

Good Governance and Economic Development: A Study of Selected Federal Ministries of Nigeria

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Abstract	Journal of Policy and Development Studies (JPDS)
Good governance is widely recognized as a critical determinant of sustainable economic development, particularly in developing countries where institutional effectiveness shapes policy implementation and public service delivery. This study examines the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria, drawing institutional evidence from selected federal ministries responsible for economic planning, fiscal management, infrastructure development, industrialization, and agricultural development. The study adopted a qualitative documentary research design and relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from official government publications, reports of international development organizations, policy documents, and peer-reviewed scholarly literature. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns and explain the nexus between governance practices and economic development. The findings revealed that while recent governance reforms have improved fiscal transparency, public financial management, and institutional accountability in some sectors, persistent weaknesses in policy implementation, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, limited institutional capacity, and weak inter-agency coordination continue to undermine sustainable economic development. The study concludes that strengthening governance institutions is fundamental to improving public sector performance and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic development in Nigeria. It recommends deepening institutional reforms, strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms, enhancing administrative capacity, improving monitoring and evaluation systems, and fostering inter-ministerial coordination to improve policy implementation and development outcomes.	Vol. 20 Issue 5 (2026) ISSN(p) 1597-9385 ISSN (e) 2814-1091 Home page: https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jpds ARTICLE INFO: Keywords Good governance; economic development; transparency; accountability; Nigeria federal ministries. Received: 21 May 2026 Revised: 3 July 2026 Accepted: 24 July 2026 DOI https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v20i5.17

1. Introduction

Good governance is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic development because it promotes transparency, accountability, effective public service delivery, and efficient resource management. Countries with strong governance institutions are more likely to achieve sustainable economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve citizens' welfare than those with weak institutional frameworks (North, 1990; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; World Bank, 2024). Consequently, good governance has become central to development policy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

In Nigeria, successive governments have introduced several governance reforms to strengthen public sector performance, including the Fiscal Responsibility Act (2007), the Public Procurement Act (2007), the Treasury Single Account (TSA), and the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS). These reforms were designed to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public resources. Despite these efforts, the country continues to face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, weak policy implementation, and poor public service delivery, reflecting persistent institutional weaknesses (World Bank, 2025; International Monetary Fund, 2025).

Federal ministries play a pivotal role in translating government policies into development outcomes through policy formulation, budget implementation, and service delivery. Ministries such as the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Federal Ministry of Works are central to Nigeria's economic transformation agenda. However, bureaucratic inefficiency, weak accountability mechanisms, and inadequate institutional capacity continue to constrain their effectiveness (Olaopa, 2018).

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between governance and economic development, most have focused on national governance indicators rather than the governance performance of federal ministries. This study therefore examines the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria using institutional evidence from selected federal ministries, with emphasis on transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Successive governments in Nigeria have introduced various governance reforms to improve transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency in the public sector. Despite these efforts, the country continues to face persistent developmental challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, high unemployment, poor public service delivery, and widespread poverty. These challenges suggest that weaknesses in governance and institutional performance continue to hinder sustainable economic development (World Bank, 2025; International Monetary Fund, 2025). Federal ministries play a critical role in implementing government policies and development programmes. However, many of these ministries are constrained by bureaucratic inefficiency, weak accountability mechanisms, poor policy implementation, and inadequate institutional capacity, which reduce their effectiveness in achieving development objectives (Olaopa, 2018).

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria, most have focused on national governance indicators with limited attention to the governance practices of federal ministries. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining how transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency within selected federal ministries influence economic development in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria using institutional evidence from selected federal ministries.

The specific objectives are to:

1. To examine the effect of transparency in selected federal ministries on economic development in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the effect of accountability practices in selected federal ministries on economic development in Nigeria.
3. To evaluate the effect of administrative efficiency in selected federal ministries on economic development in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does transparency in selected federal ministries influence economic development in Nigeria?
2. How do accountability practices in selected federal ministries affect economic development in Nigeria?
3. What is the effect of administrative efficiency in selected federal ministries on economic development in Nigeria?

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Concept of Good Governance

The concept of good governance has become central to contemporary development discourse because of its strong association with economic growth, institutional effectiveness, democratic consolidation, and sustainable development. Although governance has existed as long as organized societies, the notion of good governance gained international prominence during the late 1980s when development institutions recognized that the failure of many development programmes in

developing countries was attributable not only to inadequate financial resources but also to weak institutions, poor public sector management, corruption, and ineffective policy implementation (World Bank, 1989).

Governance broadly refers to the processes, structures, and institutions through which public authority is exercised and collective decisions are made and implemented. It encompasses the mechanisms through which governments formulate policies, allocate public resources, provide public services, and interact with citizens and other stakeholders. However, good governance goes beyond the mere exercise of authority; it emphasizes the quality of governance by ensuring that public institutions operate efficiently, transparently, accountably, equitably, and in accordance with the rule of law (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 1997).

The World Bank defines governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. It identifies three broad dimensions of governance: (i) the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; (ii) the government's capacity to formulate and implement sound policies effectively; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for institutions that govern economic and social interactions (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). These dimensions are operationalized through the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which measure voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.

Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) conceptualizes good governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority in ways that promote integrity, openness, responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability. According to the OECD, governance is effective when public institutions possess the capacity to formulate sound policies, coordinate implementation across sectors, manage public resources responsibly, and deliver quality public services that meet citizens' needs.

From a public administration perspective, good governance represents a governance model that encourages ethical leadership, institutional integrity, citizen participation, evidence-based policymaking, transparency, and accountability in public decision-making (Olaopa, 2018). It therefore provides the institutional foundation for sustainable economic development by reducing transaction costs, strengthening investor confidence, improving public expenditure efficiency, and ensuring equitable distribution of development benefits.

Scholars of institutional economics further argue that governance quality largely determines the developmental trajectory of nations. North (1990) maintains that institutions—defined as the formal and informal rules governing human interactions—shape economic performance by reducing uncertainty, facilitating transactions, and providing incentives for productive activities. Similarly, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argue that inclusive political and economic institutions are fundamental to long-term prosperity because they create incentives for investment, innovation, and broad-based participation in economic activities.

Although the principles of good governance are generally universal, their practical application differs across countries depending on institutional maturity, political systems, administrative

capacity, and socio-economic conditions. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, governance challenges continue to manifest through corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, weak regulatory enforcement, policy inconsistency, poor service delivery, and limited institutional accountability. These deficiencies have significantly constrained the effectiveness of public institutions and hindered sustainable economic development despite the country's abundant natural and human resources (World Bank, 2025).

In recognition of these challenges, successive Nigerian governments have implemented various governance reforms aimed at strengthening public sector institutions. Reforms such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA), the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), and public procurement reforms were introduced to improve fiscal transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency. While these reforms have yielded measurable improvements in public financial management, several institutional weaknesses continue to impede effective policy implementation and service delivery (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2025).

The present study conceptualizes good governance as the effective management of public institutions through transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency. These dimensions are particularly relevant because they directly influence the ability of federal ministries to formulate policies, manage public resources, coordinate development programmes, and deliver services that contribute to economic development. Accordingly, the study focuses on transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency as the principal indicators of good governance within selected federal ministries in Nigeria.

Dimensions of Good Governance

While good governance is multidimensional, this study focuses on three interrelated dimensions that are central to the performance of public institutions and are widely recognized in governance literature: transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency.

Transparency

Transparency refers to the openness of government institutions in conducting public affairs and making information accessible to citizens and stakeholders. It requires that government decisions, financial transactions, procurement processes, and policy implementation activities are carried out in a manner that is clear, timely, and subject to public scrutiny. Transparency reduces information asymmetry, limits opportunities for corruption, and enhances citizens' trust in government institutions (OECD, 2023).

In Nigeria, reforms such as the Freedom of Information Act (2011), the Treasury Single Account (TSA), and electronic public procurement systems have enhanced fiscal transparency and strengthened financial reporting across public institutions. Nevertheless, challenges relating to delayed disclosure of information, inconsistent compliance with reporting standards, and limited public access to government records continue to undermine transparency within many ministries and agencies (World Bank, 2025).

Accountability

Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials and institutions to explain and justify their actions, accept responsibility for their decisions, and be subject to sanctions where misconduct or poor performance occurs. It encompasses financial accountability, administrative accountability, political accountability, and legal accountability (UNDP, 1997).

Effective accountability promotes prudent management of public resources, strengthens institutional integrity, discourages corruption, and improves public confidence in government. In Nigeria, institutions such as the Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation, the Public Accounts Committees of the National Assembly, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) play important roles in promoting accountability. However, weak enforcement mechanisms, political interference, and inadequate institutional capacity continue to limit the effectiveness of these accountability systems (Transparency International, 2024).

Administrative Efficiency

Administrative efficiency refers to the capacity of public institutions to utilize available human, financial, and material resources effectively in achieving organizational objectives with minimal waste, delay, and duplication of effort. Efficient public administration is reflected in timely policy implementation, effective coordination, prudent financial management, and high-quality public service delivery (Olaopa, 2018).

Administrative efficiency is particularly important in federal ministries because they serve as the principal institutions responsible for translating government policies into development outcomes. Inefficiencies such as bureaucratic delays, overlapping institutional mandates, inadequate coordination, and weak monitoring systems reduce the effectiveness of public expenditure and impede national development. Strengthening administrative efficiency through institutional reforms, digitalization, and capacity development therefore remains essential for improving governance and accelerating economic development in Nigeria.

Concept of Economic Development

Economic development is a multidimensional process involving sustained improvements in the economic, social, and institutional well-being of a society. Unlike economic growth, which primarily measures increases in gross domestic product (GDP), economic development encompasses structural transformation, poverty reduction, employment creation, income redistribution, technological advancement, improved infrastructure, and enhanced quality of life (Todaro & Smith, 2021).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) emphasizes that development should be people-centred, focusing on expanding individuals' capabilities, improving access to education and healthcare, reducing inequalities, and creating opportunities for productive employment. Consequently, economic development is assessed not only through income growth but also

through broader indicators such as the Human Development Index (HDI), poverty incidence, infrastructure quality, and institutional effectiveness.

For Nigeria, economic development involves diversifying the economy beyond oil dependence, strengthening industrial productivity, promoting agricultural modernization, improving infrastructure, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing human capital. Achieving these objectives depends significantly on the effectiveness of governance institutions responsible for designing and implementing development policies.

Good Governance and Economic Development

The relationship between good governance and economic development has been extensively documented in development economics, institutional economics, and public administration literature. Effective governance creates an enabling environment for investment, innovation, efficient resource allocation, and sustainable public service delivery, all of which contribute to economic development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Good governance promotes economic development by improving policy implementation, strengthening institutional credibility, reducing corruption, enhancing fiscal discipline, and ensuring that public resources are utilized efficiently. Conversely, weak governance often results in policy failures, resource misallocation, low investor confidence, poor infrastructure, and limited socio-economic progress (World Bank, 2024).

For developing countries such as Nigeria, strengthening governance institutions is particularly important because public institutions play a central role in coordinating economic reforms, implementing development programmes, and managing public resources. The effectiveness of governance therefore directly influences the country's capacity to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Federal Ministries and Economic Development in Nigeria

Federal ministries constitute the administrative machinery through which government policies and development programmes are formulated, coordinated, and implemented. Ministries such as the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Federal Ministry of Works perform critical functions in fiscal management, infrastructure development, industrialization, agricultural transformation, and macroeconomic planning.

The performance of these ministries significantly influences the effectiveness of government interventions and the achievement of national development objectives. Ministries characterized by transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency are more likely to implement policies effectively, manage public resources responsibly, and deliver quality public services. Conversely, institutional weaknesses—including bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, inadequate coordination, and weak monitoring systems—continue to constrain development outcomes in Nigeria (Olaopa, 2018; World Bank, 2025).

Accordingly, strengthening governance practices within federal ministries remains indispensable for promoting sustainable economic development and improving the effectiveness of public administration in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Institutional Theory

This study is anchored on Institutional Theory, propounded by Douglass C. North (1990) in *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. The theory posits that the quality and effectiveness of institutions largely determine a country's economic performance and development. According to North (1990), institutions comprise the formal rules (laws, regulations, and policies) and informal norms that shape human interactions, reduce uncertainty, and facilitate efficient economic activities.

Institutional Theory emphasizes that effective governance institutions promote transparency, accountability, policy implementation, and efficient resource management, thereby fostering sustainable economic development. Conversely, weak institutions characterized by corruption, administrative inefficiency, and poor accountability hinder economic progress and public sector performance.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

Institutional Theory is relevant to this study because federal ministries are key public institutions responsible for implementing government policies and development programmes. The theory explains that improvements in transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency enhance institutional performance, leading to better economic development outcomes. It therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining how governance practices within selected federal ministries influence economic development in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies have consistently established that good governance is a significant determinant of economic development through improved institutional performance, transparency, accountability, and effective public service delivery.

Using panel data for over 200 countries, Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2010) found that countries with higher levels of government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption recorded better economic and development outcomes. The study concluded that strengthening governance institutions is essential for sustainable development.

In a cross-country analysis, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argued that inclusive political and economic institutions promote long-term economic development by encouraging investment,

innovation, and effective public administration. They observed that weak institutions often result in poor governance, policy failures, and persistent underdevelopment.

The World Bank (2025), in its Nigeria Development Update, reported that recent fiscal and governance reforms have improved macroeconomic stability and public financial management in Nigeria. However, the report noted that weak institutional capacity, inadequate service delivery, and poor implementation of public policies continue to constrain inclusive economic growth.

Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (2025), in its Article IV Consultation Report on Nigeria, observed that although recent economic reforms have strengthened fiscal discipline and enhanced revenue mobilization, governance weaknesses and institutional inefficiencies remain major obstacles to sustainable economic development.

In the Nigerian public sector, Olaopa (2018) examined public service reforms and found that administrative inefficiency, bureaucratic bottlenecks, weak accountability, and poor policy implementation have continued to limit the effectiveness of government ministries and agencies. The study emphasized that institutional reforms and capacity building are critical to improving governance and development outcomes.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates a strong positive relationship between good governance and economic development. However, most existing studies focus on national governance indicators or broad public sector reforms, with limited attention to governance practices within selected federal ministries. This provides the basis for the present study.

Research Gap

Existing studies have established that good governance is essential for economic development by enhancing institutional effectiveness, accountability, transparency, and policy implementation (North, 1990; Kaufmann et al., 2010; World Bank, 2025). However, most of these studies have focused on national governance indicators, cross-country comparisons, or broad public sector reforms, with limited attention to the governance performance of individual federal ministries.

Given that federal ministries are the primary institutions responsible for implementing government policies and development programmes, there is limited empirical evidence on how governance practices within these ministries influence economic development in Nigeria. This study addresses this gap by examining the effects of transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency in selected federal ministries on economic development, thereby providing institutional-level evidence to enrich the existing literature and inform public sector governance reforms.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a *qualitative documentary research design.* The design is appropriate because it relied on the systematic review and analysis of existing documents and published materials to examine the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Nigeria, focusing on selected federal ministries with key responsibilities for economic planning and development. These include the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Federal Ministry of Works.

Sources of Data

The study relied exclusively on *secondary data* obtained from official government publications, reports of international organizations (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, OECD, and UNDP), publications of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), policy documents, and relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through documentary review. Relevant documents were purposively selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the objectives of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using *thematic content analysis. The analysis focused on key themes of transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency to explain how governance practices within selected federal ministries influence economic development in Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

The documentary evidence reviewed indicates that good governance is closely associated with economic development in Nigeria. The findings are discussed in line with the objectives of the study.

Transparency and Economic Development

The study found that transparency initiatives such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA), the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), and the Public Procurement Act have strengthened public financial management and enhanced fiscal transparency within selected federal ministries. These reforms have contributed to improved budget management and reduced opportunities for financial leakages. However, inadequate

compliance with information disclosure requirements and weak implementation continue to limit their overall effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the World Bank (2025), which emphasizes that transparency enhances public sector efficiency and supports sustainable economic development.

Accountability and Economic Development

The findings revealed that accountability mechanisms, including financial audits and anti-corruption institutions, have improved oversight of public resources. Nevertheless, weak enforcement, bureaucratic delays, and corruption continue to undermine effective accountability within federal ministries. Consequently, the expected developmental benefits of public expenditure are not fully realized. This finding supports Olaopa (2018), who argues that strengthening accountability is essential for improving governance and public sector performance in Nigeria.

Administrative Efficiency and Economic Development

The study found that administrative efficiency remains a major challenge affecting policy implementation and service delivery. Bureaucratic bottlenecks, inadequate institutional capacity, and weak inter-ministerial coordination often delay project execution and reduce the effectiveness of development programmes. These findings are consistent with Institutional Theory (North, 1990), which posits that strong and efficient institutions are fundamental to achieving sustainable economic development.

4, Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency are essential components of good governance that significantly influence economic development. While recent governance reforms have strengthened public financial management and institutional oversight, persistent implementation gaps and institutional weaknesses continue to constrain development outcomes. The findings support previous studies (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; World Bank, 2025) that emphasize the importance of effective institutions in promoting sustainable economic development. Therefore, strengthening governance practices within federal ministries remains critical to improving policy implementation, public service delivery, and inclusive economic growth in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between good governance and economic development in Nigeria using institutional evidence from selected federal ministries. The findings revealed that transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency are critical determinants of effective governance and sustainable economic development. Although recent public sector reforms have strengthened fiscal management and institutional oversight, persistent challenges such as weak policy implementation, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and inadequate institutional capacity

continue to constrain development outcomes. The study therefore concludes that strengthening governance practices within federal ministries is essential for improving public sector performance and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Federal ministries should strengthen transparency by ensuring timely publication of budget implementation reports, procurement information, and other public financial records to enhance openness and public trust.
2. Government should reinforce accountability mechanisms by strengthening internal and external audit systems, enforcing compliance with financial regulations, and empowering oversight institutions to promote prudent management of public resources.
3. Administrative efficiency should be improved through continuous capacity building, digitalization of public services, and enhanced inter-ministerial coordination to ensure effective policy implementation and efficient service delivery.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited to a qualitative documentary analysis of selected federal ministries in Nigeria. Future studies should adopt mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to empirically examine the relationship between good governance and economic development using primary data from ministries, departments, and agencies. Further research may also undertake comparative analyses across states or sectors to provide broader evidence on the impact of governance practices on economic development in Nigeria.

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