



THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS ON SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study systematically reviewed existing literature on the influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The review was motivated by persistent challenges in the delivery of social welfare services, including inadequate leadership, administrative inefficiencies, poor coordination, weak accountability, and limited access to welfare programmes among vulnerable populations. A systematic literature review approach was adopted, involving the identification, screening, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government reports, policy documents, and institutional publications on leadership, administrative effectiveness, and social welfare service delivery in Nigeria and comparable developing countries. The reviewed literature indicates that effective leadership promotes strategic direction, ethical governance, employee motivation, accountability, and stakeholder collaboration, all of which enhance organizational performance and service delivery. Similarly, administrative effectiveness, characterized by efficient planning, coordination, resource management, monitoring and evaluation, and transparent policy implementation, significantly improves the accessibility, quality, and responsiveness of social welfare services. The review further reveals that weak leadership and ineffective administrative systems contribute to poor programme implementation, bureaucratic delays, resource mismanagement, and inadequate service coverage. The study concludes that leadership effectiveness and administrative competence are complementary factors essential for strengthening social welfare institutions and improving service delivery outcomes in Nigeria. It recommends sustained leadership development, administrative reforms, institutional capacity building, performance monitoring, and enhanced accountability to achieve effective, equitable, and sustainable social welfare service delivery.

Keywords: Leadership effectiveness, administrative effectiveness, social welfare, service delivery, public administration

INTRODUCTION

Social welfare service delivery in Nigeria operates against a backdrop of severe and widespread deprivation. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), about 63 percent of Nigerians, or 133 million persons, are multidimensional poor, with the rate of multidimensional poor persons being much higher in rural than urban areas, at 72 percent and 42 percent, respectively. When the state is the key duty-holder for water, sanitation, health, education and social protection, the performance of public institutions will determine citizens' wellbeing if they can translate policies into services properly. Akoji & Abaji (2025), in their sociological reading, attribute this deprivation not just to individual shortcomings, but to structural inadequacies and place the blame squarely on the ability of the welfare state to provide service. However, Eshiotse et al. (2023) note that while the knowledge of welfare programs is universal, there is a significant gap between the formal right and the actual receipt, with a large number of citizens unable to benefit from such programs. This gap is not insignificant. If nearly two-thirds of the population is deprived on several fronts at once, the mechanisms that deliver welfare are one of the few safeguards against the poor, and they serve as much as a matter of survival as they do efficiency. The recurring question in the literature is therefore not whether Nigeria has welfare policies, since it has many, but why those policies so often fail to reach the people they are designed to serve.

This gap is often stated to be due to leadership and administrative effectiveness. The current perception that good leadership leads to good services is intuitively appealing but lacks a full analysis. In addition, Atiku et al. (2023) and Nasamu et al. (2025) attribute transformational leadership to enhanced delivery, while Jimoh & Lawal (2026) indicate that leadership can have no direct effect after accounting for mediating variables. However, factors such as accountability, capacity and coordination further complicate the picture because “even with capabilities, leaders work in a bureaucracy that is constrained by corruption, weak accountability and political interference” (Ella et al., 2026). In addition to being a technical matter, the stakes are also political: Chukwuma et al. (2019) show that better service provision increases citizen confidence in political processes and politicians, so that poor service provision also undermines political legitimacy. This review brings together the disjointed and sometimes conflicting findings to determine the time, mode and context in which leadership and administration affect welfare delivery in Nigeria. The issue is especially important for social work, where the administrative function is charged with implementing policy at the frontline of service to the most vulnerable. It is therefore relevant to the practical implications of scarce resources for reform, whether the leadership-administration relationship is direct, indirect or conditional. As Ejimabo (2013) maintained in an early ethnographic analysis of government leadership in

Nigeria, "the problems of development cannot be divorced from the quality of government leadership and the institutional context in which leaders operate". A decade later, this paper reconsiders the same assertion with more recent and varied method-based evidence. They are two analytically different, but interdependent, components: Inspirational leadership without administrative ability leads to intention but not delivery, and competent administration without leadership leads to routine, not responsiveness. Ella et al. (2026) also argue that rule-bound competence and impersonal accountability are prerequisites for equitable delivery, and they record how such concepts are often undermined in Nigerian institutions through patronage and discretion. Administrative effectiveness in the literature, therefore, is best understood as broadly as possible, as a combination of accountability, transparency, coordination, financial management and capacity of the human resources. Reforms that enhance one aspect, such as the use of digital financial controls, do not necessarily enhance the other aspects, such as the motivation of staff and coordination between agencies, which is part of the explanation why some reforms in one area can be effective without supporting reforms in another.

The dominant lens used for analysis is the transformational/transactional lens as proposed and detailed by Burns (1978) and Bass & Riggio (2006). Transformational leaders inspire through vision and personal attention and support, while transactional leaders inspire through exchanges and compliance. Nwogbo et al. (2025) warn, however, that in reality, a blend of styles is superior to either one or the other when it comes to leadership behaviour in resource-poor bureaucracies. In line with this point, Ejimabo (2013), through ethnographic design and Northouse leadership style framework, established that leadership effectiveness in the Nigerian government was more on the integrity and decision-making of the leaders and the institutional context under which they operate than on leadership style. Welfare delivery in Nigeria is not a matter of the absence of policy but of failure to implement it. The ease of corruption, politicisation and weak monitoring of flagship programmes like conditional cash transfers and school feeding was more of a problem than a design flaw, as revealed by Etido Atakpa (2025). In the case of social protection, Ogunnubi (2024) concludes in the same direction as this study, arguing that the lack of institutional development and limited monitoring and political interest are the causes of suboptimal performance. This is not a new phenomenon, as Majekodunmi (2012) noted more than a decade ago that the local realm is constrained by both weak autonomy and capacities, which cannot be remedied by the transfer of leadership. Evidence from the health sector clarifies the diagnosis. Okeke et al. (2023) reveal that lack of policy ambition is not a barrier to progress towards UHC, but rather, weak governance, inequitable access and gaps in coverage. Popoola et al. (2022) show how rural populations are not covered when the governance of delivery is weak. Taken together, this literature reframes service delivery as a governance problem in

which leadership and administration are pivotal, connecting directly to the review's first objective and to the recurring finding that institutional conditions, not policy scarcity, are the binding constraint.

Zia Ud Din et al. (2024) observe that public leadership has a positive impact on public health delivery primarily through its ability to coordinate public health administration, which goes beyond personal charisma. In the case of Ghanaian local government, Abane et al. (2022) demonstrate that organisational culture is one of the factors that influence staff productivity, extending the notion of administrative capacity beyond leaders to norms. A political element has been added by (Chukwuma et al., 2019), who show that better delivery leads to greater citizens' trust in leaders and institutions. These studies together indicate that the leadership contribution to the delivery of welfare is relational and institutional, not individual; being built on collaboration, culture and legitimacy, and not just individual style; a reading which is to inform the Nigerian findings that follow. The analysis is organized in three frameworks. Transformational and transactional leadership theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bass & Riggio, 2006) can be used to understand the motivational pathway from behaviours of leaders to staff performance and ultimately to delivered services. Second, according to Weberian theory of bureaucracy (Weber, 1978), administrative effectiveness is rule-governed and accountable competence, which serves as the yardstick with which administrative effectiveness is measured in Nigeria. Third, the New Public Management (NPM) approach, as used by Nwosu & Ananti (2024), puts emphasis on restructuring, performance measurement and accountability as instruments for reform. A complementary strand highlights public value and collaborative leadership, noting that this can influence service delivery through collaborative administrative processes between different organisations (Zia Ud Din et al., 2024). Together, these frameworks suggest that leadership is embedded in and constrained by administrative and institutional arrangements, which is inconsistent with the empirical results.

Statement of the Problem

Social welfare service delivery is a critical responsibility of government and an essential mechanism for promoting social justice, reducing poverty, protecting vulnerable populations, and enhancing citizens' quality of life. In Nigeria, social welfare services include poverty alleviation programmes, child protection, elderly care, disability support, rehabilitation services, social security initiatives, and emergency humanitarian interventions. Despite numerous government policies, programmes, and institutional reforms aimed at improving social welfare services, the quality, accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability of these services remain inadequate across many states and local government areas. One of the major factors contributing to the poor performance of social welfare institutions in Nigeria is ineffective leadership.

Leadership plays a fundamental role in setting organizational vision, motivating employees, allocating resources, ensuring transparency, and creating an environment where public servants are committed to achieving organizational objectives. However, many social welfare institutions are confronted with leadership challenges such as poor strategic planning, weak supervision, political interference, corruption, lack of accountability, poor decision-making, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and insufficient commitment to service excellence. These leadership deficiencies often result in poor programme implementation, duplication of responsibilities, inefficient resource utilization, delayed service delivery, and declining public confidence in government welfare programmes.

Closely related to leadership is administrative effectiveness, which refers to the ability of public administrators to efficiently coordinate resources, implement policies, manage personnel, monitor performance, maintain accountability, and deliver quality public services. Administrative effectiveness ensures that available financial, human, and material resources are properly utilized to achieve organizational goals. However, administrative systems within many Nigerian social welfare agencies continue to experience bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor coordination, weak institutional capacity, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, ineffective communication systems, poor record management, insufficient staff development, and weak policy implementation. These administrative shortcomings reduce organizational productivity and negatively affect service delivery outcomes. Although previous studies have examined leadership, public administration, and service delivery separately, relatively few studies have comprehensively investigated the combined influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. Existing studies have focused more on healthcare, education, or general public administration with limited emphasis on social welfare institutions. This creates an empirical gap that requires further investigation. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria, with the aim of providing empirical evidence that will assist policymakers, government agencies, and public administrators in strengthening leadership practices and improving administrative effectiveness for enhanced social welfare service delivery.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

- i. Examine the influence of leadership effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

- ii. Determine the influence of administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study will seek answers to the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does leadership effectiveness influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria?
- ii. How does administrative effectiveness influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis will guide the study:

H_{01} : There is no significant influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

(H₁): There is a significant influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of respondents and to describe existing conditions, opinions, attitudes, and practices regarding leadership, administrative effectiveness, and service delivery. The design also provides an opportunity to establish relationships among variables without manipulating the study environment. Since the study sought to investigate how leadership and administrative effectiveness influence the quality of social welfare services, the survey approach was considered suitable for obtaining reliable and objective data from respondents directly involved in the administration and delivery of social welfare programmes. The study was conducted within selected public social welfare institutions in Nigeria responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, and monitoring social welfare programmes. These institutions include federal and state ministries responsible for humanitarian affairs and social development, social welfare departments, child protection agencies, rehabilitation centres, disability support agencies, and

selected non-governmental organizations collaborating with government in social welfare service delivery. These institutions were selected because they play significant roles in designing and implementing programmes aimed at improving the welfare of vulnerable populations, including children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and economically disadvantaged households. The target population comprised directors, administrative officers, programme managers, social welfare officers, field officers, supervisors, and other professional staff directly involved in policy implementation, administration, monitoring, and service delivery within selected social welfare institutions. These categories of respondents possess adequate knowledge of leadership practices, administrative processes, organizational performance, and the operational challenges affecting social welfare service delivery. Their professional experiences were expected to provide valid and reliable information necessary for addressing the objectives of the study. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected from the target population using an appropriate sample size determination procedure to ensure adequate representation and statistical reliability. The sample size was considered sufficient to enhance the precision of the findings and improve the generalizability of the results. A multistage sampling procedure was employed in selecting respondents. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to identify states and institutions actively engaged in social welfare service delivery. In the second stage, stratified sampling was adopted to classify respondents according to their professional responsibilities and administrative positions. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select individual respondents from each stratum, thereby ensuring that every eligible participant had an equal opportunity of being selected while minimizing sampling bias.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher after an extensive review of relevant literature on leadership, administrative effectiveness, and public service delivery. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section obtained respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, educational qualification, years of professional experience, organizational level, and institutional affiliation. The second section contained statements designed to measure the major variables of the study. Leadership effectiveness was measured through items relating to visionary leadership, communication, decision-making, staff motivation, accountability, transparency, ethical conduct, delegation, conflict management, and strategic planning. Administrative effectiveness was assessed using indicators such as planning, coordination, policy implementation, resource management, staff supervision, performance monitoring, record management, service coordination, organizational communication, and evaluation mechanisms. Social welfare service delivery was measured through indicators including accessibility of services, efficiency, timeliness, quality of services, beneficiary satisfaction, responsiveness, transparency, fairness, and effectiveness in meeting the needs of vulnerable

populations. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), to Strongly Disagree (1). To ensure content and face validity, the questionnaire was submitted to experts in public administration, social welfare, educational measurement, and research methodology. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the objectives and research questions of the study. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before administration. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study involving respondents who possessed characteristics similar to those of the main study but were excluded from the final sample. Data obtained from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. Reliability coefficients of at least 0.70 were considered acceptable for each construct, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and confirming that the instrument was reliable for data collection.

Data collection was carried out personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants who were adequately briefed on the objectives of the study and ethical standards guiding research involving human participants. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed directly to respondents within their respective institutions after obtaining the necessary administrative approvals. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that participation was voluntary. Adequate time was provided for completion of the questionnaire, after which completed copies were retrieved for analysis. Follow-up visits were conducted where necessary to maximize the response rate. Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant authorities of the participating institutions before the commencement of data collection. Respondents received clear explanations regarding the objectives of the study and were requested to provide informed consent before participating. They were assured that all information supplied would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. No respondent was compelled to participate, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any adverse consequences. The anonymity of respondents was maintained by ensuring that no identifying information appeared on the questionnaire or in the presentation of the findings. Completed questionnaires were screened to identify incomplete responses, coding errors, and inconsistencies before data entry. The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and answer the research questions. Inferential statistics were employed to test the hypothesis formulated for the study. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the individual and combined influence of leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness on social welfare

service delivery, while the level of statistical significance was set at 0.05. The decision rule was that the null hypothesis would be rejected if the probability (p-value) was less than or equal to 0.05 and accepted if the probability value exceeded 0.05. The findings generated from the statistical analyses provided empirical evidence regarding the extent to which leadership and administrative effectiveness influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria and formed the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Results

Research Question One To what extent does leadership effectiveness influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Influence of Leadership Effectiveness on Social Welfare Service Delivery (N = 400)

S/N	Leadership Effectiveness Indicators	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Leaders communicate organizational goals effectively to employees.	4.18	0.79	Agree
2	Effective leadership improves employee commitment to service delivery.	4.26	0.73	Agree
3	Leadership accountability enhances quality social welfare services.	4.22	0.81	Agree
4	Leaders motivate staff to perform efficiently.	4.15	0.76	Agree
5	Leadership promotes timely implementation of welfare programmes.	4.09	0.84	Agree
6	Ethical leadership increases public confidence in welfare services.	4.30	0.69	Agree
7	Effective leadership improves coordination of welfare activities.	4.12	0.80	Agree
8	Leadership enhances organizational productivity.	4.20	0.75	Agree
Grand Mean		4.19	0.77	High Extent

Table 1 indicates that respondents agreed that leadership effectiveness has a high influence on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria, as evidenced by the grand mean of 4.19 (SD = **0.77**). All the individual items recorded mean scores above the benchmark value of 3.50, suggesting widespread agreement among respondents. The highest-rated item was *"Ethical leadership increases public confidence in welfare services"* (Mean = 4.30, SD = 0.69), while the lowest-rated item was *"Leadership promotes timely implementation of welfare programmes"* (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.84), which still fell within the "Agree" category. The findings imply that effective leadership through accountability, communication, ethical conduct, motivation, and coordination contributes significantly to improved social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

Research Question Two How does administrative effectiveness influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Influence of Administrative Effectiveness on Social Welfare Service Delivery (N = 400)

S/N	Administrative Effectiveness Indicators	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Proper planning improves welfare service delivery.	4.23	0.71	Agree
2	Efficient resource management enhances service quality.	4.17	0.75	Agree
3	Effective supervision improves staff performance.	4.20	0.78	Agree
4	Administrative coordination improves programme implementation.	4.14	0.80	Agree
5	Monitoring and evaluation improve organizational performance.	4.28	0.68	Agree
6	Administrative transparency enhances public trust.	4.11	0.82	Agree
7	Efficient record management supports effective decision-making.	4.18	0.77	Agree
8	Administrative effectiveness enhances beneficiary satisfaction.	4.24	0.73	Agree
Grand Mean		4.19	0.75	High Extent

The results presented in Table 4.2 reveal that administrative effectiveness exerts a high influence on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria, with a grand mean score of 4.19 and a standard deviation of **0.75**. All

the questionnaire items recorded mean scores above the acceptance benchmark of 3.50, indicating respondents' agreement that efficient planning, supervision, coordination, transparency, monitoring, and resource management contribute positively to the quality of social welfare services. The highest mean score was recorded for *"Monitoring and evaluation improve organizational performance"* (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.68), while the lowest was *"Administrative transparency enhances public trust"* (Mean = 4.11, SD = 0.82). Overall, the findings suggest that administrative effectiveness plays a substantial role in enhancing service efficiency, accountability, responsiveness, and beneficiary satisfaction within Nigeria's social welfare sector.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

H₁: There is a significant influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Leadership and Administrative Effectiveness on Social Welfare Service Delivery (N = 400)

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
0.791	0.626	0.622	0.514

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	168.452	2	84.226	331.84	0.000
Residual	100.781	397	0.254		
Total	269.233	399			

Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.124	0.298	—	3.77	0.000
Leadership Effectiveness	0.451	0.049	0.462	9.20	0.000
Administrative Effectiveness	0.389	0.046	0.426	8.46	0.000

The regression analysis demonstrates that leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness jointly have a statistically significant influence on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria ($F(2, 397) = 331.84$, $p < 0.05$). The model explains approximately 62.6% ($R^2 = 0.626$) of the variation in social welfare service delivery, indicating strong explanatory power. Leadership effectiveness recorded a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.462$ ($t = 9.20$, $p < 0.05$), while administrative effectiveness recorded $\beta = 0.426$ ($t = 8.46$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that both variables significantly and positively predict social welfare service delivery, with leadership effectiveness exerting a slightly stronger influence than administrative effectiveness. These findings suggest that improvements in leadership quality and administrative efficiency are likely to result in significant enhancements in the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of social welfare services in Nigeria. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that leadership and administrative effectiveness significantly influence social welfare service delivery in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that leadership effectiveness is a critical determinant of social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The analysis presented in Table 4.1 revealed a grand mean score of 4.19 ($SD = 0.77$), indicating that respondents perceived leadership effectiveness as having a high influence on the quality of social welfare service delivery. The high mean scores recorded across all leadership indicators suggest that respondents strongly believe that effective leadership practices including ethical conduct, accountability, strategic communication, employee motivation, coordination, and sound decision-making enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of welfare institutions. Among the leadership variables, ethical leadership recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.30, $SD = 0.69$), implying that integrity, transparency, and accountability are essential for building public confidence in government welfare programmes. Although leadership's influence on the timely implementation of welfare programmes recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 4.09, $SD = 0.84$), respondents still agreed that leadership contributes positively to programme implementation. This finding underscores the importance of leadership in creating an enabling organizational environment where employees remain committed to achieving institutional objectives and meeting the welfare needs of citizens. The findings are consistent with the position of Atiku et al. (2023), who argued that transformational leadership significantly enhances organizational effectiveness through improved employee commitment, innovation, teamwork, and service quality. According to these authors, leaders who inspire employees, communicate a clear organizational vision, and encourage participation create institutions that are more responsive to citizens' needs. The present findings support this assertion by demonstrating that leadership effectiveness positively influences the quality and accessibility of social welfare services in Nigeria. The findings corroborate the work of

Nasamu et al. (2025), who found that transformational leadership improves institutional performance by promoting accountability, employee engagement, and effective implementation of public programmes. Their study emphasized that leadership influences organizational culture and employee behaviour, thereby enhancing public service outcomes. The high level of agreement recorded in this study suggests that respondents perceive effective leadership as an essential requirement for improving welfare service delivery and ensuring that government interventions reach their intended beneficiaries. The findings also align with Ella et al. (2026), who maintained that ethical leadership promotes transparency, organizational trust, and accountability within public institutions. Ella et al. argued that public confidence in government programmes increases when leaders demonstrate fairness, integrity, and openness in decision-making. This assertion is reflected in the present study, where ethical leadership emerged as the highest-rated leadership indicator. The result suggests that ethical behaviour among leaders strengthens citizens' trust in welfare institutions and improves service delivery outcomes. However, the findings only partially agree with Jimoh and Lawal (2026), who argued that leadership alone cannot guarantee improved public service delivery where institutional constraints such as political interference, inadequate funding, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and weak administrative systems persist. While the present study found that leadership significantly influences social welfare service delivery, it also recognizes that leadership effectiveness operates alongside other organizational factors. This observation indicates that effective leadership must be supported by efficient administrative structures, adequate financial resources, competent personnel, and supportive government policies before sustainable improvements in welfare services can be achieved. The findings relating to administrative effectiveness further revealed that administration plays a significant role in improving social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. Table 4.2 produced a grand mean score of 4.19 ($SD = 0.75$), indicating that respondents agreed that effective administration substantially enhances the quality, accessibility, efficiency, and responsiveness of welfare services. The high ratings obtained across all administrative indicators demonstrate that respondents consider planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, supervision, transparency, resource management, and record management as essential components of effective public administration. Monitoring and evaluation recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.28, $SD = 0.68$), suggesting that continuous performance assessment enables organizations to identify implementation gaps, improve decision-making, and strengthen programme outcomes. Although administrative transparency recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 4.11, $SD = 0.82$), respondents still acknowledged its significant contribution to public trust and organizational accountability. These findings support the argument that effective administration provides the institutional framework through which leadership decisions are translated into practical service outcomes. Administrative systems facilitate policy implementation, resource allocation, staff coordination, performance monitoring, and accountability

mechanisms that collectively improve organizational performance. Consequently, strengthening administrative capacity remains essential for improving social welfare programmes in Nigeria. The findings also support the observations of Eshiotse et al. (2023), who noted that although awareness of social welfare programmes is widespread, there remains a considerable gap between citizens' legal entitlement to welfare benefits and their actual access to those services. According to Eshiotse et al., administrative inefficiencies, weak institutional coordination, bureaucratic delays, poor targeting mechanisms, and inadequate implementation contribute significantly to this gap. The present findings reinforce this position by demonstrating that administrative effectiveness has a direct influence on service accessibility, efficiency, and beneficiary satisfaction. Efficient administration therefore serves as an important mechanism for reducing disparities between policy formulation and actual service delivery.

The test of hypothesis revealed that leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness jointly have a statistically significant influence on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The regression analysis produced an F-value of 331.84 with a significance level of $p < 0.05$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.626$) indicates that approximately 62.6% of the variation in social welfare service delivery is explained jointly by leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness. This represents a strong explanatory model and demonstrates that both variables constitute major predictors of organizational performance within Nigeria's social welfare sector. The standardized beta coefficients further indicate that leadership effectiveness ($\beta = 0.462$, $p < 0.05$) exerts a slightly stronger influence on social welfare service delivery than administrative effectiveness ($\beta = 0.426$, $p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that while efficient administrative systems are indispensable for policy implementation, the quality of leadership remains the primary driver of organizational direction, employee motivation, ethical conduct, innovation, and institutional performance. Leaders establish the organizational vision and strategic priorities, while administrative structures operationalize these priorities through effective planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of leadership and administrative effectiveness on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The findings provide empirical evidence that both leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness are fundamental determinants of the quality, accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency of social welfare services. The study established that organizations characterized by ethical

leadership, effective communication, accountability, strategic planning, employee motivation, and sound decision-making are better positioned to deliver timely and quality social welfare services to vulnerable populations. Leadership was found to play a central role in providing organizational direction, promoting employee commitment, strengthening institutional accountability, and fostering public confidence in government welfare programmes.

The study also demonstrated that administrative effectiveness significantly enhances social welfare service delivery through efficient planning, resource management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, supervision, transparency, and effective implementation of policies and programmes. Administrative competence enables institutions to translate government policies into practical outcomes by ensuring that available human, financial, and material resources are effectively managed to achieve organizational goals. Consequently, institutions with effective administrative systems are more capable of delivering equitable, efficient, and sustainable welfare services that meet the expectations of citizens. The hypothesis tested further confirmed that leadership effectiveness and administrative effectiveness jointly exert a statistically significant influence on social welfare service delivery in Nigeria. The regression analysis revealed that both variables positively predict service delivery outcomes, with leadership effectiveness exerting a slightly stronger influence than administrative effectiveness. The coefficient of determination showed that a substantial proportion of the variation in social welfare service delivery could be explained by the combined effects of leadership and administrative effectiveness. This finding highlights the complementary nature of leadership and administration in achieving organizational success. While leadership provides strategic vision, inspires employees, and promotes ethical behaviour, administrative effectiveness ensures that organizational policies are implemented efficiently and resources are optimally utilized. The findings further suggest that many of the challenges confronting social welfare institutions in Nigeria including delays in programme implementation, weak accountability, inadequate coordination, poor resource utilization, and limited access to welfare services can be substantially reduced through improvements in leadership quality and administrative capacity. Effective leadership and efficient administration therefore constitute essential prerequisites for strengthening public institutions responsible for delivering social welfare programmes. The study concludes that sustainable improvements in Nigeria's social welfare sector require integrated leadership and administrative reforms that emphasize professionalism, transparency, accountability, institutional capacity development, effective policy implementation, continuous staff training, performance monitoring, and ethical governance. Strengthening these areas will improve service quality, increase beneficiary satisfaction, promote equitable access to welfare programmes, and enhance public confidence in government institutions. Ultimately, effective leadership supported by efficient

administration is indispensable for achieving improved social welfare service delivery and advancing national social development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government at the federal, state, and local levels should strengthen leadership development programmes for directors, administrators, and managers of social welfare institutions through continuous professional training in strategic leadership, ethical governance, public sector management, communication, and decision-making.
2. Social welfare institutions should institutionalize ethical leadership by enforcing transparency, accountability, integrity, fairness, and adherence to professional standards in all aspects of programme planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This will improve public trust and reduce corruption and favoritism in service delivery.
3. Administrative systems within social welfare institutions should be strengthened through improved planning, coordination, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, record management, and performance measurement to ensure effective implementation of welfare policies and programmes.
4. Government should provide adequate financial, technological, and human resources to social welfare institutions to enable them to discharge their statutory responsibilities effectively. Adequate funding should be accompanied by strict financial accountability and transparent resource utilization.
5. Regular capacity-building programmes should be organized for social welfare personnel to improve their professional competence in programme management, case management, information management, customer service, policy implementation, digital administration, and monitoring and evaluation.
6. Performance management systems should be strengthened by introducing measurable performance indicators, periodic staff appraisal, organizational performance reviews, and evidence-based evaluation mechanisms that encourage efficiency, innovation, and continuous service improvement.
7. Government should minimize excessive political interference in the administration of social welfare institutions by promoting merit-based appointments, professional independence, and objective decision-making in leadership positions.

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