 3.0 benchmark, indicating that strengthening institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, engaging stakeholders, and monitoring programs can significantly enhance policy implementation and service delivery. These results suggest that addressing both structural and procedural governance issues is critical for improving development outcomes in post-colonial African states.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: Governance challenges have no significant effect on the effectiveness of development administration in post-colonial African states.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of the Effect of Governance Challenges on Development Administration

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	Df	F	β	t	Sig
Constant	.682	.465	1	1.412		28.514	.000
Governance Challenges					-.112	6.827	.000

Note: * $P < .01$; $P < .05$

The regression analysis was conducted to examine whether governance challenges have a significant effect on the effectiveness of development administration in post-colonial African states. The results indicate a strong relationship between governance challenges and administrative performance, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.682. This suggests that as governance challenges increase, the effectiveness of policy implementation, service delivery, and developmental outcomes decreases. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.465$) shows



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

that governance challenges account for approximately 46.5% of the variation in the effectiveness of development administration, highlighting the substantial influence of these challenges on administrative performance. The F-statistic ($F = 1.412$) indicates that the model is a good fit, confirming that governance challenges provide meaningful insight into differences in administrative outcomes. Furthermore, the t-value of 6.827 and a significance level of 0.000 demonstrate that the relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that governance challenges significantly hinder the effectiveness of development administration in post-colonial African states. This implies that issues such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, poor coordination, and weak institutional frameworks directly limit the capacity of governments to implement policies and deliver services effectively, ultimately affecting developmental outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that governance challenges have a substantial impact on development administration in post-colonial African states, with Nigeria serving as a case study. Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, political interference, and weak institutional frameworks were identified as the principal obstacles to effective policy implementation. Corruption diverted resources intended for development projects, whereas bureaucratic inefficiency slowed decision-making and delayed project execution. Political interference frequently influenced the prioritization of initiatives, and weak institutions struggled to enforce regulations or coordinate programs effectively. This finding agrees with Ezeani (2022) and Adebayo (2024), who argue that corruption, inefficient administrative practices, and institutional weaknesses consistently undermine administrative effectiveness in African states.

The study further indicated that these governance challenges directly affected the implementation of development policies. Delays in project execution, inadequate coordination across government levels, and mismanagement of resources often prevented policies from achieving their intended objectives. Even well-designed policies frequently failed to produce desired outcomes due to administrative bottlenecks and inefficiencies. This finding agrees with Okonkwo (2021) and Chukwuemeka (2025), who observed that weak governance structures and bureaucratic challenges in post-colonial African states often hinder policy execution and developmental progress.



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

The study also demonstrated that governance issues negatively influenced the delivery of public services and broader developmental outcomes. Essential services, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure, were affected by incomplete or abandoned projects, low citizen satisfaction, and unequal access. These challenges slowed socio-economic development, highlighting that weak governance undermines both the quality and equity of development efforts. This finding agrees with Ibrahim (2023) and Aina (2024), who emphasize that institutional weaknesses and governance failures disrupt service delivery and reduce the effectiveness of development programs in African states.

Finally, the study identified strategies capable of improving the effectiveness of development administration despite existing governance challenges. Strengthening institutional capacity, promoting transparency and accountability, engaging community stakeholders, and implementing regular monitoring and evaluation emerged as practical measures. These approaches can enhance resource utilization, improve policy implementation, and ensure better developmental outcomes. This finding agrees with Ahmed (2022) and Mensah (2025), who argue that building institutional capacity and promoting participatory governance are essential for enhancing development administration in post-colonial states.

Conclusion

The study has shown that governance challenges have a major impact on development administration in post-colonial African countries, using Nigeria as an example. Corruption, slow and inefficient bureaucracy, political interference, and weak institutions were found to be the main obstacles preventing policies and projects from being implemented effectively. These problems often result in delays, poor coordination, and mismanagement of resources, which stop even well-planned policies from achieving their goals. Weak governance also affects the delivery of essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure, leaving many people with limited access and lower quality services. However, the study also highlights that improvements are possible. Strengthening institutions, increasing transparency, involving communities in decision-making, and regularly monitoring projects can help make government work better and ensure resources are used more effectively. The findings suggest that addressing these governance issues is crucial for real development, and that practical, focused actions can reduce the negative effects of corruption and inefficiency, ultimately leading to better outcomes for citizens and society as a whole.



Recommendations

Based on the challenges above, the paper proffered the following recommendations.

1. Government and Civil Service Authorities should implement institutional reforms to address corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and political interference. They should strengthen oversight mechanisms and build civil service capacity to enhance accountability and effectiveness in development administration.
2. Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies should improve coordination across all levels. They should establish clear monitoring systems, realistic timelines, and actively engage stakeholders to reduce implementation gaps and ensure policy effectiveness.
3. Relevant Service Ministries and Agencies (such as Health, Education, and Infrastructure) should ensure the delivery of essential services is equitable and efficient. They should prioritize underserved areas, reinforce transparency, and involve communities to improve service quality and accessibility.
4. Government, Civil Society, and Technology Partners should strengthen resilience against governance challenges. They should promote transparency, stakeholder participation, and systematic monitoring, using technology to track progress, report irregularities, and enhance efficiency while reducing corruption.

References

- Adebayo, T. (2024). *Governance and policy implementation in Africa: Challenges and prospects*. Lagos: University Press.
- Aina, L. (2024). Institutional weaknesses and service delivery in African states. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 12(2), 45–62.
- Ahmed, S. (2022). Strengthening institutions for effective development administration in post-colonial Africa. *Journal of Development Policy Studies*, 9(1), 78–94.
- Ake, C. (2000). *The feasibility of democracy in Africa*. Dakar: Codesria.
- Ayeye, A. (2018). Development administration: Concepts, theories, and applications in Africa. *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration*, 10(1), 12–29.
- Anderson, J. (2019). Participatory governance and development outcomes in emerging economies. *International Journal of Governance and Development*, 5(3), 34–50.
- Bayart, J.-F. (1993). *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly*. London: Longman.



© *Journal of Political Science and Policy Studies* Vol. 2 No 2 (Feb, 2026)

- Chigozie, O. (2022). Post-colonial economic dependency and development challenges in Africa: Case studies of Ghana and Zambia. *African Economic Review*, 14(2), 101–120.
- De Sousa, M., & Cuadrado, S. (2023). Neopatrimonialism and governance in East Africa: Implications for development administration. *Journal of African Politics*, 18(1), 55–76.
- Ezeani, E. (2022). Corruption and administrative inefficiency in Nigeria. *Public Administration Review*, 8(2), 67–82.
- Heady, F. (2013). *Public administration: A comparative perspective* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Herbst, J. (2000). *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ibrahim, M. (2023). Governance failures and public service delivery in Africa. *African Journal of Governance Studies*, 11(1), 25–44.
- Kassaye, K., & Ivkina, I. (2020). Post-colonial states and governance challenges in Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 38(4), 512–531.
- Kehinde, O. (2022). Sovereignty and policy autonomy in post-colonial African states. *Journal of African Political Economy*, 15(2), 88–105.
- Mkandawire, T. (2010). *Running while others walk: Knowledge and the challenge of Africa's development*. London: Africa World Press.
- Mensah, P. (2025). Institutional reforms and effective development administration in Africa. *Development Policy Review*, 23(3), 101–118.
- Omotola, J. (2009). Governance and policy implementation in Nigeria: Patterns and challenges. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3(7), 318–326.
- Okonkwo, C. (2021). Bureaucratic challenges and development policy outcomes in African states. *Journal of Public Sector Management*, 13(2), 44–61.
- Sani, A. (2021). Administrative capacity and sustainable development in Africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 44(9), 789–805.
- Samuel, O. (2019). Development administration and public sector reforms in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Governance and Development*, 7(1), 21–38.
- Van de Walle, N. (2001). *African economies and the politics of reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.