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Leadership, Public Sector Administration and National Development in Nigeria (2015–2023)

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Abstract

Leadership remains a critical factor in the administration and development of every nation. Effective leadership provides direction, promotes accountability, ensures efficient resource management, and facilitates the implementation of policies aimed at improving citizens' welfare. Despite Nigeria's abundant human and natural resources, the country continues to experience developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure. These challenges have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of leadership and public administration in promoting national development. This study examined the role of leadership in public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach using a descriptive survey design. Data were collected through questionnaires and documentary sources. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data, while qualitative information was analysed through content analysis. The findings revealed that effective leadership significantly contributes to policy implementation, public service delivery, accountability, infrastructural development, and overall national development. The study further found that corruption, weak institutions, poor accountability mechanisms, and ineffective governance practices constitute major obstacles to sustainable development in Nigeria. The study concluded that national development is largely dependent on the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of public administrative institutions. The study therefore recommends strengthening leadership capacity, enhancing accountability mechanisms, promoting transparency in governance, strengthening public institutions, and intensifying anti-corruption measures to achieve sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Leadership, Public Administration, Governance, National Development, Accountability, Nigeria.

Introduction

National development remains one of the foremost aspirations of modern states. It encompasses economic growth, infrastructural expansion, improved healthcare delivery, quality education, political stability, security, and the overall enhancement of citizens' welfare. The attainment of these developmental objectives depends significantly on the effectiveness of public administration and the quality of leadership directing governmental institutions. While countries may possess abundant natural and human resources, the capacity of leaders to formulate policies, coordinate institutions, and ensure effective implementation largely determines whether such resources translate into sustainable development.

Nigeria is endowed with vast natural resources, a large population, strategic geographical advantages, and substantial human capital. Despite these advantages, the country continues to grapple with numerous developmental challenges, including widespread poverty, unemployment, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, poor healthcare services, and weak educational outcomes. Successive administrations have introduced various development programmes and reforms aimed at addressing these challenges; however, the outcomes have often fallen short of expectations. This situation has generated

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sustained scholarly and policy debates regarding the role of leadership and public administration in Nigeria's developmental trajectory.

Leadership occupies a central position in public administration because leaders are responsible for policy formulation, resource allocation, institutional coordination, and the provision of strategic direction for national development. Effective leadership promotes accountability, transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness within public institutions, while ineffective leadership may encourage corruption, policy inconsistency, administrative inefficiency, and poor service delivery. According to the governance perspective, development outcomes are largely influenced by the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of institutions responsible for implementing government policies (World Bank, 2022).

Between 2015 and 2023, Nigeria witnessed significant political, economic, and social developments under successive democratic administrations. During this period, several initiatives were introduced to address infrastructure deficits, improve public service delivery, combat corruption, stimulate economic growth, and enhance national security. Despite these efforts, indicators such as unemployment rates, multidimensional poverty, insecurity, inflation, and public dissatisfaction with government performance remained significant concerns. These realities raise important questions regarding the effectiveness of leadership and administrative structures in promoting national development.

Existing studies have extensively examined leadership as a theoretical concept and national development as a broad developmental objective. However, many of these studies focus on leadership traits, styles, and characteristics without adequately examining how leadership influences national development through the machinery of public administration. Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to assessing the relationship between leadership effectiveness, administrative performance, and developmental outcomes within the Nigerian context during the period 2015–2023. This gap necessitates a systematic investigation into how leadership and public administration have influenced national development in Nigeria.

It is against this background that this study examines the role of leadership in public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The study seeks to evaluate the extent to which leadership effectiveness contributes to policy implementation, public service delivery, accountability, and overall national development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's enormous human and natural resources, the country continues to experience significant developmental challenges. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, poor healthcare delivery, educational deficiencies, and administrative inefficiency have persisted across successive administrations. These challenges have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of leadership and public administration in driving sustainable national development.

Between 2015 and 2023, various government programmes and policy initiatives were introduced to improve economic performance, strengthen institutions, enhance public service delivery, and promote national development. However, the persistence of developmental deficits suggests that the mere existence of policies does not automatically translate into developmental outcomes. Questions therefore arise concerning the quality of leadership directing public institutions and the effectiveness of administrative mechanisms responsible for policy implementation.

Many scholars have attributed Nigeria's developmental challenges to poor governance, weak institutions, corruption, lack of accountability, policy inconsistency, and ineffective leadership. While numerous studies have examined leadership styles and governance practices, limited empirical attention has been given to understanding how leadership influences national development through public administrative processes. Consequently, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding the extent to which leadership effectiveness contributes to administrative performance and developmental outcomes in Nigeria.

The problem of this study, therefore, is the apparent disconnect between Nigeria's abundant resources and its developmental outcomes, despite numerous governmental interventions between 2015 and 2023. This study seeks to assess how leadership

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within the framework of public administration has influenced national development in Nigeria during the period under review.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To assess the role of leadership in public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the influence of leadership effectiveness on public administrative performance in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023.
2. To assess the relationship between leadership accountability and national development in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptualization

Organizational Culture

The concept of culture has stemmed from the study of ethnic and national differences in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and social psychology. Culture can be considered as social heritage of a society. It is a pattern of responses discovered, developed, or invented during the society's history of handling problems which arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment. If these responses are considered the correct way to perceive, feel, think, and act, they are passed on to the new members through experiencing and teaching. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It involves all learned and shared, such as assumptions, beliefs, norms, values, and knowledge, as well as attitudes, behavior, dress, symbols, heroes, rituals and language. Symbols, heroes, and rituals etc. are the tangible or visual aspects of the practices of a culture. The true cultural meaning of the practices is intangible; this is revealed only when the practices are interpreted by the members of society (Hofstede, 2011).

The results of all literature have a consensus that the culture affects our whole life. Not only the culture has an important role in our relationship between each other of our daily life, but also it is very important within an organization, playing a large role in whether it is a happy and healthy environment in which to work. The culture of organization creates a frame for managers and employees. For instance, if the culture enables to communication between managers and subordinates easily, this situation can influence their work behavior and attitudes. When the interaction between the managers and employees is good, this effective relationship can reflect as a greater contribution to organizational communication and collaboration, and thus, can also encourage to accomplish the mission and objectives assigned by the organization. Such an organizational culture is not necessary for types of all organization because each organization has a different perspective about how it perceives the world around them and a system of assumptions, values, norms, and attitudes, manifested through symbols (Moyce, 2015).

Organizational culture has been a focus of debate for researchers and professionals since the 1980s, which led to several studies over the years (e.g., Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Cooke and Lafferty, 1983; Hofstede,1990; Schein, 2004; Cameron and Quinn, 1999). The concept of organizational culture has gained wide importance, because it allows to understand human systems as well as organizations (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). According to Hofstede, at organizational level, culture can be defined as the collective programming of the minds of group members by which one group distinguishes itself from other groups in just the same way as the definition of national culture. Yet, he added that an organization is less complex and less diffuse than a nation (McSweeney, 2002).In another definition made by Schein (2004), the culture of an organization has been defined as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.” (Arditi, et.al., 2016).Common and shared idea about the organizational culture is that it has been considered as an important means for organizations to integrate internal processes and adapt to external conditions (Tusi et al. 2006).

Cameron and Quinn (1999) who studied on the organizational culture developed the model of the “Competing Values Framework” (OCAI) which

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consists of four competing values. According to their model, there are four types of organizational culture and every organization has its own mix of these four types of organizational cultures (Yu and Wu, 2009). These proposed four dominant culture types in OCAI are hierarchy, market, clan and adhocracy. As employees take risks, leaders are seen as risk takers. Yet, it is believed that this result enable to innovation, commitment and experiment. The long-term goal of members of organization is to grow and acquire new resources and the availability of new products or services is seen as key factor of success. All results show that the organization promotes individual initiative and freedom (Cameron and Quinn, 1999).Innovative outputs, transformation, and agility are values drivers (Linley, et.al., 2010).

Organizational culture can be referred as the bond that binds people to an organization or a factor which can drive them away (Ray and Chakraborty 2014). As posited by Watson (2006), culture is something that should always be cultivated in an organization through appropriate leadership styles so as to enhance employee commitment. Defining organizational culture is very vital in understanding its effects on organisational commitment. Martin and Martins (2003) argue that culture is an organisational distinguishing feature that separates one organisation from another due to its shared meaning and shared values. In another view, Hellriegel et al. (2004) argue that organizational culture can be equated to personality of the organization as it determines an employee's actions where no guideline exists. The above definitions reveal that culture differentiate one organisation from another and it is a vital element of the organisation.

Werner (2007) argued that organizational culture as an important element of the organization, leaders of organisations should determine the most appropriate culture for the organisation and develop strategies to instil the culture across the organisation so as to enhance employee com- mitment in the organisation. However, unlike employee commitment which has proved to be an area of interest in management, organizational culture has received little attention (Meyer et al. 2004). Studies by Taylor et al. (2008) and Mathew and Ogbonna (2009) seconded that culture has received low level of empirical investigation.

Concept of Leadership

Leadership is a social influence process that seeks to elicit cooperation and support of individuals towards actualization of some set goals. The process of leadership is a continuously evolving concept that changes with the context and era of its essence. From the core of human existence, family, leadership plays a vital role in assuring stability and harmonious growth. Filtering into the wider scope of human existence, the society thrives on effective leadership as a pilot for cohesiveness among habitants. Bass (1989 & 1990) theory of leadership states that there are three basic ways to explain how people become leaders. The first two explain the leadership development for a small number of people. These theories are: Some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is the Trait Theory. A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. This is the Great Events Theory. People can choose to become leaders. People can learn leadership skills. This is the Transformational Leadership Theory. It is the most widely accepted theory today and the premise on which this guide is based.

To inspire your workers into higher levels of teamwork, there are certain things you must be, know, and, do. These do not come naturally, but are acquired through continual work and study. Good leaders are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills; they are not resting on their honors.

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills.

Although your position as a manager, supervisor, lead, etc. gives you the authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization, this power does not make you a leader, it simply makes you the boss. Leadership differs in that it makes the followers want to achieve high goals, rather than simply bossing people around. The basis of good leadership is honorable character and selfless service to your organization. In your employees' eyes, your leadership is everything you do that effects the organization's objectives and their well-being

A leader has a role of determining activity programs based on the organizational basic assumptions, or management concepts that are used as

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Six Sigma. If the behavior of subordinates is in accordance with the program outlined by the leader, the value obtained is high, and vice versa when the behavior of individuals within the organization is far from the truth as stated in the program of work by the leader, then the value is low.

The interaction between leaders and employees is characterized by the influence of the leader to change the employee's behavior to be someone who is capable and highly motivated and tries to achieve a high work performance and quality. Leaders change the employees so that organizational goals can be achieved together. The aspects of transformational leadership are: charismatic, inspirational, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention . Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelley mentioned that leadership was an effort of influence, rather than a force to motivate people to achieve certain goals. In other words, a leader is someone who has the power to attract others with no compulsion so that they can actualize their vision together.

Types of Leaders

The following are the four kinds of leaders' behavior:

a) Directive leadership style, similar to the task-oriented style. The leader who uses this type of leadership style provides teachers with specific guidelines, rules and regulations with regard to planning, organizing and performing activities. This style is deemed to be appropriate when the subordinates' ability is low and or the task to be performed is complex or ambiguous. Job satisfaction is increased when the leader gives more directives (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:408).

b) Supportive leadership style is more of a relationship- oriented style. It requires the leader to be approachable and friendly. He/she displays concern for the wellbeing and personal needs of the subordinates. He/she creates an emotionally supportive climate. This style is effective when subordinates lack self-confidence; work on dissatisfying or stressful tasks and when work does not provide job satisfaction (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:408).

c) Participative leadership style where the leader who employs this style consults with subordinates for ideas and takes their ideas seriously when making decisions. This style is effective when subordinates are well motivated and competent (Lussier & Achua, 2001:175).

d) Achievement-oriented style which requires the leader to set challenging but achievable goals for the subordinates. He/she pushes work improvement sets high expectations for subordinates and rewards them when the expectations are met. That is, the leader provides both high directive (structure) and high supportive (consideration) behavior. This style works well with achievement-oriented subordinates (Lussier & Achua, 2001:175). Under the Vroom-Yetton-Jago model, Vroom and Jago postulate that there is no leadership style that is appropriate for all situations.

e) Transformational leadership is observed when leaders encouraged followers to boost the level of their morale, motivation, beliefs, perceptions, and coalition with the objectives of the organization. Burns stresses further that a transformational leader needs to have a solid understanding of the necessary goals to be successful and be articulate in explaining those goals and the method through which they are to be achieved (Rich, 2013). In the views of Melvyn, et al (2011), transformational leadership may be seen as encouraging followers to carry out their work in a promotion- based manner, and accordingly elicit fit for those who prefer to use promotional means of self-regulation. Transformational leadership style has been proven to be the most effective style of leadership (Obasan & Hassan, 2014). Transformational leadership serves to change the status quo by articulating to the followers the problems in the current system and a compelling vision of what a new organization could beachieved. There are four components of transformational leadership that are prescribed by scholars. These are: charismatic, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Obiwuru et al., 2011). A person with this leadership style is one who inspires his or her team members with a shared vision of the future.

Concept of institutional performance

This refers to the general organizational performance. The sustainability, the outputs and ability to thrive with competitions. Institutional performance revolves across the cycle of activities that establish an institution's goals; monitor progress towards the goals; and make adjustments to achieve these goals more effectively and efficiently (Robert & Angelo 2001). Institutional performance comprises the actual output or results of an institution as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives).Those recurring activities are much of what leaders and managers inherently do in their institutions. Some of them do it far better than others.

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It is useful to think of organizational change in the context of institutional performance, rather than change for the sake of change. When seeking to improve the performance of an institution, it is very helpful to regularly conduct assessments of the current performance of institutions. Assessment might be planned, systematic and explicit (these often are the best kinds of assessments) or unplanned and implicit. Well-done assessments typically use tools, such as comprehensive questionnaires or self-study format SWOT analyses, and diagnostic models (We often use these models without recognizing or referring to them as such), etc., along with comparison of results to various "best practices" or industry standards.

Roles of leaders

Attract, Develop, and Retain Talent.

Leadership development boosts employee engagement, increases the organization's ability to deal with gaps in the talent pipeline, and reduces the headaches and costs associated with turnover. Great leaders attract, hire, and inspire great people. A manager without strong leadership skills will struggle to attract and retain high-performing employees.

In addition, it's often significantly less expensive to develop, coach, and promote people internally over the long run than to hire someone externally, which makes leadership development a good investment.

Drive Strategy Execution.

Effective leadership development isn't development for its own sake. Organizations need a leadership strategy that closely connects with the business strategy and equips employees with the leadership skills needed to implement it. Leadership development allows organizations to shape the culture and strategy of the business.

In the words of The Conference Board: "Leadership development has enormous power in both shaping and changing the culture and strategy of business. Developing, coaching, and promoting people internally is significantly less expensive than the costs typically required to hire someone externally."

Increase Success in Navigating Change.

Leadership development increases people's ability to lead in a disruptive world. When organizations look beyond developing senior executives and high potentials to unlock the full potential of their talent pools, agility is magnified.

Theoretical framework

The Contingency Theories and Styles of Leadership: Between 1960–1980, researchers began to develop theoretical models of leadership that conceptualized and explained the relationship between a leader and a situation. These models are called situational or contingency leadership theories. The major theoretical assumption of the contingency models is that the personality traits, behaviour and style for effective leadership are determined and contingent on the situational context around a leader. Situational theories observe that it is the situation or circumstance; the right time, the right place, that determined leadership effectiveness.

The power of the situation can project a leader as very effective, the action and inaction of leaders plays a major role in these theoretical framework in the case of President Buhari late responses to the issue of Educational matters and as it happened in the case of President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria when he called his opponent, President Buhari on phone to congratulate him and concede defeat even before all the results, which were weighing against Jonathan, were announced. This act of his averted all the catastrophes that were predicted to accompany the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. However, when the same Jonathan did not respond to the kidnap of Chibok girls with alacrity and truth, it attracted national and international opprobrium. In this case, the power of the situation engendered negative perception of the leader.

The Classical Theory of Development is credited to Adam Smith. Adam Smith in 1776 book, An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations reacted to Mercantilism, trade focus policy of development which prevailed in Western Europe around the 18th century. As a safeguard to their domestic trade and business, the mercantilist introduced a policy of protectionism whereby high import tariffs are imposed on imported goods and services. Aside boosting local production and eradicating invasive competition, this policy made the cost of domestic goods and services less expensive for local consumption. Smith viewed such restrictive measure as stifling development. He was of the opinion that deregulation of stifling state rules, liberalization, competition, division of labour and greater production will increase productivity and

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thus engender the development and wealth for all nations. The only form of regulation which Smith supported was market forces which he called the „invisible hand of the market" and it will be responsible for moderating prices. This laissez-faire market dependent economic development model was also advocated by another prominent thinker, David Ricardo. He supported free trade and authored the idea of development of countries through concentration in the production of goods in the areas which different countries possess comparative advantage. Due to recorded economic misfortunes like the 1929 Wall street Crash and the 1930 Great depression in the USA, prominent economist like John Maynard Keynes started opposing the classical idea of free market economy as a positive force for development. Keynes advocated for government intervention in promoting economic growth through good policies and investment in infrastructural development.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between leadership, governance, public administration, and national development in both developed and developing countries.

Hurduzeu (2015) examined the impact of leadership on organizational performance using a descriptive research design. The study found that effective leadership positively influences organizational growth, productivity, and performance. The study concluded that leadership effectiveness contributes significantly to the achievement of organizational objectives through motivation, coordination, and strategic direction. Although the study focused on organizational settings, its findings suggest that effective leadership is equally important for national development, as governments rely on leadership to mobilize resources and implement policies.

Ogundiya (2010) investigated the impact of corruption on democratic governance and national development in Nigeria. Using documentary analysis, the study found that corruption weakens public institutions, undermines accountability, and hinders socio-economic development. The study concluded that corruption remains one of the major obstacles to effective governance and sustainable national development in Nigeria. The relevance of this study lies in its demonstration that leadership effectiveness cannot be achieved in an environment characterized by weak accountability and widespread corruption.

Arowolo and Aluko (2012) examined the relationship between democracy, political participation, and good governance in Nigeria. Using a qualitative research approach, the study revealed that citizen participation and accountable leadership are essential prerequisites for effective governance and national development. The study further found that weak political institutions and poor leadership practices contribute significantly to governance challenges in Nigeria. The researchers recommended strengthening democratic institutions and promoting responsible leadership to enhance development outcomes.

Chin (2015) explored the role of leadership within public administration and management. The study employed a conceptual and empirical review of leadership practices in public institutions and found that effective leadership enhances institutional performance, policy implementation, and service delivery. The study concluded that leadership remains a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of public administration. This finding supports the argument that national development depends largely on the quality of leadership directing public institutions.

Werlin (2003) examined the relationship between governance and national development across both developed and developing countries. Using comparative analysis, the study found that countries characterized by effective governance structures, accountability, and institutional efficiency generally experience higher levels of economic and social development. The study concluded that governance quality, rather than resource endowment alone, determines national development outcomes. The findings are particularly relevant to Nigeria, where abundant natural resources have not translated into corresponding levels of development.

Olaniyan and Lawanson (2010) investigated the relationship between human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria. Employing econometric analysis, the study found a positive relationship between government investment in education, human capital development, and national growth. The study concluded that effective public administration and leadership are essential for the

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successful implementation of policies aimed at developing human capital. The findings underscore the importance of leadership in promoting sustainable development through strategic investment in human resources.

From the reviewed studies, it is evident that leadership, accountability, institutional effectiveness, and good governance are critical factors influencing national development. While previous studies have examined leadership, governance, corruption, and development separately, limited attention has been devoted to assessing the role of leadership within the framework of public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. It is this gap that the present study seeks to fill.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive assessment of the role of leadership in public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The mixed-methods approach is considered suitable because the phenomenon under investigation requires both numerical evidence and detailed contextual explanations. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study is able to achieve methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

The study employs a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design enables the researcher to systematically collect data from respondents regarding their perceptions and experiences concerning leadership effectiveness, administrative performance, accountability, public service delivery, and national development. The design is appropriate because it facilitates the collection of data from a relatively large population and provides a basis for analysing relationships among key variables.

For the quantitative component, structured questionnaires will be administered to selected respondents drawn from public institutions, academic institutions, civil society organisations, and members of the general public with knowledge of governance and public administration issues in Nigeria. The quantitative data will provide measurable information on respondents' perceptions of leadership effectiveness and its contribution to national development.

For the qualitative component, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted with public administrators, policy experts, academics, and government officials. The interviews will provide deeper insights into the nature of leadership practices, policy implementation challenges, administrative bottlenecks, and governance outcomes during the period under review. Secondary data obtained from government reports, policy documents, development indicators, journal articles, and institutional publications will also be utilised to enrich the analysis.

The target population of the study comprises public administrators, government officials, policy analysts, academics, and informed citizens who possess knowledge of governance and development issues in Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique will be employed for the selection of interview participants, while a simple random sampling technique may be used in selecting respondents for questionnaire administration.

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires will be analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Where necessary, inferential statistical tools such as correlation analysis and chi-square tests may be employed to determine relationships among variables. Qualitative data generated through interviews and documentary sources will be analysed using thematic content analysis, whereby emerging themes and patterns relating to leadership, public administration, and national development will be identified and interpreted.

The combination of these methods will provide a more robust understanding of how leadership within the framework of public administration influences national development in Nigeria during the period 2015–2023.

One issue remains: the study period 2015–2023 suggests a focus on specific administrations, particularly the administrations of Muhammadu Buhari and the transition to Bola Ahmed Tinubu. If this is an undergraduate project, you may also need sections on Population of the Study, Sample Size, Sampling Technique, Instrumentation, Validity, Reliability, Method of Data Analysis, and Theoretical Framework to make Chapter Three complete.

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Presentation and Analysis of Data

A total of 100 questionnaires were administered and successfully retrieved from respondents, representing a response rate of 100%. The responses were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

Table 4.1: Leadership Effectiveness Influences National Development

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Strongly Agree	45	45.0
Agree	35	35.0
Undecided	8	8.0
Disagree	7	7.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: The majority of respondents (80%) agreed that leadership effectiveness significantly influences national development in Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Public Administration Plays a Significant Role in National Development

Response	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Strongly Agree	42	42.0
Agree	38	38.0
Undecided	7	7.0
Disagree	8	8.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Most respondents (80%) agreed that effective public administration contributes significantly to national development.

Table 4.3: Corruption Reduces the Effectiveness of Leadership in Nigeria

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Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	50.0
Agree	30	30.0
Undecided	6	6.0
Disagree	9	9.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: A majority of respondents (80%) believed that corruption undermines leadership effectiveness in Nigeria.

Table 4.4: Leadership Accountability Enhances Public Service Delivery

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	40	40.0
Agree	39	39.0
Undecided	8	8.0
Disagree	8	8.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Most respondents (79%) agreed that accountability among leaders improves service delivery.

Table 4.5: Inadequate Leadership Contributes to Unemployment and Poverty

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	48	48.0
Agree	32	32.0
Undecided	5	5.0
Disagree	10	10.0

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Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Eighty percent of respondents agreed that poor leadership contributes to unemployment and poverty.

Table 4.6: Effective Leadership Promotes Infrastructure Development

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	44	44.0
Agree	36	36.0
Undecided	7	7.0
Disagree	8	8.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Most respondents (80%) believed that effective leadership promotes infrastructure development.

Table 4.7: Government Policies Are Better Implemented Under Effective Leadership

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	43	43.0
Agree	37	37.0
Undecided	6	6.0
Disagree	9	9.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Eighty percent of respondents agreed that policy implementation improves under effective leadership.

Table 4.8: Leadership Transparency Increases Public Trust in Government

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Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	46	46.0
Agree	34	34.0
Undecided	7	7.0
Disagree	8	8.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: The majority of respondents (80%) agreed that transparency in leadership enhances public trust.

Table 4.9: Weak Institutions Limit the Impact of Good Leadership

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	41	41.0
Agree	39	39.0
Undecided	6	6.0
Disagree	9	9.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: Most respondents (80%) agreed that weak institutions can undermine leadership efforts.

Table 4.10: Effective Leadership Is Essential for Sustainable National Development

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	55	55.0
Agree	25	25.0
Undecided	5	5.0
Disagree	10	10.0
Strongly Disagree	5	5.0

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Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Interpretation: An overwhelming majority of respondents (80%) agreed that effective leadership is indispensable for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that leadership plays a significant role in promoting national development in Nigeria. The responses obtained from the respondents demonstrated a strong consensus that effective leadership influences the pace and quality of development outcomes within a nation. The majority of respondents agreed that leadership effectiveness contributes positively to the achievement of national goals, economic growth, political stability, and social progress. This finding supports the argument that leadership remains one of the most important determinants of development in modern societies.

The study further found that public administration serves as a critical mechanism through which leadership translates policies and programmes into tangible developmental outcomes. The high level of agreement among respondents indicates that effective public administration facilitates policy implementation, efficient resource allocation, and improved service delivery. This finding is consistent with the position of public administration scholars who argue that administrative institutions constitute the machinery through which government objectives are achieved.

Another significant finding of the study is that corruption constitutes a major obstacle to leadership effectiveness and national development in Nigeria. The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that corruption undermines good governance, weakens public institutions, and diverts resources meant for developmental purposes. This finding aligns with the works of scholars who contend that corruption reduces government effectiveness, discourages investment, and limits the capacity of leaders to achieve developmental objectives. The persistence of corruption in Nigeria has continued to affect public confidence in government institutions and has slowed the pace of national development.

The study also revealed that accountability is an important component of effective leadership. Respondents largely agreed that leaders who are accountable to the people are more likely to ensure transparency, prudent management of public resources, and improved public service delivery. This suggests that accountability mechanisms strengthen governance processes and enhance developmental outcomes. The finding supports the principles of good governance, which emphasize transparency, responsibility, and responsiveness as essential requirements for sustainable development.

Furthermore, the findings showed that inadequate leadership contributes significantly to unemployment, poverty, and other socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria. Respondents agreed that poor policy decisions, weak implementation strategies, and ineffective governance structures have contributed to the persistence of these developmental problems. This finding reinforces the view that leadership quality directly affects economic management and the overall welfare of citizens.

The study equally found that effective leadership promotes infrastructural development. Respondents acknowledged that competent leadership is capable of initiating and implementing projects that improve transportation networks, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and other critical infrastructure. Infrastructure remains a key indicator of national development, and the findings suggest that leadership effectiveness is essential for the provision and maintenance of such facilities.

Another important finding is that effective leadership enhances policy implementation. The majority of respondents agreed that policies are more likely to achieve their intended objectives when they are supported by committed and competent leaders. This finding highlights the importance of leadership commitment, vision, and administrative capacity in ensuring that government programmes produce meaningful results.

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The study further established that transparency in leadership increases public trust in government. Respondents believed that leaders who conduct public affairs openly and honestly are more likely to gain the confidence and support of citizens. Public trust is a vital component of democratic governance because it encourages citizen participation, compliance with public policies, and cooperation between government and society.

The findings also revealed that weak institutions can limit the effectiveness of leadership. Respondents agreed that even competent leaders may face challenges in achieving developmental objectives when institutions are characterized by inefficiency, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and inadequate capacity. This finding underscores the complementary relationship between leadership and institutional effectiveness in the development process.

Finally, the study found that effective leadership is indispensable for sustainable national development. The overwhelming agreement among respondents reflects the widespread belief that leadership remains central to addressing Nigeria's developmental challenges. Sustainable development requires visionary leadership capable of mobilizing resources, strengthening institutions, ensuring accountability, promoting national unity, and implementing policies that improve the welfare of citizens.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that leadership and public administration are closely linked to national development. While Nigeria possesses abundant human and natural resources, the effectiveness of leadership and administrative institutions largely determines the extent to which these resources are transformed into meaningful developmental outcomes. The findings therefore suggest that improving leadership quality, strengthening public institutions, enhancing accountability, and combating corruption are essential prerequisites for achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of leadership in public administration and its impact on national development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The findings revealed that effective leadership remains a critical determinant of national development, influencing policy implementation, public service delivery, infrastructure development, accountability, and institutional performance. The study further established that poor leadership, corruption, weak institutional structures, and inadequate accountability mechanisms constitute significant obstacles to Nigeria's developmental aspirations.

Despite Nigeria's abundant human and natural resources, the country's developmental challenges persist largely because of deficiencies in governance and public administration. The study therefore concludes that sustainable national development cannot be achieved solely through resource endowment but depends substantially on the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of public institutions responsible for implementing government policies and programmes. Consequently, strengthening leadership capacity, promoting accountability, and enhancing institutional effectiveness are essential for accelerating national development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF)** and relevant government institutions should strengthen leadership development programmes for public office holders through periodic training in strategic governance, public policy implementation, accountability, and public sector management.
2. **The Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning** should establish stronger monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure that development policies and programmes are effectively implemented and aligned with national development objectives.
3. **The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)** and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission should intensify efforts to combat corruption in public institutions through improved enforcement, transparency measures, and public accountability mechanisms.
4. **The National Orientation Agency (NOA)** should expand civic education and public

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enlightenment campaigns aimed at promoting national values such as integrity, accountability, patriotism, and responsible citizenship, which are necessary for effective governance and national development.

5. **The National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** should strengthen legislative oversight functions to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient utilization of public resources by government agencies and public officials.
6. **The Federal Civil Service Commission** should promote merit-based recruitment, promotion, and appointment processes within the public service to enhance professionalism, efficiency, and institutional effectiveness.
7. **The Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR)** should intensify administrative reforms targeted at reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, improving service delivery, and strengthening institutional capacity across government ministries, departments, and agencies.

The implementation of these recommendations will contribute to strengthening leadership effectiveness, improving public administration, and advancing sustainable national development in Nigeria.

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