ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATIONS

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between administrative capacity and poverty reduction in Nigeria, with particular reference to the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). It investigates how institutional coordination, administrative capacity, and monitoring mechanisms influence poverty reduction outcomes across key NSIP interventions. Grounded in the Capability Approach and Public Administration Theory, the study conceptualises poverty as a multidimensional condition and positions administrative capacity as the key pathway through which social investment policies are translated into tangible welfare improvements. The study adopts a quantitative descriptive survey design, drawing data from 289 respondents selected from NSIP beneficiaries and administrative staff in Kogi State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed with descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores. Findings reveal that while NSIP has contributed modestly to improving welfare through income support, education, and social protection, its overall effectiveness is constrained by weak institutional coordination, inadequate administrative capacity, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. The study concludes that poverty reduction outcomes depend significantly on the strength of administrative systems *rather than policy design alone. It recommends institutional strengthening, improved coordination, enhanced capacity building, and robust monitoring frameworks to improve programme effectiveness.*

Keywords: Administrative capacity, Poverty reduction, Institutional coordination, Monitoring mechanisms, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP).

1.0 Introduction

Development administration is centrally concerned with how public institutions organize resources, coordinate actors and translate policy intentions into tangible improvements in citizens' welfare. Within this framework, administrative capacity refers to the ability of state institutions to design sound policies, mobilise financial and human resources, ensure effective coordination, and monitor outcomes in a transparent and accountable manner (Grindle, 2017). In developing countries such as Nigeria, the strength or weakness of administrative capacity often determines whether well-intentioned development programmes succeed or fail in addressing social challenges.

Since 2015, poverty has remained a pressing development concern in Nigeria, despite periods of economic growth. Rising unemployment, inflation, insecurity and structural inequalities have deepened household vulnerability, particularly among rural dwellers and urban informal workers. Official statistics indicate that a significant proportion of Nigerians continue to live below the national poverty line, with poverty becoming increasingly multidimensional in nature, affecting income, education, health and living standards (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020; World Bank, 2022). These trends underscore the limits of growth without effective social protection and administrative delivery mechanisms.

It was against this background that the Federal Government introduced the National Social Investment Programmes in 2015 as a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. The NSIP was designed to cushion the effects of economic hardship through targeted interventions such as cash transfers, youth employment schemes, microcredit support and school feeding programmes. Beyond their social objectives, these initiatives also represent a test of Nigeria's administrative machinery, given their scale, complexity and reliance on intergovernmental coordination.

Examining administrative capacity in relation to poverty reduction is therefore critical, as it sheds light on how institutional effectiveness, coordination and accountability shape development outcomes. Understanding this relationship provides valuable insights into why poverty persists despite sustained policy interventions and how development administration can be strengthened to deliver inclusive and sustainable welfare improvements (UNDP, 2021).

Despite the proliferation of poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria, poverty levels have remained persistently high, raising serious concerns about the effectiveness of development interventions. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, about 40.1% of Nigerians, approximately 83 million people, were living below the national poverty line as of 2019, while more recent multidimensional poverty data indicate that over 63% of the population experience deprivations across health, education, and living standards (NBS, 2020; NBS, 2022). These figures suggest that successive government programmes have not translated into sustained and broad-based welfare improvements.

The introduction of the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) in 2015 was intended to reverse this trend through targeted social protection and empowerment initiatives. However, evidence from policy reviews and development reports points to recurring administrative weaknesses in programme implementation. These include poor inter-agency coordination, inadequate human and technical capacity, weak monitoring mechanisms, and financial leakages that undermine programme efficiency and credibility (World Bank, 2022; UNDP, 2021). Such challenges have limited the reach and impact of NSIP interventions, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. Against this backdrop, there is a compelling need to interrogate how administrative capacity shapes poverty reduction outcomes under the NSIP. Understanding this relationship is crucial for explaining the persistence of poverty despite substantial public investment and for identifying institutional reforms necessary to enhance development administration in Nigeria.

Therefore, study seeks to address the following questions:

i. How has institutional coordination influenced the implementation of the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria?
ii. What effect does administrative capacity have on poverty reduction outcomes under the National Social Investment Programme in Nigeria?
iii. What role do monitoring mechanisms play in the effectiveness of National Social Investment Programme interventions in Nigeria?

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of administrative capacity on poverty reduction outcomes in Nigeria, using the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Assess the influence of institutional coordination on the implementation of the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria.
ii. Examine the effect of administrative capacity on poverty reduction outcomes under the National Social Investment Programme in Nigeria.
iii. Analyse the role of monitoring mechanisms in the effectiveness of National Social Investment Programme interventions in Nigeria.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Administrative Capacity

Administrative capacity refers to the ability of public institutions to effectively design, coordinate, implement, and evaluate policies in pursuit of development goals. It encompasses institutional structures, human resources, technical expertise, financial management systems, and accountability mechanisms that enable the state to translate policy intentions into practical outcomes (Grindle, 2017). In the context of developing countries such as Nigeria, administrative capacity is not merely about the existence of formal institutions, but about how well these institutions function in practice. Weak coordination among agencies, inadequate skills, politicisation of bureaucracy, and poor data systems often constrain administrative performance, even when policies are well conceived (Andrews, et al., 2017). Conversely, strong administrative capacity enhances policy coherence, reduces waste and leakages, and improves service delivery to citizens. Within poverty reduction programmes, administrative capacity determines targeting accuracy, timeliness of intervention, and sustainability of outcomes. As such, it is widely recognised as a critical determinant of development effectiveness and state legitimacy in contemporary development administration.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond low income to include deprivation in education, health, housing, nutrition, and access to basic services. Modern development discourse recognises poverty as both a material condition and a structural outcome shaped by inequality, exclusion, and weak institutions (Sen, 1999). In Nigeria, poverty has persisted despite economic growth, reflecting deep-seated structural and governance challenges. Poverty reduction, therefore, involves deliberate policy actions aimed at improving living standards, expanding opportunities, and reducing vulnerability among disadvantaged populations. These actions include social protection, employment creation, human capital development, and access to essential services (World Bank, 2022). Effective poverty reduction is not achieved solely through economic expansion, but through inclusive policies and administrative systems capable of reaching the poor. Without strong implementation capacity, poverty reduction strategies risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative, failing to deliver sustained welfare improvements.

Social Investment Programmes

Social investment programmes are state-led interventions designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by investing directly in people's welfare and productive capacities. Unlike traditional welfare approaches that focus on short-term relief, social investment emphasises long-term empowerment through education, skills development, income support, and access to basic services (Morel, et al., 2012). In Nigeria, social investment programmes have been adopted as a strategic response to widespread poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, particularly since 2015. These programmes seek to protect vulnerable groups while simultaneously enhancing their capacity to participate in economic and social life. However, the success of social investment programmes depends heavily on administrative effectiveness, including proper targeting, coordination across agencies, and transparent management of resources. Where these conditions are weak, social investment initiatives may struggle to achieve meaningful poverty reduction, regardless of their policy ambition or funding levels.

Development Administration

Development administration is a branch of public administration that focuses on the role of the state in promoting socio-economic transformation, particularly in developing societies. It is concerned with how administrative systems, institutions, and processes are mobilised to achieve development objectives such as poverty reduction, equity, and social welfare (Riggs, 1970). Unlike traditional administration, development administration places emphasis on change, innovation, and responsiveness to complex social needs. In the Nigerian context, development administration operates within a challenging environment marked by institutional fragility, political pressures, and resource constraints. Yet, it remains central to translating development plans and policies into concrete outcomes. Effective development administration requires capable institutions, skilled personnel, and adaptive governance mechanisms that can respond to evolving development challenges. Where administrative systems are weak, development efforts tend to be fragmented and ineffective, reinforcing the gap between policy intentions and lived realities of citizens (UNDP, 2021).

Overview of the National Social Investment Programmes

The National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) were introduced in 2015 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a coordinated policy response to rising poverty, unemployment, and social vulnerability. The programmes emerged within the broader framework of inclusive growth and social protection, with the primary objective of cushioning the effects of economic shocks while promoting human capital development and social inclusion among the poorest segments of the population (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016; World Bank, 2021). The NSIP is structured around four core components which are the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), and N-Power programme.

The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) provides direct income support to extremely poor households to enhance basic consumption and access to social services, while the N-Power programme focuses on youth employment and skills acquisition, targeting graduates and non-graduates to improve employability. The third component of the scheme which is the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) is designed to offer microcredit facilities to small traders and artisans, while the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is aimed at improving school enrolment and child nutrition through locally sourced meals (UNDP, 2022).

Administratively, the NSIP operates through a multi-agency framework involving relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, with coordination at the federal level and implementation support from state and local governments, a complex structure which highlights the importance of administrative capacity for effective programme delivery and poverty reduction outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on the Capability Approach and Public Administration Theory, both of which provide complementary lenses for understanding poverty reduction and administrative performance. The Capability Approach was developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s by Amartya Sen, with further refinements by Martha Nussbaum (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). The theory emerged as a critique of income-based measures of development, arguing that poverty should be understood as deprivation of basic capabilities, that is, the real freedoms people have to live lives they value. Its central argument is that development interventions should expand individuals' capabilities, such as access to education, health, skills, and economic opportunities, rather than merely increasing income levels.

Public Administration Theory on the other hand, has its roots in early twentieth-century scholars such as Woodrow Wilson (1887) and later contributors like Max Weber and Herbert Simon, focuses on how public institutions are organised and how administrative efficiency, coordination, and accountability influence policy outcomes. The theory argues that effective administration is essential for translating policy goals into concrete social outcomes, particularly in complex public programmes (Weber, 1947; Simon, 1976).

Applied to Nigeria, the Capability Approach helps explain poverty as a multidimensional problem affecting citizens' welfare and life chances, which the National Social Investment Programmes seek to address through education, income support, and employment schemes. Public Administration Theory, on the other hand, illuminates how administrative capacity such as coordination, human resources, and accountability, shapes the effectiveness of NSIP implementation. Together, the theories demonstrate that poverty reduction under NSIP depends not only on programme intent but also on the administrative systems responsible for delivering expanded capabilities to Nigerians.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies from developing countries have underscored the centrality of administrative capacity to poverty reduction outcomes. Grindle (2017) examined administrative reforms in Latin American countries with the objective of assessing how institutional capacity affects pro-poor policy implementation. Anchored in institutional theory and using qualitative comparative analysis of policy documents and reform outcomes, the study found that weak coordination and limited bureaucratic autonomy significantly constrained poverty-focused interventions. Grindle concluded that administrative effectiveness, rather than policy design alone, determines poverty reduction success.

Similarly, Andrews, et al. (2017) investigated state capability and service delivery outcomes in selected African and Asian countries. Their study, guided by the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) framework and based on mixed-method evidence, revealed that countries with adaptive administrative systems recorded better poverty reduction outcomes than those relying on rigid bureaucratic structures. The authors argued that building functional administrative capacity is essential for inclusive development.

In a cross-country study, Rauch and Evans (2000) analysed bureaucratic structures and development performance in 35 developing states. Using quantitative indicators of bureaucratic professionalism and poverty-related outcomes, the study established a strong correlation between merit-based administration and improved welfare indicators. The authors concluded that professional bureaucracies enhance poverty reduction by improving policy consistency and implementation.

Batley and McCourt (2015) focused on public management reforms and poverty outcomes in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on institutional and governance theories and qualitative case studies, they found that donor-driven reforms often failed where domestic administrative capacity was weak. Their conclusion emphasised the need to strengthen internal administrative systems rather than transplant external models.

More recently, World Bank (2022) conducted a global assessment of social protection systems, examining how administrative capacity affects poverty reduction. Using secondary data analysis across low- and middle-income countries, the study found that countries with robust targeting, monitoring, and accountability systems achieved more sustained poverty reduction. The report concluded that administrative capacity is a decisive variable in translating social investment into welfare gains.

Administrative Capacity and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Empirical evidence from Nigeria similarly highlights the administrative dimension of poverty reduction. A study by Aderonmu (2019) examined public sector capacity and poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria, with the objective of assessing implementation effectiveness. Using a qualitative review of policy documents and programme reports, the study found that poor coordination among MDAs and weak monitoring frameworks undermined poverty reduction efforts. The author concluded that administrative weaknesses largely explain the limited impact of anti-poverty programmes.

Okolie and Oche (2020) analysed governance capacity and social policy outcomes in Nigeria through the lens of institutional theory. Employing documentary analysis and secondary poverty data, the study revealed that fragmented administrative structures and political interference reduced the effectiveness of poverty-focused interventions. The authors argued that strengthening bureaucratic autonomy and coordination is critical for poverty reduction. In a related study, Yusuf and Adetayo (2021) assessed administrative accountability and poverty outcomes in Nigeria's social programmes. Using qualitative content analysis of audit reports and development indicators, the study found that financial leakages and weak oversight mechanisms diluted programme impact. The authors concluded that poverty reduction is unlikely without transparent and accountable administrative systems.

Adepoju (2022) examined the relationship between human resource capacity in the public service and poverty reduction outcomes in Nigeria. Anchored in public administration theory and using secondary data from government and international reports, the study found that inadequate skills and capacity gaps among implementing officers negatively affected programme delivery. The study concluded that investment in administrative capacity is a prerequisite for effective poverty reduction.

More recently, Nwankwo and Eze (2023) investigated institutional capacity and multidimensional poverty in Nigeria. Using secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics and policy evaluations, the study established that states with stronger administrative coordination recorded relatively better welfare outcomes. The authors concluded that poverty reduction is as much an administrative challenge as it is an economic one.

National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria

Empirical studies on the National Social Investment Programmes further illuminate the role of administration in poverty reduction. A study by Akinola (2018) examined the policy origins and objectives of the NSIP, using policy analysis as its method. The study found that while the programmes were well-designed, their effectiveness depended heavily on administrative coordination across federal, state, and local governments. Akinola concluded that administrative fragmentation limited early programme outcomes.

Ogwumike and Ozughalu (2019) assessed the impact of NSIP components on household welfare using secondary survey data and poverty indicators. Although the study found modest improvements in income and school enrolment, it concluded that administrative bottlenecks and targeting errors constrained broader poverty reduction. In another study, Olanrewaju (2020) focused on monitoring and evaluation practices within the NSIP framework. Using qualitative analysis of official reports, the study found weak feedback mechanisms and inconsistent data management. The author argued that these administrative gaps undermined evidence-based decision-making and programme sustainability.

A World Bank (2021) evaluation of Nigeria's social protection programmes, including the NSIP, examined administrative efficiency and poverty outcomes. Using mixed secondary data sources, the report found that cash transfer components performed better where administrative systems were stronger. The study concluded that improving administrative capacity would significantly enhance poverty reduction impacts. More recently, UNDP (2022) reviewed the NSIP within the context of human development outcomes in

Nigeria. The study found that although the programmes reached millions of beneficiaries, administrative capacity constraints particularly at sub-national levels limited long-term poverty reduction. The report concluded that strengthening development administration remains critical to achieving inclusive social investment outcomes.

Gaps in Literature

Despite the growing body of literature on poverty reduction and social protection in Nigeria, existing studies largely focus on programme design and impact assessment, with limited attention to the role of administrative capacity in shaping outcomes. Many analyses treat administrative weaknesses as background issues rather than core explanatory variables. Moreover, few studies adopt a holistic, programme-specific case study of the National Social Investment Programmes across the 2015–2023 period using exclusively secondary data. This study addresses these gaps by systematically linking administrative capacity to poverty reduction outcomes within Nigeria's development administration context.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology, considered most appropriate given the nature of the variables under investigation, administrative capacity and poverty reduction outcomes, which can be measured using observable and numerical indicators such as programme coverage, institutional efficiency, budget implementation, and welfare outcomes. This approach enabled the researcher to generate objective, reliable, and generalisable findings on the relationship between administrative processes and the performance of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in Nigeria. The research design adopted was the descriptive survey design, which facilitated the collection of standardised data from a large sample of respondents. The population of the study comprised NSIP beneficiaries across key intervention areas as well as administrative staff involved in programme implementation in Lokoja, Kogi State. A total population of 169,050 was estimated, from which a sample size of 399 was determined using the Taro Yamane sampling technique, although 289 respondents were eventually accessed and analysed. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument captured respondents' perceptions on institutional coordination, administrative capacity, and monitoring mechanisms. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores, to establish statistical relationships and draw meaningful conclusions aligned with the study objectives.

4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section covers the presentation of the findings of the study and analysis, followed by the discussion of the findings. The data presentation and analysis is based on the total of 289 questionnaires retrieved and analysed. The mean scores in this study were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale. A mean range of 4.50 to 5.00 represents Strongly Agree, indicating a very high level of agreement among respondents. A mean score between 3.50 and 4.49 signifies Agree, reflecting a high level of agreement. Values ranging from 2.50 to 3.49 are interpreted as Undecided, showing a moderate or neutral response. A mean score between 1.50 and 2.49 represents Disagree, indicating a low level of agreement, while scores from 1.00 to 1.49 denote Strongly Disagree, reflecting a very low level of agreement among respondents.

Table 4.1: Bio-Data of Respondents (N = 289)

S/N	Item	Response Categories	Frequency (%)
1	Gender	Male	162 (56.1%)
		Female	127 (43.9%)
2	Age	18–27 years	61 (21.1%)
		28–37 years	98 (33.9%)
		38–47 years	82 (28.4%)
		48 years & above	48 (16.6%)
3	Education	Secondary	44 (15.2%)
		ND/NCE	76 (26.3%)
		HND/Bachelor's	129 (44.6%)
		Postgraduate	40 (13.8%)
4	Occupation	Civil Servant	67 (23.2%)
		NSIP Staff	42 (14.5%)
		Trader/Artisan	84 (29.1%)
		Farmer	51 (17.6%)
		Unemployed	45 (15.6%)
5	NSIP Beneficiary	Yes	201 (69.6%)
		No	88 (30.4%)

Source: *Fieldwork, 2026.*

Table 4.1 presents the biodata of the respondents. On gender, the findings show that 162 (56.1%) of the respondents are male, while 127 (43.9%) are female. On age distribution, the results reveal that 61 (21.1%) of the respondents fall within the 18–27 years category, 98 (33.9%) are within the 28–37 years bracket, 82 (28.4%) fall within the 38–47 years category, while 48 (16.6%) are aged 48 years and above. With respect to educational qualification, 44 (15.2%) of the respondents possess secondary school certificates, 76 (26.3%) hold ND/NCE qualifications, 129 (44.6%) have HND or bachelor's degrees, while 40 (13.8%) possess postgraduate qualifications.

On occupation, the findings indicate that 67 (23.2%) of the respondents are civil servants, 42 (14.5%) are NSIP staff, 84 (29.1%) are traders or artisans, 51 (17.6%) are farmers, while 45 (15.6%) are unemployed. Finally, on NSIP beneficiary status, the data shows that 201 (69.6%) of the respondents have benefited from at least one NSIP programme, while 88 (30.4%) have not. This indicates that the majority of respondents have direct exposure to NSIP interventions, thereby strengthening the credibility of their perceptions.

Table 4.2: Institutional Coordination and Implementation of NSIP (N = 289)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
1	There is effective coordination among government agencies involved in NSIP implementation.	88 (30.4%)	102 (35.3%)	45 (15.6%)	34 (11.8%)	20 (6.9%)	3.70
2	Communication between federal, state, and local authorities enhances NSIP implementation.	95 (32.9%)	98 (33.9%)	42 (14.5%)	33 (11.4%)	21 (7.3%)	3.73
3	Clear institutional responsibilities contribute to smooth NSIP implementation.	90 (31.1%)	101 (34.9%)	44 (15.2%)	32 (11.1%)	22 (7.6%)	3.71
4	Poor coordination among agencies delays NSIP service delivery.	110 (38.1%)	95 (32.9%)	38 (13.1%)	28 (9.7%)	18 (6.2%)	3.87
5	Collaboration among stakeholders improves NSIP effectiveness.	97 (33.6%)	103 (35.6%)	40 (13.8%)	29 (10.0%)	20 (6.9%)	3.76
6	Institutional conflicts negatively affect NSIP implementation.	105 (36.3%)	96 (33.2%)	41 (14.2%)	30 (10.4%)	17 (5.9%)	3.84
7	Information sharing supports efficient NSIP implementation.	92 (31.8%)	104 (36.0%)	43 (14.9%)	30 (10.4%)	20 (6.9%)	3.75
8	Coordination mechanisms are adequate for effective service delivery.	85 (29.4%)	97 (33.6%)	52 (18.0%)	35 (12.1%)	20 (6.9%)	3.66

Source: *Fieldwork, 2026.*

Table 4.2 presents the findings on institutional coordination and the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). On the first statement, 30.4% strongly agreed and 35.3% agreed that there is effective coordination among government agencies involved in NSIP implementation, while 15.6% were undecided, and a combined 18.7% disagreed. With a mean score of 3.70, the result suggests that respondents largely believe coordination among agencies exists, though not without some noticeable gaps. Similarly, on communication between federal, state, and local authorities, 32.9% strongly agreed and 33.9% agreed that it enhances implementation, while 14.5% remained neutral. However, 18.7% expressed disagreement. The mean value of 3.73 further reinforces the view that intergovernmental communication is generally considered beneficial to NSIP delivery.

Regarding clarity of institutional responsibilities, 31.1% strongly agreed and 34.9% agreed that it contributes to smooth implementation, whereas 18.7% combined disagreed. The mean score of 3.71 indicates a broadly positive assessment, suggesting that defined roles within implementing structures are fairly understood, though not universally so. On whether poor coordination delays service delivery, a relatively high proportion of respondents - 38.1% strongly agreed and 32.9% agreed - confirmed this concern, with only 15.9% disagreeing. The mean score of 3.87, which is among the highest in the table, highlights strong agreement that coordination challenges can significantly hinder timely service delivery. In a similar vein, 33.6% strongly agreed and 35.6% agreed that collaboration among stakeholders improves NSIP effectiveness, while 16.9%

disagreed. The mean of 3.76 indicates a solid consensus that stakeholder collaboration is a key driver of programme success. On institutional conflicts negatively affecting implementation, 36.3% strongly agreed and 33.2% agreed, while only 16.3% disagreed. The mean score of 3.84 suggests that respondents strongly perceive institutional conflict as a major constraint to effective implementation.

For information sharing, 31.8% strongly agreed and 36.0% agreed that it supports efficient implementation, while 17.3% disagreed. With a mean score of 3.75, the findings indicate that respondents view information flow among agencies as an important element of effective programme delivery. Finally, on the adequacy of coordination mechanisms for service delivery, 29.4% strongly agreed and 33.6% agreed, while 19.0% disagreed. The mean score of 3.66, though still within the agreement range, is the lowest in the table, suggesting that respondents are relatively less convinced about the adequacy of existing coordination structures.

Table 4.3: Administrative Capacity and Poverty Reduction Outcomes

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
9	Administrative efficiency improves NSIP delivery to poor households.	102 (35.3%)	98 (33.9%)	42 (14.5%)	28 (9.7%)	19 (6.6%)	3.81
10	Adequate staffing enhances NSIP performance.	88 (30.4%)	101 (34.9%)	45 (15.6%)	32 (11.1%)	23 (8.0%)	3.69
11	Timely release of funds improves poverty reduction outcomes.	115 (39.8%)	92 (31.8%)	38 (13.1%)	27 (9.3%)	17 (5.9%)	3.90
12	Weak administrative capacity reduces NSIP effectiveness.	120 (41.5%)	89 (30.8%)	39 (13.5%)	25 (8.7%)	16 (5.5%)	3.94
13	NSIP officials possess required skills.	90 (31.1%)	96 (33.2%)	47 (16.3%)	32 (11.1%)	24 (8.3%)	3.68
14	Administrative delays affect access to NSIP services.	118 (40.8%)	90 (31.1%)	41 (14.2%)	25 (8.7%)	15 (5.2%)	3.94
15	Record keeping improves accountability.	95 (32.9%)	100 (34.6%)	44 (15.2%)	30 (10.4%)	20 (6.9%)	3.76
16	Administrative capacity improves beneficiaries' living conditions.	98 (33.9%)	97 (33.6%)	43 (14.9%)	31 (10.7%)	20 (6.9%)	3.76

Source: *Fieldwork, 2026.*

Table 4.3 presents the respondents' views on administrative capacity and poverty reduction outcomes under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). A clear dominant opinion across the table is that administrative capacity plays a decisive role in determining the effectiveness of NSIP in reducing poverty. This is strongly reflected in the high levels of agreement recorded across most items, particularly where respondents emphasised both strengths and weaknesses within the administrative system.

On administrative efficiency improving NSIP delivery, the dominant view is agreement, with 35.3% strongly agreeing and 33.9% agreeing (mean = 3.81). This indicates that most respondents perceive administrative efficiency as a key driver of effective service delivery to poor households.

Similarly, on adequate staffing enhancing NSIP performance, the prevailing opinion is also agreement, as 30.4% strongly agreed and 34.9% agreed (mean = 3.69). Although slightly lower than other items, the dominant perception still supports the importance of staffing levels in programme effectiveness. A particularly strong dominant view emerges on timely release of funds, where 39.8% strongly agreed and 31.8% agreed (mean = 3.90). This indicates a firm consensus that funding timeliness significantly influences poverty reduction outcomes, making it one of the most influential administrative factors identified by respondents.
In the same direction, the statement that weak administrative capacity reduces NSIP effectiveness attracts one of the strongest dominant responses, with 41.5% strongly agreeing and 30.8% agreeing (mean = 3.94). This shows a clear and emphatic perception that administrative weaknesses directly undermine programme success. On whether NSIP officials possess the required skills, the dominant opinion remains agreement, with 31.1% strongly agreeing and 33.2% agreeing (mean = 3.68). However, the relatively lower mean suggests that while skills are acknowledged, respondents are less emphatic compared to other administrative factors.

Another strong dominant perception is seen in the statement that administrative delays affect access to NSIP services, where 40.8% strongly agreed and 31.1% agreed (mean = 3.94). This reinforces the widespread belief that delays within the administrative system significantly hinder beneficiaries' access to services. On record keeping improving accountability, the dominant opinion is again agreement, with 32.9% strongly agreeing and 34.6% agreeing (mean = 3.76), indicating that respondents recognise documentation practices as important for transparency and accountability. Finally, on the impact of administrative capacity on beneficiaries' living conditions, the dominant response is also agreement, with 33.9% strongly agreeing and 33.6% agreeing (mean = 3.76). This suggests that respondents generally believe administrative effectiveness translates into improved welfare outcomes.

Table 4.4: Monitoring Mechanisms and Effectiveness of NSIP (N = 289)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
17	Regular monitoring improves NSIP effectiveness.	110 (38.1%)	96 (33.2%)	40 (13.8%)	25 (8.7%)	18 (6.2%)	3.88
18	Monitoring identifies implementation challenges.	105 (36.3%)	100 (34.6%)	42 (14.5%)	26 (9.0%)	16 (5.5%)	3.88
19	Supervision enhances transparency in NSIP.	108 (37.4%)	97 (33.6%)	41 (14.2%)	26 (9.0%)	17 (5.9%)	3.87
20	Monitoring ensures benefits reach intended beneficiaries.	112 (38.8%)	95 (32.9%)	39 (13.5%)	25 (8.7%)	18 (6.2%)	3.89
21	Weak monitoring contributes to corruption.	120 (41.5%)	88 (30.4%)	39 (13.5%)	25 (8.7%)	17 (5.9%)	3.93
22	Monitoring reports improve future interventions.	100 (34.6%)	98 (33.9%)	43 (14.9%)	30 (10.4%)	18 (6.2%)	3.80

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
23	Field inspections improve accountability.	104 (36.0%)	97 (33.6%)	42 (14.5%)	27 (9.3%)	19 (6.6%)	3.83
24	Monitoring strengthens NSIP effectiveness.	111 (38.4%)	96 (33.2%)	40 (13.8%)	25 (8.7%)	17 (5.9%)	3.90

Source: *Fieldwork, 2026.*

Table 4.4 presents the respondents' views on monitoring mechanisms and the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). On whether regular monitoring improves NSIP effectiveness, the dominant opinion is agreement, with 38.1% strongly agreeing and 33.2% agreeing (mean = 3.88). This shows that most respondents firmly believe that consistent oversight enhances programme outcomes. Similarly, on monitoring identifying implementation challenges, 36.3% strongly agreed and 34.6% agreed (mean = 3.88), indicating a dominant view that monitoring plays a practical role in detecting operational bottlenecks within NSIP.

For supervision enhancing transparency, the prevailing opinion is also agreement, with 37.4% strongly agreeing and 33.6% agreeing (mean = 3.87). This suggests that respondents largely associate effective supervision with improved openness and reduced opacity in programme execution. On whether monitoring ensures that benefits reach intended beneficiaries, the dominant response is again agreement, with 38.8% strongly agreeing and 32.9% agreeing (mean = 3.89). This reflects a strong perception that monitoring systems help to reduce exclusion and misallocation of benefits.

A particularly strong dominant opinion is observed in the statement that weak monitoring contributes to corruption, where 41.5% strongly agreed and 30.4% agreed (mean = 3.93). This indicates a firm consensus that inadequate oversight significantly increases the risk of corrupt practices within the programme. On whether monitoring reports improve future interventions, the dominant view remains agreement, with 34.6% strongly agreeing and 33.9% agreeing (mean = 3.80). This suggests that respondents recognise the importance of feedback mechanisms in strengthening future NSIP design and implementation.

For field inspections improving accountability, 36.0% strongly agreed and 33.6% agreed (mean = 3.83), showing a dominant belief that physical verification and field-level supervision enhance responsibility and compliance among implementers. Finally, on whether monitoring strengthens NSIP effectiveness, the dominant opinion is agreement, with 38.4% strongly agreeing and 33.2% agreeing (mean = 3.90). This further reinforces the overall finding that monitoring is widely viewed as a central pillar in improving the efficiency and impact of NSIP interventions.

Discussion of Findings

On the first objective of the study which focuses on institutional coordination and implementation of NSIP, the findings reveal that institutional coordination significantly influences the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in Nigeria. Respondents generally agreed that effective coordination among agencies enhances service delivery (mean range: 3.66–3.87), while poor coordination and institutional conflict were identified as major impediments. This aligns strongly with Akinola (2018), who observed that administrative fragmentation within NSIP structures weakened implementation efficiency, particularly due to overlapping mandates across tiers of government. Similarly, Okolie and Oche (2020) emphasised that fragmented institutional arrangements and political interference reduce bureaucratic coherence and policy effectiveness in Nigeria's social sector. The observed importance of communication and information sharing in this study also corroborates the World Bank (2021) finding that stronger coordination systems improve social protection outcomes. Furthermore, Batley and McCourt (2015) argued that weak inter-agency coordination in developing states consistently undermines welfare delivery, reinforcing the present study's evidence. Andrews et al. (2017) also stressed that adaptive and well-coordinated administrative systems are central to effective service delivery. Therefore, the findings suggest that NSIP implementation is not constrained by policy intent but by coordination inefficiencies within Nigeria's multi-level governance structure, confirming that institutional alignment remains a critical determinant of programme effectiveness.

On administrative capacity and poverty reduction outcomes, the study established that administrative capacity has a strong and direct influence on poverty reduction outcomes under NSIP. Respondents consistently agreed that administrative efficiency, staffing adequacy, funding timeliness, and record keeping significantly enhance programme performance (mean range: 3.68–3.94), while weak administrative capacity and delays were strongly identified as major constraints. This finding is consistent with Rauch and Evans (2000), who demonstrated that professional and merit-based bureaucracies significantly improve welfare outcomes in developing countries. Likewise, Adepoju (2022) found that human resource capacity gaps among implementing officers in Nigeria undermine effective service delivery. The result also supports Yusuf and Adetayo (2021), who reported that financial leakages and weak administrative controls reduce the effectiveness of social programmes. Furthermore, the World Bank (2021) emphasised that administrative strength is a decisive factor in translating social investment into poverty reduction outcomes. Grindle (2017) similarly argued that administrative capability, rather than policy design alone, determines success in poverty-focused interventions. Hence, the present findings reinforce the argument that NSIP outcomes are heavily dependent on internal administrative competence, particularly in relation to resource management, personnel capacity, and operational efficiency.

In the respect of monitoring mechanisms and effectiveness of NSIP, the findings indicate that monitoring mechanisms play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of NSIP interventions in Nigeria. Respondents strongly agreed that regular monitoring improves effectiveness, ensures accountability, and reduces corruption risks (mean range: 3.80–3.93). Weak monitoring was particularly associated with corruption and inefficiency. This aligns with Olanrewaju (2020), who identified weak feedback systems and poor monitoring structures as key limitations in NSIP implementation. Similarly, Yusuf and Adetayo (2021) observed that weak oversight mechanisms contribute to financial leakages and reduced programme impact. The World Bank (2021) also confirmed that robust monitoring systems significantly improve targeting accuracy and programme outcomes in social protection schemes. In the broader literature, Andrews et al. (2017) argue that adaptive administrative systems with strong monitoring capacity are essential for effective service delivery, while Batley and McCourt (2015) emphasise that weak accountability structures often undermine donor-driven reforms. The present findings therefore reinforce the centrality of monitoring as a governance tool that enhances transparency, improves beneficiary targeting, and strengthens policy feedback loops, ultimately ensuring that NSIP interventions translate into meaningful poverty reduction outcomes in Nigeria.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study establishes that administrative capacity plays a decisive role in shaping the effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme in Nigeria. Findings reveal that institutional coordination, administrative competence, and monitoring systems significantly influence service delivery and poverty reduction outcomes. While NSIP has contributed to improving welfare conditions among beneficiaries, its impact is constrained by coordination gaps, capacity limitations, and monitoring weaknesses. The study therefore underscores that strengthening administrative structures, enhancing accountability, and improving inter-agency collaboration are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive poverty reduction in Nigeria.

In light of the study's findings, there is a clear need for targeted administrative and institutional reforms within the National Social Investment Programmes.

i. In light of the above, it is recommended that the Federal Government should strengthen institutional coordination among all agencies involved in the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). This can be achieved through clearer role definitions, improved inter-agency communication, and the establishment of a unified coordination framework to reduce duplication and administrative delays.
ii. Secondly, deliberate investment should be made in building administrative capacity through regular training, recruitment of skilled personnel, and improved staff motivation to enhance efficiency in service delivery and poverty reduction outcomes. Adequate and timely release of funds should also be institutionalised to ensure smooth programme implementation and reduce bottlenecks that hinder beneficiaries' access to services.
iii. Furthermore, robust monitoring and evaluation systems should be strengthened through the use of digital tracking tools, regular field inspections, and independent audits to ensure transparency and accountability. Feedback from monitoring exercises should be systematically integrated into policy review and programme redesign.

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