

Financial Governance in Public Sector in Africa: A Meta-Analysis

Rev. Kigen, Kipchirchir Benard¹, David Minja²

¹Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Email: info@jjccdiscipline.org

²Professor, Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Email: minja.david@ku.ac.ke

Abstract: *This study examines the effectiveness of financial governance reforms and their implications for public sector performance in Africa using a qualitative meta-synthesis approach. Guided by the pragmatic research paradigm and informed by Agency Theory, Theory of Evaluation, and Institutional Theory, the study synthesized evidence from peer-reviewed literature. One hundred studies were identified through PRISMA screening, of which twenty met the inclusion criteria for final analysis. The findings identified five major dimensions of financial governance: fiscal accountability and transparency, institutional strengthening and capacity building, digital financial management systems, budget control and expenditure monitoring, and regulatory compliance and audit reforms. Effective financial governance was found to improve accountability, transparency, financial reporting, resource utilization, and public trust. However, weak institutional capacity, political interference, inconsistent implementation, and corruption continue to constrain reform outcomes. The study concludes that strengthening governance frameworks, institutional capacity, and accountability mechanisms is essential for improving fiscal discipline and public sector performance across Africa*

Keywords: Financial governance; Public financial management; Fiscal accountability; Transparency; Public sector performance; Institutional capacity; Africa

1. Evolution and Development of Financial Governance

Financial governance has evolved considerably in response to changing socioeconomic conditions, public sector reforms, regulatory developments, and global financial crises. These transformations have influenced how organizations and governments manage financial resources, ensure accountability, and promote transparency. According to Pandya (2025), the modern concept of financial governance emerged during the 1980s and 1990s, a period characterized by globalization, privatization of public enterprises, deregulation of capital markets, and increasing financial activities. These developments contributed to rapid corporate growth, resulting in greater complexity in ownership and control structures.

As the separation between ownership and management widened, agency problems emerged because of conflicting interests between managers and shareholders. Consequently, corporate governance developed as a framework for promoting managerial accountability while safeguarding stakeholder interests. Early governance frameworks focused on boards of directors, financial reporting standards, and auditing processes. However, these frameworks were often weakly enforced, resulting in governance failures, information asymmetry, and financial malpractices (Hossain et al., 2024). Weak regulatory enforcement increased managerial discretion, limited stakeholder oversight, and exposed organizations to risks such as asset misappropriation, earnings manipulation, and poor strategic decisions.

In response, several regulatory reforms were introduced. The Sarbanes–Oxley Act of 2002 in the United States, the UK Corporate Governance Code, and reforms in Europe and Asia strengthened financial reporting, transparency, and

shareholder protection. At the same time, many African countries initiated public financial management reforms aimed at improving accountability, transparency, and auditing standards within the public sector (Akinsola, 2025). These reforms enhanced disclosure requirements and transformed financial governance into a more legally mandated practice (Lusha & Mziu, 2025).

Despite these improvements, compliance-based approaches revealed several limitations. Excessive emphasis on regulatory compliance often overlooked broader principles such as transparency, accountability, ethical leadership, and institutional integrity. Furthermore, compliance requirements imposed administrative and financial costs on smaller organizations, potentially discouraging innovation and investment.

During the 2000s, financial governance evolved toward integrated approaches emphasizing risk management, compliance, and performance monitoring (World Bank, 2023). International organizations such as the OECD and COSO developed governance frameworks, while governments introduced Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms to strengthen fiscal discipline and accountability. Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), program-based budgeting, and treasury management systems were increasingly adopted to improve efficiency and transparency.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund further promoted PFM reforms to strengthen budget discipline, improve expenditure quality, and enhance transparency in resource utilization (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Many developing economies adopted Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) to improve budgeting, accounting, and reporting. Performance-based

budgeting also gained prominence as governments sought to link resource allocation to measurable outcomes.

In Africa, financial governance reforms accelerated during the 1990s and early 2000s through structural adjustment programs, decentralization initiatives, and public sector reforms. Countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, and Tanzania introduced legislative and institutional reforms to improve financial accountability and fiscal management. Kenya enacted the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, while South Africa's Public Finance Management Act of 1999 established principles for sound financial administration. Nigeria adopted Treasury Single Account reforms, and many African countries implemented IFMIS to improve transparency and reduce financial leakages.

Despite these reforms, challenges such as weak institutional capacity, political interference, corruption, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, limited technical expertise, and fiscal constraints continue to affect financial governance in Africa. These challenges have reduced the effectiveness of reforms and limited improvements in service delivery outcomes.

In contemporary times, financial governance has shifted from a compliance-oriented approach toward a broader focus on transparency, accountability, proactive risk management, and sustainability. Transparency requires institutions to disclose financial information accurately and promptly (Setiawan & Mais, 2025). Risk management has become a central component of financial governance, particularly following the 2008 global financial crisis.

Furthermore, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles have increasingly been integrated into financial decision-making and reporting processes, reflecting growing concerns regarding social responsibility and environmental sustainability (Quttainah et al., 2025). Technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, big data analytics, and digital financial systems are transforming financial governance by improving transparency, efficiency, and decision-making. However, these technologies also introduce challenges including cybersecurity risks, data privacy concerns, and technological inequalities, reinforcing the need for robust financial governance frameworks within public institutions.

2. Problem statement

Public sector institutions manage public resources and therefore have constitutional, legal, and ethical obligations to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficient utilization of financial resources. Unlike private organizations that are primarily accountable to shareholders, public institutions are accountable to citizens regarding the collection, allocation, and expenditure of public funds.

Weak financial governance systems increase the risks of corruption, inefficiency, financial mismanagement, and misuse of public resources, thereby undermining public trust, institutional performance, and service delivery (Olatinsu & Eke, 2025). In addition, increasing financial complexity

arising from globalization, donor-funded projects, infrastructure financing, and sophisticated borrowing arrangements presents significant challenges to public financial management.

Many developing countries continue to experience weaknesses in financial controls, auditing systems, and reporting mechanisms, increasing the risks of fiscal mismanagement and unsustainable public debt (Adjagba et al., 2025). The 2008 global financial crisis further demonstrated that weak financial governance can contribute to budget deficits, stalled development projects, and reduced capacity to deliver essential public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Furthermore, emerging Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) concerns and technological innovations, including artificial intelligence, data analytics, and blockchain technologies, present both opportunities and risks for public financial management. While these technologies improve efficiency and transparency, they may also expose institutions to cyber fraud, data breaches, and cybersecurity threats.

Although financial governance is increasingly recognized as a tool for promoting sustainable development and improving service delivery, evidence on its effectiveness remains fragmented across African countries. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive meta-analysis to synthesize existing evidence, identify research gaps, and evaluate the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improving public sector outcomes in Africa. The objective of this study is to critically review and synthesize empirical and theoretical literature on financial governance in the African public sector in order to evaluate the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improving service delivery outcomes and to identify the key factors contributing to their success or failure.

3. Research Objective

- 1) To review the evolution and development of financial governance in African public sectors.
- 2) To analyze financial governance reforms implemented in African public institutions.
- 3) To assess the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improving accountability, transparency, and service delivery.
- 4) To explore the drivers of success or failure in financial governance reforms in Africa.
- 5) To develop a conceptual framework for financial governance in the African public sector.

4. Methodology

This study adopted the pragmatic research paradigm, which emphasizes practical solutions to real-world problems within their contextual realities. Pragmatism supports the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches in understanding complex social phenomena and evaluating governance reforms and public service delivery outcomes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The paradigm focuses on "what works" in addressing societal challenges and therefore provides an

appropriate framework for examining financial governance issues within public sector environments.

The study employed a qualitative meta-synthesis approach within a meta-analysis framework. Unlike statistical meta-analysis, which combines effect sizes from quantitative studies, qualitative meta-synthesis integrates findings from empirical and theoretical studies to generate broader understanding and identify emerging patterns in the literature. This approach is appropriate for financial governance studies, which commonly employ qualitative, mixed-methods, and observational designs.

Secondary data were obtained through documentary review of peer-reviewed journal articles on financial governance, public financial management reforms, and public service delivery in Africa. Relevant studies were identified through searches of indexed academic databases. A total of 100 studies were initially retrieved and screened using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines.

Studies were included if they were peer-reviewed, methodologically rigorous, relevant to financial governance reforms, and contained measurable indicators of accountability, transparency, financial performance, or service delivery outcomes. Following quality appraisal, 20 studies met the inclusion criteria and were selected for final synthesis.

Data were extracted using a documentary analysis framework and analyzed through thematic content analysis. Theory-based evaluation guided the interpretation of findings by examining the relationship between financial governance reforms and public service delivery outcomes (Weiss, 1995). The study focused on identifying areas of convergence and divergence regarding the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in Africa.

5. Theoretical Frameworks

The principal theory anchoring this study is Agency Theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976). The theory explains the relationship between principals, who delegate authority and resources, and agents, who are responsible for managing those resources on their behalf. It argues that conflicts of interest, information asymmetry, and agency costs arise when agents pursue personal objectives rather than those of principals. Consequently, effective governance mechanisms, including monitoring, accountability, transparency, financial reporting, internal controls, auditing, and performance evaluation, are necessary to align the interests of agents with those of principals. Agency Theory provides the primary theoretical foundation for this study because financial governance in the public sector involves public officials acting as agents responsible for managing public resources on behalf of citizens, governments, and development partners. The theory underpins Objective 2, which examines financial governance reforms implemented in African public institutions, by explaining the governance mechanisms introduced to reduce agency problems. It also informs Objective 3 by providing a framework for assessing whether financial governance reforms improve

accountability, transparency, prudent financial management, and service delivery. Although Agency Theory offers a strong explanation of governance, financial stewardship, and accountability, it gives limited attention to organizational learning and the processes through which reforms generate sustainable institutional improvements. This limitation necessitates complementing it with the Theory of Evaluation.

The Theory of Evaluation emerged during the 1990s through the work of Huey-Tsyh Chen, Peter H. Rossi and Carol H. Weiss (Grey, 2024). The theory argues that programme and policy outcomes can only be understood by examining how, why, and under what conditions interventions produce intended results (Matta et al., 2023). Rather than merely determining whether reforms succeed or fail, the theory explains the causal mechanisms linking interventions to outcomes while recognizing the influence of contextual factors. The theory is guided by principles of problem analysis, causal reasoning, context-sensitive implementation, evidence-based learning, and continuous improvement (Farrukh, 2024). Its major strength lies in explaining not only whether reforms work but also why they work and the conditions under which they succeed. However, it provides limited explanation of institutional dynamics and broader governance environments that shape policy implementation. The Theory of Evaluation supports Objective 3 by providing a framework for assessing the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improving accountability, transparency, and service delivery. It also underpins Objective 4 by facilitating analysis of the drivers of success or failure in financial governance reforms through examination of implementation processes, contextual influences, and causal mechanisms. Furthermore, the theory contributes to Objective 5 by informing the development of a conceptual framework that links financial governance reforms with governance outcomes.

Institutional Theory, advanced by John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan during the 1970s, argues that organizational behaviour and reform outcomes are shaped by formal rules, organizational structures, institutional norms, and societal expectations (Aksom & Vakulenko, 2024). Organizations seek legitimacy by conforming to accepted institutional practices while responding to pressures from their external environments. The theory is guided by the principles of institutional legitimacy, conformity, organizational stability, and environmental influence (Silva et al., 2024). It explains why organizations operating under different institutional conditions often experience varying reform outcomes despite implementing similar governance initiatives. Although Institutional Theory effectively explains the influence of institutional environments, it pays limited attention to innovation, organizational agency, and informal practices such as corruption, patronage, and political interference. Institutional Theory primarily informs Objective 1 by explaining the evolution and development of financial governance within changing institutional environments. It also supports Objective 2 by examining how institutional arrangements influence the adoption and implementation of financial governance reforms across African public institutions. Additionally, the theory contributes to Objective 4 by explaining why similar financial governance reforms produce different outcomes due to differences in institutional

capacity, political commitment, administrative systems, and regulatory environments. Finally, together with Agency Theory and the Theory of Evaluation, Institutional Theory informs Objective 5 by providing an institutional perspective for developing a comprehensive conceptual framework for financial governance in the African public sector.

6. Literature Review

Existing literature demonstrates that financial governance reforms significantly influence accountability, transparency, efficiency, and public service delivery outcomes. One major theme emerging from the literature is fiscal accountability and transparency. Studies have shown that strong audit mechanisms, transparent reporting systems, and disclosure practices enhance accountability and reduce financial irregularities in public institutions. Olatinsu and Eke (2025) found that effective audit systems improve accountability and safeguard public resources, while Muthomi (2026) established that budget transparency significantly increases fiscal transparency and public trust in Kenyan county governments. Similarly, Deng (2025) reported that legislative oversight and independent audit institutions strengthen financial governance and prevent misuse of public resources.

Fiscal transparency has increasingly become an important component of good governance because it enables citizens, oversight institutions, and development partners to monitor the utilization of public resources. Transparent budget processes facilitate public participation, improve decision-making, and strengthen confidence in government institutions. However, several studies indicate that information asymmetry, delayed disclosure of financial information, and limited citizen access to budget information continue to undermine transparency efforts in many African countries. Weak enforcement of disclosure regulations further limits the effectiveness of transparency initiatives.

A second theme concerns internal controls and auditing systems.

Several studies indicate that effective internal controls improve financial reporting quality and reduce opportunities for fraud and corruption. Muti'ah et al. (2024) found that internal control systems and transparent reporting strengthen accountability and reduce corruption risks. Likewise, Ntakiyimana (2024) reported that auditor independence, management support, and auditor experience improve financial reporting quality in Rwandan public institutions. Studies by Confidence and Egberibin (2023), Kimathi (2025), and Ibrahim and Salihu (2024) further demonstrate that strong internal controls, audit independence, and monitoring mechanisms enhance transparency and financial accountability.

Internal auditing has increasingly become an essential governance tool for ensuring compliance with financial regulations and improving institutional performance. Effective audit systems facilitate early detection of financial irregularities, strengthen risk management, and improve the credibility of financial reports. Celestin et al. (2024) found that strengthened internal controls and performance audits in Rwanda improved financial discipline and reduced financial mismanagement. Similarly, Kgalamone, Myeza, and Varachia

(2025) established that enhanced audit disclosures improve stakeholder confidence and increase the credibility of financial statements.

The adoption of digital financial management systems represents another important area of financial governance. Attiogbe and Arhin (2025) found that Ghana's Integrated Financial Management Information System improved accountability, transparency, and financial reporting. Similarly, Sipejji, Tibbs, and Sindani (2024) established that digital financial systems improved accountability and financial oversight in public institutions. However, the effectiveness of these systems depends on institutional capacity and governance structures.

The introduction of Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) across many African countries has contributed significantly to improving budgeting, expenditure control, procurement management, and financial reporting. Digital systems reduce manual errors, strengthen audit trails, and enhance access to financial information. Nevertheless, inadequate technical capacity, insufficient infrastructure, resistance to change, and cybersecurity risks continue to constrain effective implementation. These challenges suggest that technological solutions alone cannot guarantee improved governance without supportive institutional environments.

Budget reforms and expenditure control mechanisms also emerge prominently in the literature. Adebayo, Oladipo, and Yusuf (2024) found that participatory budgeting and medium-term expenditure frameworks improve fiscal discipline and expenditure control. Yusuf, Benjamin, and Abdulateef (2025) similarly reported that budget planning, procurement systems, and compliance mechanisms enhance accountability and reduce financial mismanagement. Okoye and Musa (2023) further established that procurement governance practices reduce financial leakages and improve value for money in public spending.

Public expenditure management has become increasingly important in many African countries because governments face growing demands for social services amid limited financial resources. Effective expenditure controls ensure that public funds are utilized according to approved budgets and policy priorities. Studies indicate that medium-term expenditure frameworks, program-based budgeting, and performance-based budgeting contribute to improved fiscal discipline and efficient resource allocation. However, budget deviations, political interference, delayed disbursements, and weak monitoring systems continue to undermine expenditure management in several countries.

Another important strand of literature focuses on accounting standards and financial reporting. Mnif and Malleh (2025) found substantial variations in financial reporting transparency due to differences in IPSAS implementation. Marota and Johari (2025) reported that IPSAS adoption enhances transparency, comparability, and accountability in financial reporting. Similarly, Suryanto (2025) found that effective accounting systems and transparent budgeting practices improve the quality and reliability of financial reports.

International Public Sector Accounting Standards have increasingly gained acceptance as tools for improving the quality, consistency, and comparability of financial reporting. The adoption of these standards promotes transparency and strengthens accountability mechanisms within public institutions. Nevertheless, several countries continue to experience challenges associated with implementation costs, inadequate technical expertise, insufficient training, and resistance to change. Consequently, the level of compliance with international accounting standards varies considerably across African countries.

The literature further indicates that effective financial governance contributes to improved public service delivery outcomes. Strong financial controls, transparent budgeting, and accountable expenditure management enhance the efficiency of public investments in health, education, infrastructure, and social protection programs. Adjagba et al. (2025), while examining Kenya's Universal Health Coverage programme, found that sound financial management is essential for ensuring sustainability and efficiency in health financing. Similar findings suggest that weak financial governance often results in delayed projects, inadequate service provision, and reduced public confidence in government institutions.

Institutional factors also significantly influence the success of financial governance reforms. Institutional capacity, political commitment, regulatory enforcement, leadership quality, and organizational culture determine whether reforms achieve intended outcomes. Countries with strong institutions and effective oversight mechanisms tend to realize greater improvements in accountability and financial performance than those characterized by weak governance structures. These findings support Institutional Theory, which argues that organizational performance is influenced by formal rules, norms, and institutional environments.

The reviewed studies additionally reveal considerable contextual differences across African countries. Variations in administrative systems, political environments, resource availability, and governance capacities influence the effectiveness of financial reforms. Consequently, reforms that succeed in one country may produce different outcomes in another because of differing institutional conditions and implementation capacities.

Despite the positive effects of financial governance reforms, the literature reveals persistent challenges, including weak institutional capacity, inadequate enforcement, information asymmetry, political interference, corruption, and limited technical expertise. Furthermore, considerable variations exist in the effectiveness of reforms across African countries because of differences in institutional arrangements and governance environments.

Overall, the reviewed studies demonstrate substantial convergence regarding the importance of accountability, transparency, internal controls, digital financial systems, expenditure management, and accounting standards in improving financial governance outcomes. However, gaps remain concerning the long-term effectiveness of reforms, contextual differences among African countries, and the

interaction between institutional capacity and financial governance practices. These findings justify the need for a meta-analysis to synthesize existing evidence, identify emerging trends, and determine the factors influencing the success or failure of financial governance reforms in Africa.

In particular, very few pieces of research are there that deal with the evolutionary process of financial governance systems (Objective 1), comparison of financial governance reforms across African public organizations (Objective 2), effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improving accountability, transparency, and service delivery (Objective 3), and factors behind the success or failure of financial governance reforms (Objective 4). In addition to this, none of the existing research efforts has tried to develop a conceptual framework of financial governance based on these findings (Objective 5). All of these weaknesses are the reasons why the meta-analysis of existing evidence is needed.

7. Data Analysis and Synthesis

Analysis of data entailed thematic synthesis and content analysis techniques. The results of the selected articles were coded, grouped into various themes, and synthesized based on the research objectives. In frequency analysis, the frequency of different dimensions of financial governance was established, while comparative analysis showed similarities, differences, context and factors that have an impact on the success or failure of reforms in financial governance in Africa.

8. Discussions

Objective One: The review examined the evolution and development of financial governance in African public sectors

To review the evolution and development of financial governance in African public sectors. In the reviewed papers, the researchers indicate that financial governance in the African public sector has been considerably changing from the previous financial controls systems to governance frameworks with emphasis on accountability, transparency, efficiency and value for money. Financial Governance in the early stages in public sector in Africa focused on compliance with financial regulations and control of budgets. Modern governance systems include concepts such as citizen involvement, assessment and performance management, modern digital finance management and corporate Governance. This is attributed by increased focus on the need for governance in financial management and to foster sustainable public sector governance for social and economic development. The outcome is in line with the Theory of Evaluation; it states that every evaluation system evolves as a form of continuous learning through reassessment and reconsideration of both the impact of the decisions taken and its respective effects.

The review indicates that African governments have progressively adopted more results-driven financial governance systems based on evaluations of existing governance frameworks. Likewise, the Institutional Theory explains that each governance change is shaped by a changing institution, rules, legal, normative and organizational

framework that provides mechanisms of coercion for its conformity. Therefore, the reform of the financial governance becomes institutionalized through these mechanisms into a process of reform. It is through this process that some countries have adopted international standard. The evidence from the empirical studies aligns with the Agency theory, the governments and citizens are principals and public official as agent who manage public resources. In an attempt to limit opportunism, the evolution of financial governance framework toward modern ones emphasizes strengthened governance systems such as adequate information disclosures, clear financial reporting, adequate internal controls and stringent performance accountability processes to increase transparency and to monitor agent behavior.

Objective Two: To Analyze Financial Governance Reforms Implemented in African Public Institutions

To analyze the Financial Governance Reforms Implemented in African Public Sectors Major financial governance reform trends across the African public sector institutions found in the papers reviewed, include; reform of fiscal accountability and transparency systems, institutional reforms and building human capacity, development of integrated digital financial management systems such as IFMIS, budget and expenditures monitoring reforms, as well as reform of regulatory and audit mechanisms. For instance, Olatinsu and Eke (2025), Putra et al. (2025), Muthomi (2026) and Yusuf et al. (2025) confirm that through fiscal reform, there are improvement on access of financial management information, enhanced disclosure of information and stronger accountability mechanisms. Attogbe and Arhin (2025), Ntakiyimana (2024) and Kimathi (2025) find out that as financial institutions strive to build stronger institution based on auditor skills, internal controls, as well as enhance technical and managerial capacity. Therefore, digital financial management systems become integral components of any reform agendas in most African countries.

According to Sipeji et al. (2024), Adjagba et al. (2025) and Attogbe and Arhin (2025) have established digital governance finance tools, such as IFMIS improve government expenditures, efficiency, fiscal transparency and effectiveness of public expenditure management. Additionally, enhanced budget and expenditure control and monitoring mechanisms (Nshakira & Ece, 2024), effective implementation of reforms towards compliance, audit reports (Olatinsu & Eke, 2025) and adopted of IPSAS enhance stronger budgetary discipline. The finding further supported by institutionalism theories where reforms of the financial management processes require the presence of robust rules, regulations, and norms which ensure that reforms take place in the framework of good governance. Conversely, the finding is supported by Agency theory, since good reforms that incorporate transparency and strong audit and internal control mechanisms minimize the principal-agency conflict, and promote efficient management and use of public resources in the public sector in Africa.

Objective Three: To Assess the Effectiveness of Financial Governance Reforms in Improving Accountability, Transparency, and Service Delivery

To assess the effectiveness of financial governance reforms in improvement of accountability and service delivery based

on the review, there was considerable consensus on the effectiveness of reforms in achieving improvements in accountability and transparency among countries that implemented these reforms. For instance, reforms of fiscal control and transparent information flow have significantly led to better accountability and transparency, reduction of waste, misuse and corruption in the management of financial resources (Attogbe & Arhin, 2025; Kimathi, 2025; Olatinsu & Eke, 2025). Improved monitoring of budget and expenditure reduce inefficiency and fraud in the procurement process (Kimathi, 2025; Putra et al., 2025) and therefore enhance the service delivery from African Public Sector, with reduced finance leakage, corruption, and inefficient and poor resource allocation and delays.

Similarly, reform of the audit mechanisms significantly strengthens fiscal accountability and transparency through independent verification of financial records and promotes public financial management practices (Adjagba et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2025). The Theory of Evaluation provides for useful explanation in the context of this paper on that evaluation of financial governance can bring good management results and improve the quality-of-service delivery as it enhances efficiency and effective utilization of financial resources (Boonstra, 2016; Olatinsu & Eke, 2025; Putri & Agustina, 2023). It also noted that the effectiveness of these reforms depended on the various contextual conditions such as institutional capacities, administrative arrangements, political and social contexts, and the quality of regulatory and institutional enforcement mechanisms in the countries.

Objective Four: To Explore the Drivers of Success or Failure in Financial Governance Reforms in Africa

The synthesis identified several factors that determine the success or failure of financial governance reforms. Successful reforms are characterized by strong institutional capacity, competent human resources, effective internal controls, political commitment, robust regulatory frameworks, independent auditing systems, and adequate digital infrastructure. Institutional support enables organizations to effectively implement financial governance reforms and sustain improvements in accountability and financial performance. Conversely, the review identifies weak institutional capacity, inadequate technical expertise, limited financial resources, political interference, corruption, weak enforcement mechanisms, resistance to organizational change, inadequate digital infrastructure, and poor regulatory compliance as major barriers to successful reform implementation.

These findings strongly support Institutional Theory, which argues that organizational performance is shaped by institutional structures, norms, and governance arrangements. Financial governance reforms are therefore unlikely to achieve their intended outcomes where institutional environments remain weak. Likewise, the Theory of Evaluation suggests that implementation quality significantly influences reform effectiveness, implying that reforms should be accompanied by continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive learning to improve implementation outcomes. The findings are equally consistent with Agency Theory, which suggests that governance reforms are more successful where

effective monitoring systems, incentive structures, and accountability mechanisms minimize agency conflicts between public officials and citizens. Conversely, corruption, political interference, weak oversight, and poor enforcement increase agency problems by allowing agents to pursue personal interests rather than public objectives. Strengthening governance institutions therefore reduces agency costs and improves financial management.

Objective Five: To Develop a Conceptual Framework for Financial Governance in the African Public Sector

The findings from the meta-synthesis provide a strong foundation for developing a conceptual framework for financial governance in the African public sector. The review demonstrates that financial governance effectiveness is influenced by the interaction of five core governance dimensions: fiscal accountability and transparency systems, institutional strengthening and capacity building, digital financial management systems, budget control and expenditure monitoring mechanisms, and regulatory compliance and audit reforms. The conceptual framework proposes that these governance dimensions function as independent but mutually reinforcing components that collectively improve accountability, transparency, financial performance, and public service delivery. Institutional capacity, political commitment, organizational culture, and regulatory enforcement serve as enabling contextual factors that moderate the effectiveness of governance reforms.

The framework integrates the Theory of Evaluation by emphasizing continuous monitoring, performance assessment, and evidence-based decision-making as mechanisms through which governance reforms generate improved outcomes. It also incorporates Institutional Theory by recognizing that institutional structures, legal frameworks, and governance norms determine the successful implementation and sustainability of financial governance reforms. In addition, the framework draws on Agency Theory by emphasizing that governance mechanisms including transparency, financial reporting, auditing, internal controls, and regulatory oversight reduce agency conflicts between citizens (principals) and public officials (agents). These mechanisms promote accountability, reduce opportunities for corruption, and ensure that public resources are managed in the public interest. The integrated framework therefore provides a comprehensive explanation of how financial governance reforms contribute to improved accountability, efficient resource utilization, and sustainable public sector performance across African public institutions.

Implications for Public Service Delivery

The findings further demonstrate that financial governance reforms contribute to improved public service delivery by promoting efficient resource allocation, reducing financial leakages, and strengthening accountability. Effective financial management supports the delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and social protection programs. Conversely, weak financial governance contributes to resource wastage, project delays, poor service delivery, and declining public trust.

Despite the substantial convergence observed across the reviewed studies, considerable differences exist across

African countries because of variations in institutional capacity, political environments, administrative systems, and regulatory enforcement. These contextual differences explain why similar financial governance reforms may produce different outcomes across countries.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that financial governance reforms are most effective when transparency, institutional capacity, digital systems, expenditure controls, and regulatory frameworks operate simultaneously within supportive institutional environments. Consequently, improving financial governance in Africa requires not only the adoption of reforms but also strengthening institutions, enhancing technical capacity, and promoting accountability mechanisms that support sustainable public sector performance.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study demonstrates that effective financial governance is fundamental to improving accountability, transparency, fiscal discipline, and public sector performance across Africa. The synthesis identifies fiscal accountability, institutional capacity, digital financial management systems, expenditure control, and regulatory compliance as the principal dimensions influencing governance effectiveness. Although financial governance reforms have generated positive outcomes, their success depends on strong institutional capacity, political commitment, effective enforcement, and sustained monitoring. Strengthening governance institutions, expanding digital financial management systems, enhancing transparency, and reinforcing audit and compliance mechanisms will further improve public financial management and service delivery. Future studies should examine the long-term impacts of emerging digital technologies and institutional reforms on financial governance across diverse African contexts

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