

Development Administration in Africa: A Critical Analysis of the Predicament of Lack of Visionary Leadership

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Abstract

This paper examines the nature of development administration in selected African countries. It also explores how leaders in some African nations do not focus on enhancing the capabilities of their administrative system, economic development, socio-cultural diversity, infrastructural, and political willingness to accomplish development administration. The paper argues that a nation that allows only a small segment of its leaders or citizens to write development policies or laws will not accomplish sustainable development. Development administration goals cannot be accomplished without an inclusive political leadership approach because the reciprocity of interaction and steward leadership are important traits of development administration. The predicament of poor leadership has not only negatively affected the dynamics of development administration, but it has also prevented the implementation of the principles of the *greatest good for the greatest number*. There is no doubt that participation at both national and grassroots levels must involve the collaboration of ethical experts that could genuinely serve as change agents. This paper uses quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyze the problem of development administration in selected

African countries. The conceptual framework is based on the frustration-aggression theory, shared governance, visionary leadership, and strategic doing concept. The findings reveal that there is a negative correlation between authoritarian leadership and economic growth in Africa. Thus, many African countries must adopt an empowering ideology that exhibits egalitarian principles. In addition, there is a positive relationship between African nations that grow and consume their local products and development administration. The paper recommends that African nations should establish capacity building initiatives to help its people move from consumer-oriented to production-orientated nations. There is no doubt that self-reliance, participatory sustainable development, shared governance, and inclusive democracy would transform African countries into more developed countries within the next 25 years.

Keywords: development administration, good governance, economic development, ethical leadership, purposeful policy

1. Introduction

In the past five decades, there have been disparities in the economic development processes in developed and developing countries. This discovery by scholars has led to significant contributions to the development of administration and growth-poverty-inequality literature (Adeleye et al. 2020; Akinfenwa 2020a; Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020; Dibie & Dibie 2021). The challenge of development administration provided the justification for engaging in research on this subject – specifically, from an African-continent perspective (Jones et al. 2022; Kaifala 2023).

Development administration as used in this paper refers to a genuine participatory process that could foster social and material advancement such as equality, freedom, and other valued quality for most of the people in the Africa countries. Thus, development administration is a major mechanism for using public administration and efficient private sector organizations to enhance the provision of essential services such as communication facilities, healthcare, education institutions, transportation, and other public utilities (Chakrabsrty & Kandpal 2020; Dibie & Dibie 2024; Ghosh 2021). The major goal of developing administration in Africa should have been to raise the people's standard of living on the continent. Unfortunately, lack of visionary and moral leaders, bureaucratic bottleneck, public corruption has destroyed the fabric of public administration in the African continent. Rather than reinforcing the environment for development most African leaders have established constricting transparency and accountability to derail the processes of development administration (Arthur 2023; Mahajan 2019; Onimode 2004)

Some scholars contend that since most African countries accomplished their independence from western European countries they have been confronted with a vicious circle of public corruption which involves the diversion of public resources for private gains. These vicious unethical practices have undermined the sustainable goals of development administration in the continent (Alidu 2023; Dooley & Pattern 2024; Dibie & Dibie 2024). In addition, rather than focusing on establishing economic growth and

trade cooperation with China, Europe, United States and other developed countries, the lack of visionary leader in the continent has made them to constantly engage in, ethnic or tribal, and religious conflict, widespread illiteracy, political turmoil, and violence against women (Dibie & Dibie 2024; John et al. 2023). Further, glaring inequalities, and endemic poverty encompass most of the root cause of lack of development in many African countries (Alidu 2023; Chanda & Chitondo 2024; Ndembu et al. 2024). The above development administration challenges reveal that African leaders have been taking their citizens for granted for a long time because of their lack of vision or a deliberate adoption of immoral principles of self-aggrandizement (Dibie, 2025).

Neocolonialism as used in this paper refers to the idea that, even after gaining formal independence, former colonies remain subject to external economic and political control (Nkrumah, 1960; Scott & Marshall 2009; Stanard, 2018; Wikipedia 2025). The foundation of neocolonialism started when the European leaders decided to organize the Berlin Conference of 1885 in Germany. The major resolution of the Berlin conference was the scramble and partition of the African continent into political units and colonies, respectively. It should be noted that no African leaders neither invited nor participated in the conference. In the process of achieving the western European colonialism goals African people of different kingdoms and extraction who were not supposed to be together were forcefully merged to be in one colony (Obikwelu et al. 2023; Tukon 2024). Most of the political instability today in the African continent are due to tribal and ethnic struggles as well as state boundary crises that were created by western European colonial administrators (Azeez 2023; John et al. 2023). Thus, it has been argued by many scholars that some of the legacies of colonialism, including ethnic divisions and weak state structures, and ongoing political instability and conflict in many African countries (Azeez 2023; Dibie 2025; Obikwelu et al. 2023; Tukon 2024).

According to Azeez (2023) and John et al. (2024) the mechanisms of neocolonialism has been used by western industrialized countries to prevent African countries from achieving their respective development aspirations. Other scholars contend that limited public goods such as infrastructure development, are tantamount to the overall consequences of neocolonialism. The aftermath of neocolonialism has not only been detrimental to the people of the African continent, but the predicament has also propelled economic dependence, political instability, and social inequalities contributing to a wide range of humanitarian challenges that continue to hinder the African peoples' progress (John et al. 2024; Tukon 2024). Further neocolonialism has also galvanized unequal access to healthcare and other social services, contributing to persistent health disparities in many African countries. Other negative mechanism of neocolonialism includes economic dependency, resource exploitation by multinational corporation (MNCs), prioritization of MNCs' interests, tax evasion and financial manipulation, corruption and bribery, political interference, orchestrating coup d'état to remove African leaders who refused to succumb to neocolonial interests, collapse local industries, land grabbing and labor exploitation (The Conservation 2022; Van Rossum & Dalrymple-Smith 2020). In addition, multinational corporations' marginalization of local industries and exacerbates economic disparities within African societies (John et al. 2024;

Van Rossum & Dalrymple-Smith, 2020)

Other negative impact of neocolonialism includes the World Bank and the IMF imposition of stringent structural adjustment economic policies that escalated poverty rate in many African countries (Bretton Woods Project 2020; Hickel, J. 2020; Tukon 2024; Toussaint & Bruneau 2023). In addition, neocolonialism has had a profound and lasting negative impact on Africa's development, contributing to numerous challenges faced by the continent's countries in the present day (Obikwelu et al. 2023). Further, it has also been postulated by other scholars that the enduring legacy of European colonialism has been the limited benefits of infrastructure development in the African continent. These foreign imposed economic policies have also led to economic dependence, political instability, and social inequalities in many nations in the African continent (Chanda & Chitondo 2024; Pillay & Kikasu 2024; Mbaku 2020). Because of lack of visionary leaders, corruption, self-aggrandizement, lack of accountability, transparency, and loyalty to western industrialized countries many African countries have not been able to enforce strong legal frameworks, international accountability, and labor laws to regulate MNC activities in their respective countries (Oyier, 2017; Oxfam Briefing Paper 2017; Van Rossum, & Dalrymple-Smith (2020). Lack of trust between French and English nations, and ethnic differences among African leaders has prevented African leaders to collaborate in establishing solid regional economic integration policies that could enhance their bargaining authority with multinational corporations as well as foster the continent's people's welfare and development (Dibie 2025; John et al. 2023).

Jones and Pillay (2022), and Matabof (2023) argued that building a new nation-state is an exercise in political development. Rich countries often display certain common traits typically lacking in Africa countries. The traits include a stable government, a merit-based civil service system, basic public services, and legal structures (Magstad 2021; Ndembi et al. 2024). Thus, many African countries face four development administration challenges such as disparity in nation building, lack of equality, freedom, and other valued qualities (Ndembi et al. 2024). In addition to the stated challenges is the fact that many African countries do not have charismatic leaders that could help them to create key mechanism that could galvanize nation-building stage (Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020; Mamokhere 2024). They also tend to get away with impunity and immorality at home because of their totalitarian leadership style of governance and weak maintenance of law and order in their respective countries. Since countries in the African continent are mostly destabilized, they do not have common identity. The predicament of colonialism that orchestrated the current map of the continent has also galvanized lack of common identity based on the notion of belonging to a political community separate and distinct from all others. The outcome of this injustice has also propelled the inability to create a collaborative government and highly performing institutions that are capable of exercising authority, implementing policies, and providing services equitably to all citizens in their respective nations (Dibie 2017; Mamokhere 2024; Sebola et al. 2024). Further, one the predicament in many African countries is that they are not capable to levy and collect taxes because their economies are based on subsistence agriculture with little or nothing to tax (Chanda & Chitondo 2024; Dooley & Pattern 2024). Therefore, in a

political environment, where there is high mechanism of corruption, lack of a stable government, a merit-based civil service system, basic public services, and legal structures it would be very difficult to accomplish development administration (Dooley & Pattern 2024; Mamokhere 2024; Pillay & Kikasu 2024).

Rather than working diligently to serve the citizens of their respective nations, it has become widespread practice for most African political leaders to use their public office to extract commissions at every available opportunity. This immoral dilemma has disenfranchise the principles of development administration in most countries in the African continent (Bengu 2023; Dibie & Dibie 2017; Kalu & Aniche; 2024; Mbaku 2020). It has also been argued that to solve the injustice predicaments facing over a billion people living in the African continent, there is the urgent need for new social and economic development initiatives, visionary and ethical leaders they would put the interests of the as the first priority (Dibie 2025; Dooley & Pattern 2024; Kalu & Aniche 2024). It is also paramount that the proposed ethical and stewardship leaders must be Indigenous Africans (Dibie 2025; Galperin, et al. 2024; Mamokhere 2024). Every nation requires highly qualified experts in the formulation of policies because each region has distinctive characteristics based on religion, geopolitical factors, former colonial influence, ethnic and geographical factors. The current type of governance in most African countries lack continuing interaction between government and its citizens. Thus, lack of reciprocity, empathy and the liberation of African nations' citizens may continue to prohibit development administration. According to Cox et al. (2011); Jreisat (2009); Onimode (2004); Shafritz et al. (2022) without liberation, rule of law, and development-oriented leadership there might be no hope for prosperity of the citizens and thus development administration (Carbone & Pellegata 2020; Kalu & Aniche 2024)

It has been argued that the landscape of public administration tends to have changed due to the adoption of market-driven principles that are associated with the concept of New Public Management (NPM) (Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020; Dibie 2014; Shafritz et al. 2022). Many scholars also associate development administration with the post-colonial state centered dynamics of public management (Dooley & Pattern 2024; Onimode 2004; Riggs 1970). Dibie (2018) contend that despite the concept of new public management and development administration, the administrative system in African countries is shaped by mechanisms such as culture, religion, ethnicity, local politics, nature of economy, conflict, and very weak legal systems. These factors make the western models of public administration less relevant in some countries in the African continent.

Several countries in the African continent are rich in natural resources, however their wealth is one of the lowest among the world's nations (African Development Bank 2021; Dibie 2025; Mahajan 2019). While mineral has played an important part in the development of civilizations throughout the world history, in respect of the discovery and mining of gold, iron, bronze, diamond, crude oil, and the recent electronic and information ages, this has not been the case in most African countries (Bengu 2023; Galperin et al. 2024; Garside 2021). The African continent is endowed with more than sixty (60) identified strategic minerals and metals such as bauxite, chromite, coltan (tantalum), copper, crude oil, diamond, fluor spar, gold, platinum, vanadium, manganese, phosphate, titanium, uranium, vermiculite, zircon, etc.

The African continent also leads the world in production and reserves of gold, phosphate, platinum, and manganese (Garside 2021; Iyer 2014; Sharaky 2011). According to Tukon (2024), if the natural endowed countries such as Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Zambia can adopt a peaceful climate, it would stimulate economic transformation, good management of resources and assets. Every nation needs ethical leaders to mobilize revenue from endowed natural resources, as well as invest to advance their citizens welfare to attain factors of economic growth (Dibie 2024; Galperin et al. 2024; Jones et al 2022; Kaifala 2023). African nations are well endowed with natural resources, but are heavily indebted to countries that are not endowed with similar minerals because the non-endowed countries send their multinational corporations to explore and harvest Africa's natural resources to the detriment of the African continent (Arthur 2023; Bengu 2023; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy 2021).

The United Nations Economic Development in Africa (2021) report argues that the African continent continues to have an elevated level of dependence on imports and commodity-based natural resource export. This is because many nations in the continent have not been able to identify the strategic means of enhancing sustainable growth as well as increasing the living standards of their citizens (United Nations Economic Development in Africa report, 2021). Because foreign aids have been constantly diverted to unethical and underdevelopment-oriented use for many decades, it has been argued that aids should be abandoned because it has failed to end poverty in many African countries (Aikins 2023; Kalu & Aniche 2024; Easterly 2007). Thus, the African economic development programs over the past ten decades were set during the colonial regime. It should be noted that initial economic development policies for several nation in the African continent nations were exploited by Western Europeans countries pragmatically for benefit. Africa was used for the cultivation of raw mineral resources and crops for European industries (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy 2021; Settle 1996). This is the major reason African nations have been classifying as producers of raw matters and consumers of finished products (Azeez 2023; Dibie, 2018; Schoch & Lakner 2020).

Scholars have argued that history is about to repeat itself because African economies are again responding to the rising demand for commodities by a rapidly industrializing power of European, Chinese, and North Americans nations. Dibie (2025) and Galperin et al. (2024) contend that while the Chinese are busy investing in land, infrastructure and mines are escalating, mineral export, are taking a growing share of natural resources that would made Africa great again. Another, major predicament facing Africa nations is that they are becoming exporter of raw materials and consumers of finished products. Frankema (2015) and Mankiw (2024) argued that such types of imbalances of trade might not be sustainable for Africa's countries' development. African countries need to avoid a renewed cycle of commodity dependency and the dependency trap that they suffered for many decades (Azeez 2023; Williamson, 2011). The dependency trap has been argued to be one of the mechanisms that western industrialized countries have constantly preventing success in transforming into an economic sphere of development.

What is missing in the literature on development administration in the African continent is

that the perception of Africans to develop without the help of western adulterized nation has not been effectively addressed. While China, Japan Indonesia Singapore have successfully explored different strategies to successfully accomplished their development administration with little or no help from western industrial nations, African nations' leaders do not trust their indigenous experts rather they still waiting for foreigners to teach them how to restructure their continent so that they will continue to suffer from the dependency trap. This paper is filling the gap in the literature by arguing that "it will take moral visionary African leaders to develop the continent. The paper is significant because it investigates and provide details findings on how African Indigenous ethical and visionary leaders have the potential to unlock the development challenges currently facing most countries in the continent.

2. Social Justice and Development Administration Framework

The goal of development is social justice (Sharma & Nepal 2020; Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020). This means that the development of a nation's society depends on social and economic changes that could positively affect the lives of everyone in a country. Thus, enhancing the capacity of society through client-oriented, result-oriented projects, commitment or motivation of citizens and leaders, loyalty (Dibie 2025; John et al. 2024). On one hand, a vibrant rule of law system could enhance development administration. On the other hand, social justice that promotes cheerful outlook equity, freedom and other moral valued qualities for the African people could lead to socioeconomic progress, changes, and innovation. These factors could also galvanize cheerful outlook, participation of society members, and adaptive persuasion (Dibie 2024; Sharma & Nepal 2020). There are two distinctions of development principles. The first principle argues that administration of development can be accomplished through administration. The second principle denotes that development administration entails the need to enhance the capacity for development (Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020). Unlike the way public administration is practice in many African countries, development administration needs to be encouragement of a greater participatory process and not a system that gives special privileges to only the elites and politician but everyone in a nation. According to Li et al. (2021), and Mahajan (2019) development is a process that should involve a more forward-looking educational system, infrastructure building, good health system, greater socio-economic stratification of a nation's structure, greater concern for economic justice as well as other societal systems (Dibie 2025; Li et al. 2021).

The predicaments of development administration in many African countries are the inability of the political leaders to enhance the capacity for development (Dibie 2022; V Sharma & Nepal 2020). Nations in the African continent should not rely on the development model of the western European nations that previously colonized them. This is because European entrepreneurs cannot be trusted. It is high time for the African people to take a stand in honestly exploring new initiatives or mechanism to improve their indigenous capacities. The new African moto should be resilience. The current administrative system in most African countries is closely related to what Riggs (1964 and 1970) called "Prismatic Sala Model". According to the Riggs (1964 and 1970) and Chakrabarty and Kandpal (2020) nations that practice this model of administration are characteristics by family welfare, nepotism, and favoritism. Rather than promoting development, their administration plays a significant role

in making appointments to various administrative positions based on favoritism qualifications. In addition, the system of administration superimposes a new formal structure based on family kinship as well as giving priority to personal increase in power, wealth rather than social welfare that will benefit all citizens in their nation. Understand such a system of prismatic sala governance there is total disregard for universal rule of law (Chakrabarty & Kandpal 2020). The Prismatic Sala Model administrative approach to governance is one of the reasons why most African countries' Presidents want to stay in their position for 15, 20, 25 years or more without any strategic development plan. Therefore, exploitation, lack of social justice, poverty and elevated levels of unemployment becomes a major characteristic of the African countries that do not have visionary leaders.

Figure 1 shows the major mechanism of development administration. The major goals of development administration are to bring about change in the values and attitudes of people in lower or middle-income nations as well as the administrative system. In addition, development administration enhances the transformation of not only a nation but also the entire society, economic, social, political, and administrative elements intermeshed for the purposes of change (Bagai 2009; Dwivedi 1999; Saffritz et al. 2022). Thus, it could be argued that development administration is an action or purposeful system that could help guide an organization or nation towards the accomplishment of incremental or progressive economic, social, and political goals that have been set. Further, the days of imposition from outside are now gone. Many scholars argued that African countries could accomplish development administration only when they adopt innovative mechanism that would galvanize their respective administrative activities towards the attainment of shared governance and steward leadership principles (Dibie 2025; Hyden 2006; Obiyan 2005; Olowu & Sako 2003; Onimode 2004).

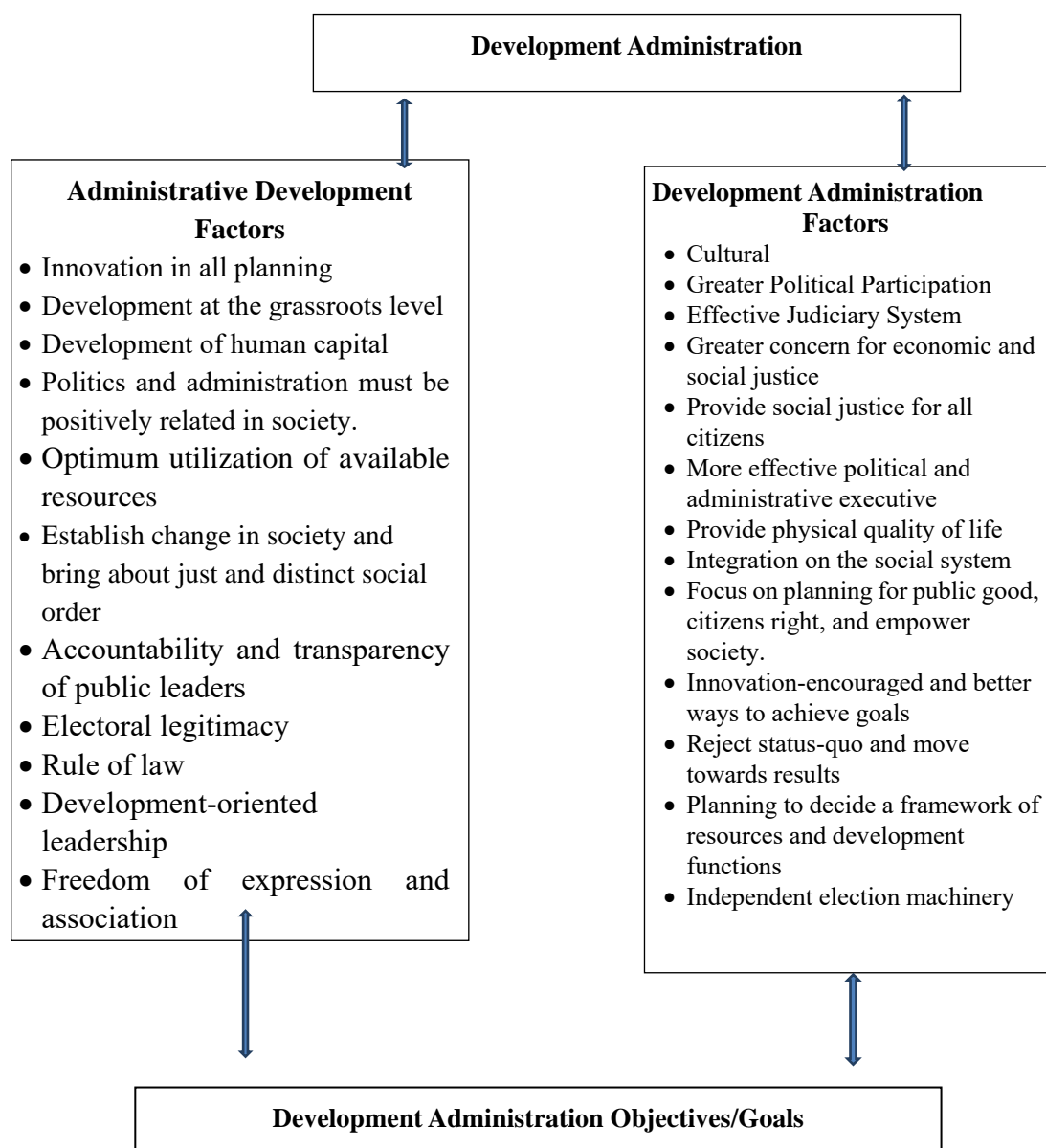


Figure 1: Relationship between Development Administration and Administrative Development

Source Designed by Dibie R. (2025).

The concept of strategic doing by Ed Morrison (2012) provides a framework on how to build a strategy for development administration in Africa. The concept helps to establish collaborations as well as builds innovation in any government or organization that is committed to accomplishing its strategic goals (Galperin et al. 2024). Dibie (2022) and Shafritz et al, (2022) contend that strategic doing requires constant mutual communication, attention of specific details of “where an organization or government want to go” and “how the members of the organization want to get to where they are going.” The models explain how people could work collaboratively to accomplish economic development and effective public policy goals by using a flexible market-based public administration approach.

Chakrabarty and Kandpal (2020), and Dibie 2018) contend that strategic doing could enhance a market orientation approach to public management performance and vibrant services systems. Figure 2 shows a link between strategic doing and new public management.

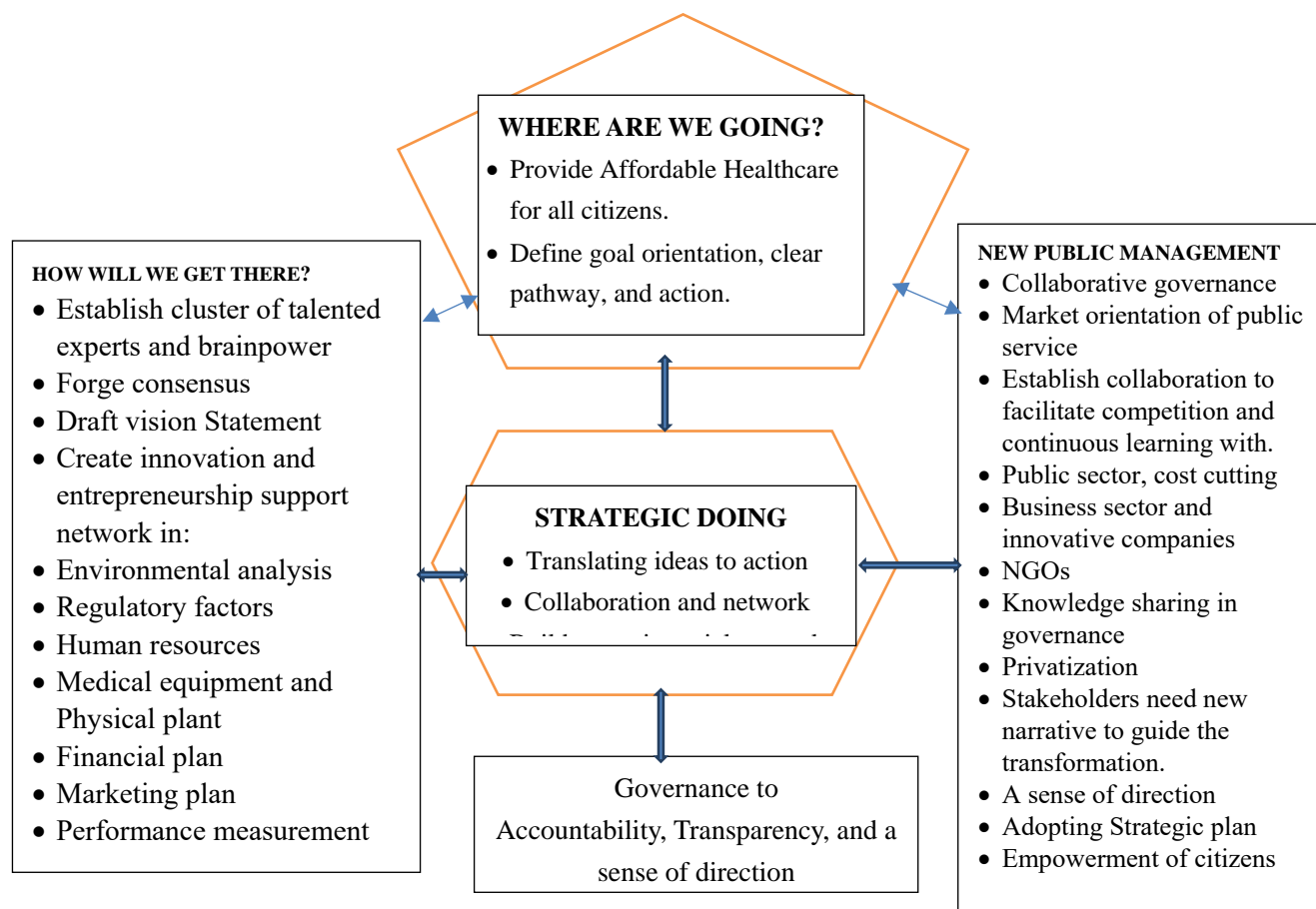


Figure 2: The Integration of Strategic Doing and New Public Management Principles

Source Designed by Dibie R. (2025)

Figure 2 explains the integrated model of strategic doing and the new public management principles. The new public management principles adopted the market principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in galvanizing collaborative governance between the private, public, and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of public policies and development administration programs as well as initiatives in the African countries (Chakrabarty and Kandpal 2020; Dibie & Dibie 2024).

The market orientation of the new public management should also include contracting out, performance measurement, privatization, empowerment of citizens, greater competition, cost cutting, goal orientation, and flexibility as well as the use of information technology to enhance the free flow of communication (Jreisat 2004; Shafritz et al. 2022). Figure 2 also shows that strategic doing could be overly critical to enriching ideas as well as galvanize momentum for a comprehensive network of actions as well as mutual commitment to accountability. The cause of disagreement is collaborating with colleagues to put the right pieces and ideas in the right combination to accomplish set strategic goals. According to

Dibie (2022) and Shafritz et al, (2022) the concept also encourages a strategic network of people who are willing to invest in developing networks. Such people are amazingly comfortable to jump across boundaries easily whenever the needs arise for them to galvanize their attention on strengthening the opportunity to achieve set strategic goals (Dibie 2022; Marrisson 2012; Shafritz et al, 2022).

The dependency theory presents an argument that resources flow from a periphery of poor underdeveloped countries such as nations in Africa to a core of wealthy industrialized states in Europe and North America by enriching them at the expense of the African countries (Enuke 2018; John et al. 2023; Onimode 1981; Tukon 2024). This imbalance in the distribution of human and industrial resources makes African states to be poor while the industrial nations of the West are enriched. Thus, the way the poor African nations are integrated into the world economic system is unfair and constitutes an avenue for continuous exploitation. The consequence of dependency is that African countries are put in a convoluted situation whereby they produce raw materials and market for the finished and manufactured good of the western industrialize nations (Conservation 2022; Enuke 2018; Obikwelu et al. 2023). Further, the ethical implication of this unfair practice is that western industrial countries use the raw natural resources they obtain from the African countries to become richer while the true owners of the natural resources are left in perpetual poverty, crisis of governance and leadership, as well as urban unemployment rate. The unfair global economic relationship operates in such a manner that the poor African nations are keep impoverished and are economically dependent on the rich western industrialized nation. Furthermore, it should be noted that African nations are not only underdeveloped countries, but there are also many other poor countries in Asia, South, and Central America (Enuke 2018; Schoch & Lakner 2020). Some scholars also argued that one of the strategies for keeping Africa perpetually underdeveloped was the unethical adoption of colonial imperialism (Bourguignon 2016; Conservation 2022; Tukon 2024). The colonial imperialism strategies propel the deliberate removal of millions of young adults from Africa that constituted human agents of scientific and technological inventions because of European slave trade (Apiko et al. 2020; Bourguignon 2016; Enuke 2018; Van Rossum & Dalrymple-Smith 2020). The cause of disagreement of this paper is how the dependency concept could be used to explain the current global inequalities and the predicaments of ineffective development administration in Africa.

To solve this major development predicament, African nations need to find their own way to reinvigorate their economy just the way Japan, Singapore, Taiwan South Korea and Hong Kong, India and China did. This is because nations that adopted economic policies without adjusting them to meet their own unique characteristics often fail to accomplish their development administration goals (Arthur 2023; Dibie 2018; Mankiw 2024). Despite these predicaments, Botswana is doing fine with a stable democratic system. However, countries where governments are dysfunctional have a higher risk of civil wars. This is true of Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, South Sudan, Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Libia, Central African Republic and so on.

There is a consensus among theories of development administration discussion in this paper,

that development should involve psychological empowerment of citizens and a combination of meaningful employment. These positive outcome of development administration could boost high self-efficacy, self-determination, and the ability to influence relevant development's needs just has what Dubai and Singapore did. In addition, these initiatives could lead to the provision of public goods and services that would benefit everyone in their respective nations. It paramount that African nations should be developed into becoming law-based countries where the government, president, elites, and poor citizens cannot be above the law. All laws enacted should be enforced in such a way that the entire citizens are respected, strengthened judicial institution should also be a priority if African nations want to strive for sustainable development soon. Therefore, a new dimension of development administration in African countries should involve greater political participation forward-looking education, health, greater stratification of structure, visionary leaders, and concern for economic justice. Finally, there should be a consensus that women's empowerment is very crucial for African nations to fully attain substantial development (Dibie, 2028). This is because regardless of gender and domestic responsibilities women and men have the obligation to participate equally in their nation's development process.

3. Research Method

The goal of this paper is to examine the nature of development administration and the predicament of lack of visionary leadership in Africa. The research was conducted between 2019 and 2025. The analysis utilized quantitative and qualitative methods, and data was derived through primary and secondary sources all over Africa. Most of the primary data were derived from interviews, focus group meeting, and questionnaires. The in-depth interviews were useful to capture the respondents' voice, and experiences about the nature of development in their respective countries in Africa. The African continent was divided into four regions: (1) North Africa; (2) West Africa; (3) East Africa; and (4) South Africa. Three countries were selected from each region. Questionnaires were administered to 3,500 respondents drawn from the selected countries. Those who participated in completing the questionnaires, focus group meetings, and interviews included business executives, public servants, police, doctors, lawyers, soldiers, teachers, stay-at-home spouses, farmers, traders, nurses, and administrators of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A total of 2,670 (76.3%) questionnaires were completed and returned by respondents. Data collected were analyzed with SPSS statistical tool and presented in frequency tables and percentile. The questionnaire was designed to capture data relevant to the research questions and objectives of the study. In addition, the questionnaire also comprised of closed ended questions to capture the nature of development administration in Africa. Three hundred and twenty-five (325) respondents from the above profile of participants attended the focus group meetings.

Interviews were conducted in the North, West, East, and Southern regions. Three hundred (300) interviews were conducted in three countries within each region (100 per country). Thus, a total of 1,200 one-on-one interviews were conducted. The central research questions are: (1) What do you consider to be the cause of lack of development administration in many African countries? (2) What are the possible mechanisms that can be adopted by African countries to accomplish development administration and economic development?

Secondary data analysis was also conducted through the review of relevant journal articles and books. In addition, some of the secondary data were derived through content analysis of government policy documents and annual reports produced by international agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Human Development Index, and the World Bank. In addition, staff of government agencies, ministries, departments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were interviewed to substantiate the cases in point. The findings support some of the arguments presented in the literature review. The limitation of the study is that not all 55 countries in the African continent were covered by this research.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Fifty six percent (56%) of the 2670 respondents were male, and forty one percent (41%) female. In addition, 67% of the respondents were from the private sector, 21% work in different ministries or agencies of the government, and 12% are unemployed. Most the public-sector respondents have degrees in various disciplines. Three percent (3%) of the respondents employed in the private sector and public sector do not have a high school diploma or certificate. About 30% of the traders and farmers had some qualifications from tertiary institutions. Forty percent (40%) of the employees in the NGOs were students from universities or polytechnics. Fifty percent (50%) of the students were either doing their internship or in school part-time to complete their degree program.

Research Question 1: What do you consider to be the cause of lack of development administration in many African countries?

Table 1. Cause of Lack of Development Administration in many African Nations

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree %	Disagree %
1	African nations were used as producers of raw material for European manufacturing and consumption	923	1245	37	103	262	2168 81.2%	365 13.7%
2	Lack of investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure	1357	947	39	149	178	2304 86.3%	327 12.2%
3	Lack of inclusive political system and visionary leaders	623	1955	0	30	63	2578 96.5%	92 3.4%
4	Economic policies are made without consultation or input of highly educated citizens	522	998	58	281	411	1520 57.9%	692 25.9%
5	European leaders continue to negatively interfere in African nations development affairs after independence	662	1504	0	375	129	2166 81.1%	504 18.9%
6	African leaders that were not	679	1303	12	208	468	1982	676

	in good terms with their former European experts were frustrated and removed from their position						74.2%	25.3%
7	Lack of collaboration among neighboring Africa countries	599	1208	0	803	60	1807 67.7%	863 32.3%
8	Most African leaders are selfish, corrupt, ignorant, and power hungry	943	1153	0	273	301	2096 78.5%	574 21.5%
9	Lack of investment in human and economic capital	721	1408	0	144	397	2129 79.7%	541 20.3%
10	Foreign aid did not help African countries to develop because it created a dependency trap	524	1546	6	41	253	2070 77.5%	294 11%
11	African leaders rigid top-down structure of governance	377	873	61	444	915	1250 46.9%	1359 50.9%
12	African leaders adopted economic integration institutions without the will or ability to implement them	1013	642	9	500	506	1655 62%	1006 37.7%
13	Lak of good faith joint venture with foreign multinational companies	394	1449	20	400	407	1843 69%	807 30.2%
	Mean						73.7%	23.3%

Source: Derived from Field research in sub-Saharan Africa 2019-2025.

Table 1 was used to calculate the reasons for lack of development administration in many Africa countries. The data shows that 81.2% of the respondents agree that African nation was used as producers of raw material for European manufacturing and consumption. Another 86.3% of the respondents strongly agree that lack of investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure where some of the reasons why many African countries have not been able to attain development administration. Lack of inclusive political system and visionary leaders constituted 96.5%, respondents. In addition, 81.1% of the respondents indicated their concern about the negative interference of European leaders in the African development process after independence. These interferences were considered as immoral factors that have been preventing African nations from accomplish development administration goals. Further, 79.7% of the respondents reported that there is a lack of investment in human and economic capital. Another 78.5% of the respondents acknowledge that ignorant, selfish, corrupt, and power drunk behavior of some African leaders were reasons why many African nations have not been able to accomplish development administration.

Other factors that have prevented African nations from accomplishing development

administration includes foreign aid, because it created a dependency trap 77.5%. In addition, African leaders that were not in good terms with their former European administrative leaders were frustrated and removed from their position 74.7%. Furthermore, 69% of the respondents reported that lack of good faith in joint venture with foreign multinational companies were reasons why many countries in the African continent have not been able to achieve development administration. Development administration could not take place in many African countries because economic policies were made without consultation or input of highly educated African citizens 64.4% constitute respondents vote. Further, 62% of the respondents also indicated that it was overwhelming to think about how African leaders adopted economic integration institutions without the political will or ability to implement them. These factors were related to their rigid top-down structure of governance and inability to effectively collaborate with their neighboring countries to formulate effective economic integration.

The predicaments of lack of development administration in many African countries is evident in the high rate of unemployment and dilapidated infrastructure all over their respective countries. Respondents also indicated that public schools and hospitals were poorly funded and equipped to equitably serve the needs of all the citizens in the respective African countries. The mean of agree factors were 73.3% while the disagree factors mean is 23.4%. Therefore, the research data confirm that the lack of participatory process of directed social change in many African countries, maintenance of law and order and various other essentials services has not reinforced the environment for development administration in the many African The efficacy of the principles of the “greatest good for the greatest number” does not prevail in the African continent.

Questionnaire items 14 to 27 were utilized to evaluate the possible mechanisms that can be adopted by African countries to accomplish development administration and economic development. These questions highlighted data about initiative-taking and the perception of respondents from various sectors in the African nations 'economies. Table 2 results reveal that 86.6% of respondents stated that the political leaders in the four regions covered in this research must promote entrepreneurship to improve the manufacturing and high productivity sectors in their respective countries. Thus, these African countries must change from being consumers of finished products made in Europe to a culture of manufacturing their own products. Closely related to the above factor 79.7% of the respondents also indicated that African nation's leaders must take charge of all indigenous mineral resources and transform them to finished manufactured goods for development administration to ever take place.

In addition, 70.4% of the respondents stated that there is a paramount need for the promotion of the fundamental human rights of all citizens, transparency, and accountability towards all the people in African countries to accomplish development. The major mechanism required to accomplish development administration in the future are shown in Table 2 below.

Question 2: What are the possible mechanisms that can be adopted by African countries to accomplish development administration and economic development?

Table 2. Mechanisms to Propel Development Administration and Economic Development?

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree %	Disagree %
14	Rule of Law and Judicial Reform	786	822	31	385	640	1608 60.2%	1025 38.4%
15	Accountability and transparency of public leaders	808	922	5	321	614	1730 64.8%	935 35%
16	Development oriented leadership	864	870	23	364	549	1734 64.9%	913 34.2%
17	Freedom of expression and association	711	559	44	563	793	1270 47.6%	1356 50.8%
18	Promote the fundamental rights of all citizens	855	1024	28	413	350	1879 70.4%	763 28.6%
19	Transform agriculture and land use	422	503	44	654	1003	925 34.6%	1657 62%
20	Move from consumption economy to production nations	1069	638	0	421	542	1707 63.9%	963 36.1%
21	Promote entrepreneurship to improve the manufacturing and high productivity sectors	1503	809	0	179	179	2312 86.6%	358 13.4%
22	Take charge of all indigenous mineral resources and transform them to manufacturing goods	1561	566	0	437	106	2127 79.7%	543 20.3%
23	Enhance a modern electricity and energy transition system	783	946	29	384	528	1608 64.8%	912 34.2%
24	Structural Transformation	921	687	36	480	546	1746 60.2%	1026 38.4%
25	Build roads and other infrastructure	1122	624	0	355	569	1746 65.4%	924 34.6%
26	Investment and create more access to electricity through solar energy	1033	681	0	433	525	1714 64.2%	958 35.9%
27	finished trade products within integrated member nations and world market	679	1037	28	294	632	1716 64.3%	926 34.7%
	Mean						63.7%	35.5%

Source: Derived from Field research in sub-Saharan Africa 2019-2023.

In addition, while 64.9% of the respondents indicated that African nations need development-oriented leadership, another 65.4% of the respondents stated the African

continent nations need to focus on building roads and other infrastructure. Further, 64.8% of the respondents indicated that investment that can create more access to electricity through solar energy could galvanize development administration. Trading of finished products within integrated economic member nations (i.e., ECOWAS, COMESA) and the world market was what 64.3% of the respondents stated was needed to achieve development administration. It was also interesting to note that 60.2% of the respondents indicated that establishing and enforcing the rule of law and major judicial reforms could further enhance ethical values that are needed for development administration in many Africa countries that are plagued with corrupt political leaders, and civil servants.

On one hand, 63.9% of respondents indicated that moving from the consumption economy to production nations could lead to better development administration. On the other hand, 60.2% of respondents supported structural transformation, while another 50.8% of the respondents reported that freedom of expression and association might not be a good enough strategy to enhance development administration. Another good and stronger mechanism that attracted 63.9% of the respondents was moving from the consumption economy to production nations. The mean of the agreed mechanism is 63.7%, while the mean of the disagree mechanism was 35.5%, respectively.

The interview respondents were overly excited to express their views about the challenges of lack of effective development administration initiatives in their respective countries. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of them contended that having a visionary leader that are not corrupt, have empathy for the citizens of their country could help to reinvigorate development administration in most African countries. In addition, 89% of the interview respondents stated that the challenges of development administration in the African continent are due to lack of lack of visionary leaders. They also argued that it will take Africans to develop their respective countries just the way the United States, and European countries did. The dependency trap is one of the reasons why African nations could not attempt to manufacture their own finished products despite the fact they have the raw material and mineral resources to produce finished good and export them to over foreign countries. Another, 79% of the interviewed respondents stated that due to self-aggrandizement some African leaders do not understand what it takes to promote economic development and capacity building. In addition, 83% of the respondents stated that African presidents and political leaders do not appreciate their home countries in the continent, they refer to steal their respective nation's resources and travel to Europe or north America to buy big mansions that they only spend few weeks in a year. These same corrupt political leaders run down the hospitals and schools in their respective countries and allow them to dilapidate while they travel abroad to seek medical treatment. They also engage in sending their children to study abroad.

The analysis of the research data reveals that lack of visionary leadership, corruption, and poor socio-economic condition remains some of the key missing pieces in Africa's post-colonial development administration puzzle. Unfortunately, rather than rising up to the challenges of economic development, the ruling elite of many African countries have made themselves enemies of their countries' progress (Akahara 2023; Dibie 2025; Dibie & Dibie 2017). As a result of a mindset of vanities many African leaders have weaponized poverty,

lack of education, poor healthcare and electricity facilities, ethnic rivalries and the people's perceived helplessness to further their own selfish interests and those of global multinational institutions that profit from a destitute and failing African continent (Akahara 2023; Chanda & Chitondo 2024; Dibie 2025; Pillay & Kikasu 2024).

5. Policy Recommendations

The transformational strategy of African countries requires putting nations first before self. Governments of African nations should be more accountable to their people and their countries rather than foreign countries. In addition, countries in the African continent should be mindful that economic exploitation of the activities of multinational corporations by western European countries, North America, and Asian countries often leads to economic predicaments in African nation's development process (Dibie 2025; Mamokhere 2024). African countries should therefore engage on strategic import substitution programs to reduce or eliminate their purchase of manufactured products from western Europe, north American, China and Japan. African leaders should also strategically sell their primary products on the world market. Further, their ability to combat internal corruption could also enhance their capacity to reserve their foreign exchange to have enough funds to purchase manufactured products from overseas (African Development Bank 2021; United Nations Economic Development in Africa Report 2021; Coulibaly 2027; Dibie 2025). Therefore, Africa nations should focus on encouraging investment rather than simply waiting for aids and handouts from foreign countries.

The structural transformation of the African continent should also focus on reducing poverty by adopting inclusive growth of people from diverse groups (Adeleye et al. 2020; Dibie 2025). The adoption of a diversity approach could also ensure equality and equity in opportunities and protection in the employment market. On the other hand, this strategic approach could allow all segments of the diverse groups in the African continent to have equitable access to both public goods and services, as well as economic growth. Even though the current government and societies in some African countries are complex, there is still hope that nations in the continent can accomplish a modern and inclusive economy. A well planned and implemented development strategy could enhance gains from production, trade, investment in infrastructure, and other growth opportunities that are critically needed for the transformation of marginalized groups such as youths and women (Dibie 2025; Dibie, 2018; Mamokhere 2024). Some African nations are beginning to formulate policies that could galvanize economic transformation. Such initiatives involve moving workers from low productivity regions and sectors such as agriculture to higher productive industrial service sectors (Dibie 2018; Usman & Laundry 2021; Li et al 2021).

Conducive and Enabling Environment: According to Dibie (2025), Dibie & Dibie (2024) and Fagbadebo & Dorasamy (2021), the skills of effective leadership are very critical for African nations seeking long-term economic and sustainable development. To be successful, African political leaders must understand what their citizens need to live a good life. A visionary political leader must know how to conduct analysis, adopt shared governance and servant leadership skills,

and explore mechanisms that would enable its administration to have constructive insight and good judgment to galvanize economic development (Dibie & Dibie 2024; Kalu & Aniche 2024; Li et al. 2021; Bengu 2023; Jones et al 2022; Kaifala 2023).

Regional Integrated Trade in Africa: One of the unrealized potentials for increasing development that African countries continue to ignore is regional economic trade and integration. Increasing interregional trade under the African continent Free Trade Area has the potential for nations to gain wealth from trade, investment, infrastructure development, production, and other human capacity building opportunities. The free Trade Area opportunities would also enhance commodity-based exports (United Nations Economic Development in Africa report 2021). In addition, marginalized people can immensely benefit from the growth opportunities that are associated with the African Continent Free Trade Area (Mankkiw 2024).

Sustained Poverty Reduction: One strategy to reduce the challenges of sustained poverty in many African countries is to adopt a more inclusive and diversity growth strategy that includes all their citizens irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, or religion. An inclusive and diversity policy could spill-over to all business sectors such as industrial, manufacturing, services, and agriculture (Adeleye et al. 2020; Galperin et al. 2024; United Nations Economic Development in Africa report 2021). Promoting diversity, equity, justice, moral values, and performance management could galvanize access to market and employment as well as drastically reduce poverty (Alidu 2023; Dibie 2022). Figure 2 below shows major factors to consider in addressing the challenges of implementing development administration in the African continent.

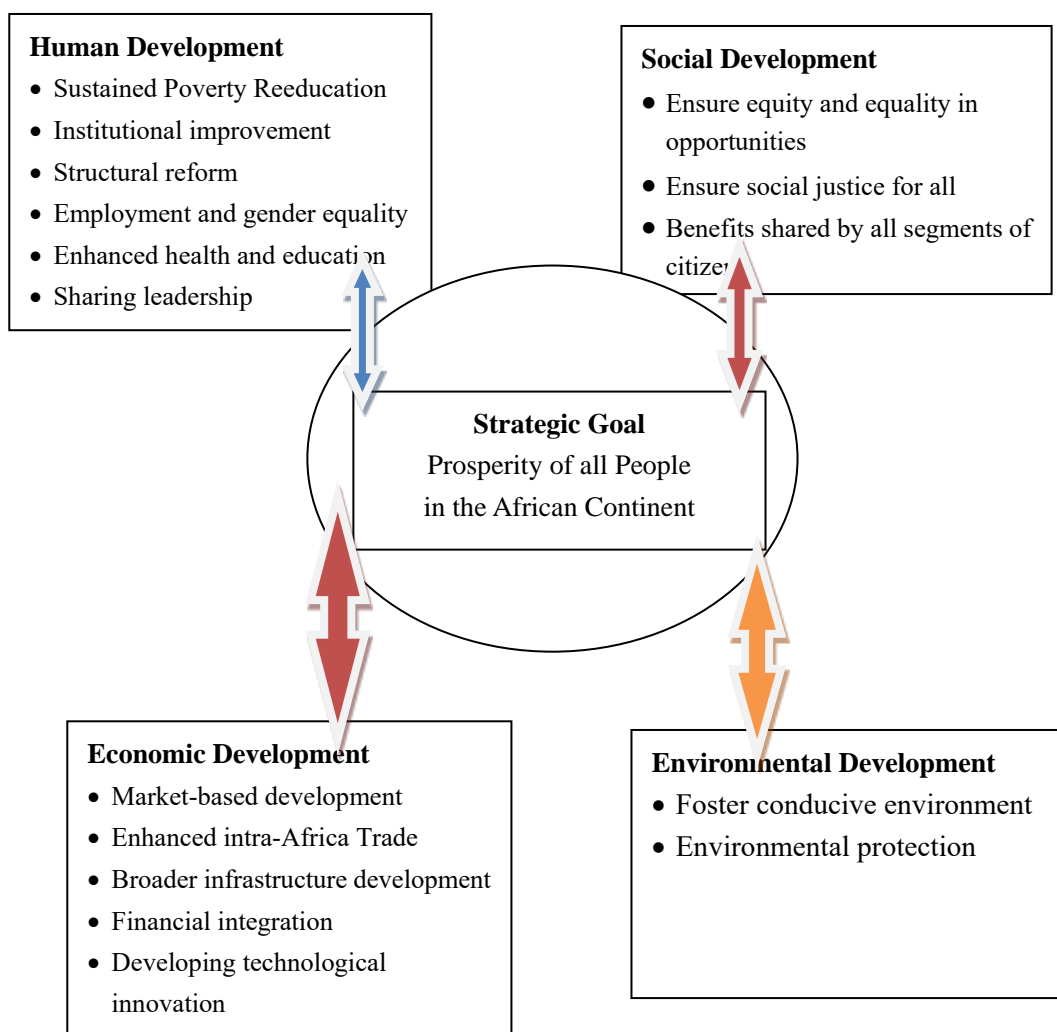


Figure 2. Strategy to Enhance Prosperity and Economic Growth in Africa

Source Designed by Dibia R. (2025)

Health and education: According to Dibia (2025), and Kalu & Aniche (2024), it is very crucial for African political leaders to be required to earn good educational qualification, moral values, and leadership experience before they could be elected. This education requirement could enhance their knowledge of the problems and challenges associated with their positions. Earning higher level of education, could help new African leaders to understand how to engage in strategic doing and shared governance, as well as how to provide sustainable solutions (Adeleye et al 2020; Dooley & Pattern 2024. United Nations Economic Development in Africa report 2021). Furthermore, the ability of African leaders to conduct critical analysis, understand the problems of the continent, and work diligently and selflessly to solve them could determine how the economic development pendulum would swing to a positive direction as well as galvanize the welfare and human rights of citizens in many African countries (Dibia 2025 & 2017; Kaifala 2023; Kalu, & Aniche, 2024).

Institution Improvement and Structuring of Reform: To maximize the potentials for accomplishing the goals of the 2030 sustainable development and Agenda 2063, African

nations must conduct institutional improvement and structural reform. (Adeleye & Eboagu 2019; Pillay & Kikasu 2024; United Nations Economic Development in Africa report 2021). Many scholars have argued that institutional reform could potentially lead to the transformation of the judicial system in most African countries. The challenge would be ensuring fair and impartial administration of justice where nobody is above the law or constitutional provisions of any African country (Bengu 2023; Dibie 2018a; World Bank report 2022). Thus, the blueprint or gold standard for achieving an inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development in any African country is moral, and visionary leaders.

Corruption Solution: To escape the vicious cycle that corruption has created for disadvantaged groups, the citizens of African nations must fight for their rights and demand accountability from their leaders, ensuring access to basic social services and resources. Further, programs that enable disadvantaged people to take part in the development processes by opening dialogue between them and their governments should be established. Citizens of any country would benefit from being considered champions of integrity, and the community prospers when there is shared governance (Alidu 2023; Dibie 2022; Dibie et al 2015; Transparency International, 2016). In addition, African leaders must adopt simplicity in their lifestyle, avoid unnecessary waste of public funds, put the interest of their citizens before themselves, and discourage extravagant display of waste of resources within their respective countries and abroad (Dibie 2018a; Jones et al 2022).

Women Empowerment: The empowerment and inclusion of women in governance should be fundamental to strengthening women's right rights an enabling them to have control over their lives and exert influence in societies in the African continent (Dibie 2018b; Gomes & Mejimdiui 2023). Thus, women's empowerment is about creating just and equitable societies and nations in the African continent. It is inconceivable for women, who make up the larger population of the continent to be sidelined in governance. After more than sixty years of independent many countries in the African continent needs to be transformed into a place where people are treated with dignity and respect (Dibie 2018b; Ndembi et al. 2024).

Economic Development and Capacity Building: Boosting agricultural productivity is essential to economic development and enhancing structural transformation could advance the process (Apiko et al 2020). Economic growth is important because it keeps all nations moving in a positive, productive direction (Dibie et.al 2015; Mankiw 2024). Increased economic growth in Africa will enhance or increase employment opportunities. The neoclassical approach to economic growth prescribes two basic premises (Mankiw 2024). A free-market economy is important in the economic development of a country. Clear and serious uneven distribution of economic resources between regions and ethnic groups is known to have led to conflict, and sometimes to serious secessionist rebellion. An enabling environment free of conflict is where economic growth can take place (Coulibaly 2017; Mankiw 2024; Nafziger 2006).

Enhancing Good Governance and Nation Building: Good governance is about accountability, which depends on information, transparency, and recourse contestability (Dibie 2025; Dibie

& Dibie, 2021). Leaders who can understand, appreciate, and motivate colleagues in multiple cultures in the African context could become an increasingly valued resource for the continent. According to The World Bank report (2022) and Dibie (2025), African nations that have technologically savvy leaders will have competitive advantage in development administration because without technology, the future of integrated Africa or global partnership and network would be impossible (Kaifala 2023; Kalu & Aniche 2024). Figure 2 provides a concept mapping of how to enhance development administration and prosperity in the African continent.

As the trend towards globally confectioned markets becomes stronger in the future, Africa's political leaders must learn to manage global production, marketing, and sales teams to accomplish competitive advantage (Dibie 2025; Dibie 2018; Mamokhere 2024; Mankiw 2024). A home-centric view will not help African nations to accomplish development administration goals. Leaders who understand, appreciate, and motivate colleagues in multiple cultures will become an increasingly valued resource. African leaders must also develop social architecture that encourages bright and confident people to work together successfully, and to exercise their own creativity. In addition, for African nations to accomplish development administration goals, they will need the capacity for personal leadership stemming from a deep self-awareness developed from the inside out, rather than from the outside in (Azeez 2023; Mamokhere 2024). Future African leaders must know their strengths, and how to draw upon the complementary strengths of others in the process of sharing leadership roles as needed for development administration.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined the nature of development administration and the predicaments of lack of visionary leadership in many countries in the African continent. The paper argues that ineffective government leadership and conflict could serve as a lever to poor sustainable economic growth and social development. Despite the incremental drop in the number of poorer individuals over the last decade in some African countries, unequal distribution of wealth and official corruption of African leaders and senior public administrators remain obstacles to progress in a number of countries in the African continent. Therefore, visionary and steward leadership, investment in human and economic capital, inclusive political system, open market, and good regional integration as well as ethical, political will, and equitable provision of public goods and services to all citizens could move the needle towards economic development in the continent as well as enhance development administration in many African countries.

This research reveals that African countries lack capacity and visionary leaders. Nations in the African continent must build capacity, and to build capacity, they need competent and visionary leaders, not religious or tribal leaders. There is, however, an increasing number of nations in the African continent that are showing signs of economic development. The positive economic growth in the countries that are doing much better reflects their ability to hire highly qualified Indigenous experts to formulate and effectively implement needed and vibrant economic policies. In addition, the adoption of development administration has

galvanized some countries to embrace true democracy and encourage shared governance, and participatory forms of government. African governments that were previously vulnerable to domestic and external shocks in the past decades are now encouraging cooperation between civil society organizations and national and regional governments. In addition, it is paramount for African leaders to realize that for any nation to grow economically, the citizens must be actively engaged in the development process. The dynamics of participation is how to galvanize societal energy without causing political disintegration or revolution (Dooley & Pattern 2024; Pillay & Kikasu 2024).

Furthermore, Africa's achievement of the basic level of economic development will aid humanity in its quest for peace, prosperity, and harmony. There is no doubt that the era of promoting globalization and sustainable development success depends on formulating appropriate development administration programs for the African people. Such initiatives would resolve the predicaments associated with injustice to over a billion people living on the continent. Because of the importance of diversifying African nations' economies, it is critical to recognize how various dimensions of development administration models and diversification can have different implications for the policy options that are available (Dibie 2025). In addition, economic diversification, which is associated with development administration and structural transformation, would enhance African nations' capacity building. The various governments in the continent must adopt the strategic approach to increase productivity, per capita income growth, and shock resilience (Mamokhere 2024; Usman & Laundry, 2021). It is paramount for leaders of African nations to realize that it will take Africans to develop their respective countries. Africans must be the change agent that they wish to see in the continent. In addition, they must develop a common sense of development administration strategy. Future research should explore how African nations could systematically start to convert their wealth of raw materials into finished products for the global market.

Finally, the efforts of some African counties to break free of dependency has not been successful because they continue to believe that access to the benefits of globalization have been uneven. This major challenge has also fostered inequalities along the developed and developing nations. Therefore, to prepare for success in the implementation of development administration, African leaders must change their mindset or their leadership orientation and moral perspectives of what constitute a good life. In addition, African countries need to adopt mechanism that could galvanize self-reliance through more effective development choices and leadership in governance, enterprise-driven economic growth, and increased resilience among its vulnerable citizens (Dibie 2025). Ethically elected leaders in African countries must enact and effectively implement policies that lead to the accomplishments of (a) sustainable natural resource management; (b) effective utilization of quality health, water and sanitation system; (c) reduce the importation of foreign consumer goods and enhance domestic production of domestic goods, (d) enhance effective, citizen-responsive governance; (e) start programs that could propel rural poverty reduction and employment, and (f) enhance the education system and quality.

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