

# The Role of Strategic Management in Shaping Public Policy: Analyzing the Impact of Government Leadership in National Development

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## Abstract

This study investigates the critical role of strategic management in shaping public policy and examines the influence of government leadership on national development outcomes. Amid increasing governance challenges such as policy inconsistency, institutional inefficiencies and rising citizen demands, the integration of strategic planning into public sector governance has become essential. Utilizing a quantitative research design supported by descriptive and inferential statistical tools this research analyzes the perception of strategic management practices including environmental scanning, goal setting, implementation, and evaluation within public institutions. The study emphasizes the mediating role of effective leadership in aligning public strategies with national development priorities. Findings reveal a significant relationship between the adoption of strategic management principles and improved policy performance, highlighting how government leadership drives coherence, continuity and measurable development outcomes. The study concludes with practical recommendations for institutionalizing strategic practices, strengthening leadership capacity and enhancing data-driven policymaking. These insights contribute to a broader understanding of how strategic governance can foster sustainable and inclusive national development.

**Keywords** Public Policy; National Development; Public Sector Governance; Strategic Planning; Leadership Capacity; Policy Evaluation.

## 1. Background

Strategic management is predominantly associated with driving success and is have increasingly gained recognition as a vital component within public administration. As governments worldwide grapple with multifaceted challenges such as economic instability, climate change, digital disruption, demographic transitions, and heightened public expectations for transparency and accountability, the imperative for structured and anticipatory governance has intensified. Within this dynamic environment strategic management provides a critical framework through which public sector institutions can manage uncertainty, prioritize resource allocation and promote sustainable national advancement (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022).

Strategic management in public sector context entails a systematic approach to analyzing both internal capabilities and external influences to design, implement, and assess policies and programs that align with long-term national goals (Fuentes et al., 2020). While private sector strategies often focus on profitability and competitive advantage, public sector strategy emphasizes the creation of public value, equity, and inclusive development (Klijn et al., 2025). The application of strategic management principles in public governance enhances decision making processes, promotes coordination among government agencies, improves the quality of service delivery, and reinforces institutional effectiveness (Henry, 2021). At the heart of effective strategic management in the public sector lies the necessity for capable leadership. Public leadership comprising elected officials, senior civil servants, and administrative professionals plays a critical role in defining strategic direction, coordinating resources, fostering stakeholder alignment, and ensuring policy continuity (Lynch, 2021). These leaders must combine visionary thinking with managerial expertise to transform strategic frameworks into tangible policy initiatives. Their capacity to align governance decisions with overarching national development goals largely determines the effectiveness of strategy implementation and the resulting improvements in public outcomes (Knies et al., 2024).

Public policy serves as the primary mechanism through which national objectives are articulated and pursued. It embodies deliberate choices made by government actors regarding priorities, the distribution of resources, and methods for addressing complex societal issues (Banso et al., 2023). When grounded in robust strategic

management, public policy becomes more forward looking, adaptive, and capable of responding to the fluid demands of the socio-political environment (Yalmanov, 2021). Strategic policymaking empowers governments to anticipate emerging challenges, leverage future opportunities, and orchestrate intergovernmental collaboration to drive meaningful and sustained national transformation (Wallace et al., 2020). Although there is growing recognition of the vital role strategic management plays in advancing sustainable national development, many governments particularly in developing nations continue to struggle with effectively integrating strategic principles into public governance (Singh et al., 2020). Challenges such as policy inconsistency, inadequate long-term planning, fragile implementation structures, and a disconnect between policy initiatives and the actual needs of citizens remain widespread (Hill & Varone, 2021). These issues are often compounded by limited institutional capacity, entrenched bureaucratic practices, and weak accountability systems, all of which impede the successful execution of policy objectives (Hill & Hupe, 2021).

A particularly troubling and recurring challenge is the misalignment between policy formulation and overarching national development goals. Too often, policies are developed without a unified strategic vision or meaningful consideration of prevailing socio-economic conditions (Bryson & George, 2020). Consequently, development initiatives become disjointed, short sighted, and difficult to sustain and this lack of strategic coherence results in inefficient use of resources, overlapping efforts, and missed opportunities to achieve systemic transformation and long-term impact (Mintzberg et al., 2020). In addition, deficiencies in leadership significantly exacerbate these governance challenges. The lack of visionary, accountable, and purpose driven leadership often diminishes the effectiveness of even the well-designed strategic initiatives (Farazmand, 2020). Frequently, leaders neglect inclusive decision making processes, fail to engage key stakeholders, and overlook evidence based approaches to policymaking. Such leadership gaps weaken the legitimacy of public actions and erode trust in governance structures. The absence of strategic foresight at the helm contributes to policy inconsistency, short-term priorities, and an inability to institutionalize critical reforms (Howlett, 2023).

In light of these issues it have becomes imperative to explore how strategic management tools such as environmental analysis, objective setting, efficient resource allocation, and systematic performance evaluation can be seamlessly embedded within public policy frameworks (Krasnostanova et al., 2021). Equally important is the need to assess leadership's pivotal role in articulating and sustaining a nation's strategic vision, ensuring alignment across policies, and promoting continuity in governance (Cortes & Herrmann, 2021). This study, therefore, aims to fill a crucial gap in the literature by examining the intersection of strategic management and public policy, with a specific emphasis on leadership's influence in shaping developmental outcomes. Addressing these concerns is essential for fostering governance systems that are adaptive, forward-thinking, and responsive to the evolving needs of citizens (Kurzahls et al., 2020).

In addition, deficiencies in leadership significantly exacerbate these governance challenges as the lack of visionary, accountable, and purpose driven leadership often diminishes the effectiveness of even the most well designed strategic initiatives (Lawal & Oriola, 2023). Frequently, leaders neglect inclusive decision making processes, fail to engage key stakeholders, and overlook evidence-based approaches to policymaking. Such leadership gaps weaken the legitimacy of public actions and erode trust in governance structures. The absence of strategic foresight at the helm contributes to policy inconsistency, short term priorities, and an inability to institutionalize critical reforms (Matshabaphala & Ringson, 2022).

Public administrators, as key actors in executing government policies and programs, are positioned to gain significantly from this study and by highlighting effective strategies and revealing common challenges in strategic management provides a practical guide for enhancing administrative efficiency, transparency, and accountability (Barbosa, 2020). It underscores the importance of strategic thinking, robust performance metrics, and ongoing evaluation in delivering public services. These findings can support the cultivation of a results driven culture within public institutions, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and strengthened public confidence (Ferreira et al., 2020).

This study offers substantial value to a wide array of stakeholders, including policymakers, public administrators, researchers and development professionals. Its central contribution is in deepening the understanding of how strategic management shapes outcomes within the public sector particularly its influence on policy development, execution and the broader trajectory of national development. Through an examination of strategic management practices in governmental institutions, the research delivers both empirical data and theoretical frameworks that can inform the creation of more effective policies and strengthen public sector governance. Another significance of this study is that it examines the vital convergence of strategic management and public policy through the lens of government leadership as it delves into how public sector leaders apply strategic frameworks and methodologies to shape the formulation, execution, and assessment of policies that

drive national progress. An exploration of theoretical foundations, institutional approaches and practical case studies help underscores the pivotal role of strategic leadership in crafting public policies that are effective, inclusive and sustainable (Fuertes et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this study offers substantial value to a diverse set of stakeholders, including policymakers, public sector leaders, academics, and development professionals. Its core contribution is in deepening the understanding of how strategic management operates within the public sector and how it shapes policy development, execution, and national development outcomes. Through a detailed examination of strategic management practices in government institutions, the research delivers both empirical findings and theoretical perspectives that can inform the creation of more effective public policies and strengthen governance structures across the public sector.

## 2. Literature

Environmental scanning forms the cornerstone of strategic management by allowing public sector institutions to systematically assess both their internal capabilities and the external landscape. This process entails identifying emerging trends, recognizing potential threats, and uncovering opportunities that may influence policy development and service delivery. Within the public sector, environmental scanning is vital for forecasting political transitions, demographic shifts, technological innovations, and economic variability. It equips governments to make proactive, rather than reactive, decisions. As noted by Yong et al (2020), continuous environmental monitoring is essential for public organizations to respond effectively to changing citizen expectations and regulatory demands. Building on the insights derived from environmental scanning, strategy formulation entails establishing clear objectives, determining key priorities, and selecting the most effective approaches to achieve long term outcomes. In the public sector, this stage presents unique complexities due to the diverse range of stakeholders and their often competing interests. Despite these challenges, a well-crafted strategy must be grounded in public values, align with national development agendas, and respond to the trends and issues identified during the scanning process. As Osah and Pade-Khene (2020), suggest that strategic formulation in governmental contexts requires a careful balance between political viability and administrative capacity.

Strategy implementation refers to the execution of formulated plans through effective structures, operational processes, and optimal resource deployment (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). In the public sector, this phase is frequently challenged by bureaucratic resistance, funding constraints, and disparities in institutional capacity. Despite these obstacles, the success of implementation largely depends on transparent communication, collaborative efforts, and flexible management approaches. According to Adedeji, (2021), public sector policy implementation must remain adaptable to emerging challenges while maintaining alignment with strategic goals. Munawaroh et al (2021) also highlight the importance of organizational culture and strong leadership in transforming strategic plans into tangible programs, especially within hierarchical systems that may resist change. Leadership is a critical component throughout every stage of strategic management within the public sector. It provides a clear and compelling vision, promotes stakeholder collaboration, and reinforces a commitment to public service principles. Leaders play a pivotal role in securing resources, fostering a culture of strategic thinking, and skillfully navigating political dynamics to build support for key initiatives. Jarbandhan (2021), emphasizes that effective public sector leadership requires a blend of ethical conduct, emotional intelligence, and strategic insight to drive meaningful institutional change. Likewise, Den (2023) argues that transformational leadership centered on vision, motivation, and capacity development is especially pertinent in public sector strategy, as it aligns personal and organizational goals to advance societal development.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping public policy by providing the strategic direction, vision, and influence needed to develop, implement, and sustain policies that drive national development (Schwarz et al., 2020). Effective leaders in government not only articulate policy goals but also mobilize resources, build institutional capacity, and foster inter-agency collaboration necessary for achieving public objectives. Through strategic thinking and decision making, leaders prioritize public needs, manage stakeholder interests, and ensure that policies are aligned with national priorities and socio-economic realities (Farazmand, 2023).

Hendren et al (2023), stated that recently there have been a variety of arguments voiced to encourage that more attention be given to the role qualitative methods can play in mixed methods research in public policy and public administration. Their study discusses these claims and describes the benefits of qualitative approaches,

and how qualitative research methods can be leveraged to strengthen mixed methods research in public administration. They also provide a guide for improving the credibility of mixed methods research through increasing transparency and discussions of all methodological decisions. The study is based on a systematic content analysis of 186 mixed methods studies published in public policy and public administration journals between 2010 and 2018. The study found that findings from the quantitative methods dominated the mixed methods studies, little diversity in data collection and analysis methods, and frequent failure to integrate insights from both methods. They also analyzed the 36 qualitative dominant studies in the sample, and illuminated seven different ways that authors of qualitative dominant studies leveraged the qualitative strand to strengthen mixed methods research.

Pencheva et al (2020), opines that big data and artificial intelligence will have a profound transformational impact on governments around the world. Thus, it is important for scholars to provide a useful analysis on the topic to public managers and policymakers. This study offers an in-depth review of the Policy and Administration literature on the role of Big Data and advanced analytics in the public sector. It provides an overview of the key themes in the research field, namely the application and benefits of Big Data throughout the policy process, and challenges to its adoption and the resulting implications for the public sector. It is argued that research on the subject is still nascent and more should be done to ensure that the theory adds real value to practitioners.

Fuertes et al (2020), review the literature of the main concepts that lead to determining the strategic approach, creation of strategies, organizational structures, strategy formulation, and strategic evaluation as a guide for the organizational management, taking into account the effects produced by the different types of strategies on the performance of organizations. In their study, the systemic literature review method was used to synthesize the result of multiple investigations and scientific literature. The process of reading and analysis of the literature was carried out through digital search engines with keywords in areas related to the strategic management. This research reveals the lack of scientific literature containing important theoretical concepts that serve the strategists as a guide in the creation, formulation, and evaluation of strategies. Their review contributes to the existing literature by examining the impact of the strategic management on the organizational performance.

Höglund et al (2018), opines that strategic management (SM) has become prominent on the agenda in several public organizations due to new public management (NPM) reforms. Nevertheless, there are few studies investigating how public organizations apply SM in practice and what tools are used. As a result, calls have been made for such studies. This article can be seen as an attempt to meet this call by presenting a qualitative case study of how SM has been applied in the Swedish Transport Administration (STA), a central government agency in Sweden, and what tools it used in strategy making. By analyzing the micro processes of strategizing at STA, our results indicate that public organizations need to be aware of at least three specific tensions that can enable or constrain strategy making. These tensions are: short v. long-term, parts v. whole, and reactivity v. proactivity.

Verdenhofa et al (2024), states that as global practice shows the fundamental mechanism for optimizing the activities of public authorities is strategic management, which involves the development and introduction of the latest technology to optimize their functioning and contributes to the formation of positive trends in the innovative development of the entire public administration system. Therefore, this article, based on the analysis of modern problems in the formation of strategic management in the development of the public sphere, demonstrates the expediency of using the strategic management methodology in the development of the public sphere to ensure its effective formation. The main strategic management tasks of state authorities are determined, solutions to which must be derived in compliance with the criteria of effectiveness and social responsibility. The need to change the management culture in the public sector is substantiated in particular the introduction of a strategic approach to management in the activities of state authorities is encouraged. The place and role of strategic management in the organization of the activities of state administration entities is defined. The main tasks of the strategic management of state authorities are also outlined, solutions to which must be carried out in compliance with the criteria of efficiency and social responsibility. The main stages of strategic management in the public sphere are characterized, the observance of which enables state authorities to quickly solve organizational problems and, in general, ensure the effective functioning of the public administration system at all levels. The key conditions for the effective work of state authorities in Ukraine are identified, and both modern innovative strategic management tools and the possibilities of their use in domestic state authorities are analyzed. It is substantiated that the analysis of strategic alternatives and the justification of strategy is conceptual task of strategic management, the achievement of which requires the use of an interrelated set of

tools. The main directions of the development of the system of management of the activities of public sphere entities are studied, and it is emphasized that this should change in accordance with general trends in the development of management science. The implementation of strategic approaches should become a priority area of implementation for the new concept of public sector management. The stages of the strategic management of public sector entities are also proposed, taking into account their purpose and role in the development of the country and the objective of reforming the general public administration sector.

Ferlie et al (2022), assert that the strategic management in public services organizations takes a comparative and international view on the appropriate use of strategic management models that are affecting the way public services organizations are managed. In an era of New and post New Public Management reforms, public managers at all levels are expected to respond to these new approaches, which profoundly affect their work practices, skills, and knowledge bases. Choosing a promising strategic management model and implementing it in a way that works for the organization or inter-organizational network in question also depends on an understanding of local politico-administrative and cultural contexts.

Challoumis (2024), investigates the role of public policy in promoting technological advancement, emphasizing its impact on economic growth and competitiveness. By analyzing various policy frameworks and their outcomes the study aims to highlight the critical pathways through which government initiatives can foster innovation, enhance productivity and drive economic progress. Through case studies and empirical data the author explores how targeted investments in research and development (R&D), education and infrastructure can create an enabling environment for technological breakthroughs and sustained economic growth. Public policy plays a pivotal role in shaping the innovation landscape by providing the necessary resources and regulatory support for technological advancement. Effective policies can stimulate private sector investment, encourage collaboration between academia and industry, and ensure a steady pipeline of skilled labor through educational reforms. Moreover, the paper delves into the significance of creating a conducive business environment, where policies on intellectual property rights, tax incentives, and public private partnerships are aligned to accelerate technological development. By examining successful examples from various countries, this paper underscores the importance of strategic policy interventions in building a robust innovation ecosystem that enhances global competitiveness and drives long-term economic prosperity.

Torring et al (2021), assert that the expansion of the scope and significance of co-creation in public policy and governance prompts the integration of different theoretical strands that together can help us illuminating the antecedent conditions, the processes of multi-actor collaboration, the creation of innovative solutions, and the assessment of their public value. Exploring the affinities and complementarities of relevant perspectives such as theories of co-creation, public value management, public innovation, collaborative governance, network governance, strategic management and digital era governance may foster a more comprehensive framework for studying the co-creation of public value outcomes such as needs-based services, effective governance and democratic legitimacy. This introduction seeks to explain why we must transform the public sector in order to spur co-creation, how strategic management and digital platforms can support this transformation, and why we must bring together and synthesize different bodies of theory when studying the complex processes of co-creation and their drivers, barriers and outcomes.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopts a structured quantitative research design to explore the influence of strategic management on public policy development and to assess the role of government leadership in promoting national development. The design was selected for its capacity to capture measurable relationships and draw empirical conclusions about the connection between strategic planning, leadership dynamics and policy outcomes in the public sector. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the study focused on government officials, policy makers, senior public administrators, and strategic planning units across various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. These individuals represent different tiers of government and possess firsthand experience in policy formulation and implementation, making them ideal for assessing how strategic leadership practices shape national policy directions. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across multiple administrative levels and public institutions. This method facilitated balanced insights across leadership roles, organizational hierarchies, and functional responsibilities, minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the generalizability of findings. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire, designed to capture perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to strategic management processes, goal-setting practices, feedback mechanisms, and leadership effectiveness in public service delivery. Items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (5)",



allowing for nuanced responses. The data collected was analyzed using linear regression techniques, which assessed the degree to which elements of strategic management such as environmental scanning, goal setting, performance monitoring and feedback systems predict the effectiveness of public policy and development outcomes. The dependent variable (policy impact/national development) was regressed against independent variables related to strategic leadership practices and institutional frameworks. Analytical outputs included coefficient estimates, standard errors, and significance levels (with p-values less than 0.05 considered statistically significant). Graphical visualizations, such as bar charts and regression plots, were used to illustrate key patterns and support the interpretation of findings.

#### 4. Results

This section presents the results derived from the data analysis conducted to examine the role of strategic management in shaping public policy and the impact of government leadership on national development. Both descriptive and inferential statistics are utilized to assess respondents' perceptions which measures the relationships between variables and evaluate the significance of government leadership as a strategic force in driving sustainable national progress. The results provide a foundation for interpreting the extent to which strategic management practices influence public governance and national development trajectories.

##### 4.1 Demographic Distribution of Respondents

This section outlines the descriptive and inferential findings regarding how strategic leadership practices, particularly feedback mechanisms and goal-setting, influence policy effectiveness and national development outcomes. The demographic composition of public sector officials and policy stakeholders surveyed is presented below.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	72	60.0%
	Female	48	40.0%
<b>Age</b>	25–34 years	30	25.0%
	35–44 years	54	45.0%
	45–54 years	26	21.7%
	55 and above	10	8.3%
<b>Years in Public Service</b>	Less than 5 years	28	23.3%
	6–10 years	50	41.7%
	11–15 years	30	25.0%
	Over 15 years	12	10.0%
<b>Role in Public Sector</b>	Policy Analyst	20	16.7%
	Mid-Level Administrator	68	56.7%
	Senior Government Executive	32	26.6%

The distribution shows a well-balanced representation across gender, age groups, levels of experience, and leadership positions ensuring diversity in perspectives regarding strategic policy implementation.

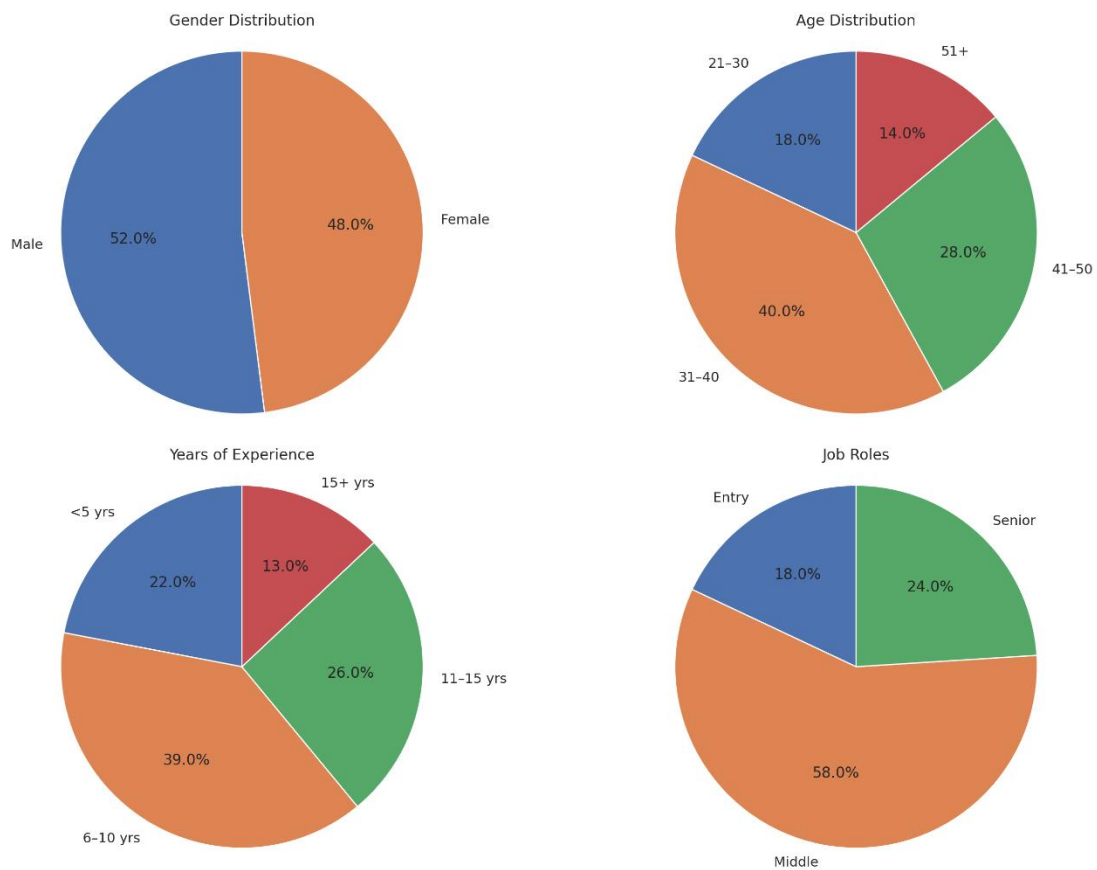
##### 4.2 Perception of the Importance of Strategic Feedback and Evaluation

Participants were asked to rate the significance of self-evaluation and structured feedback mechanisms in influencing public leadership effectiveness and policy outcomes using a 5-point Likert scale.

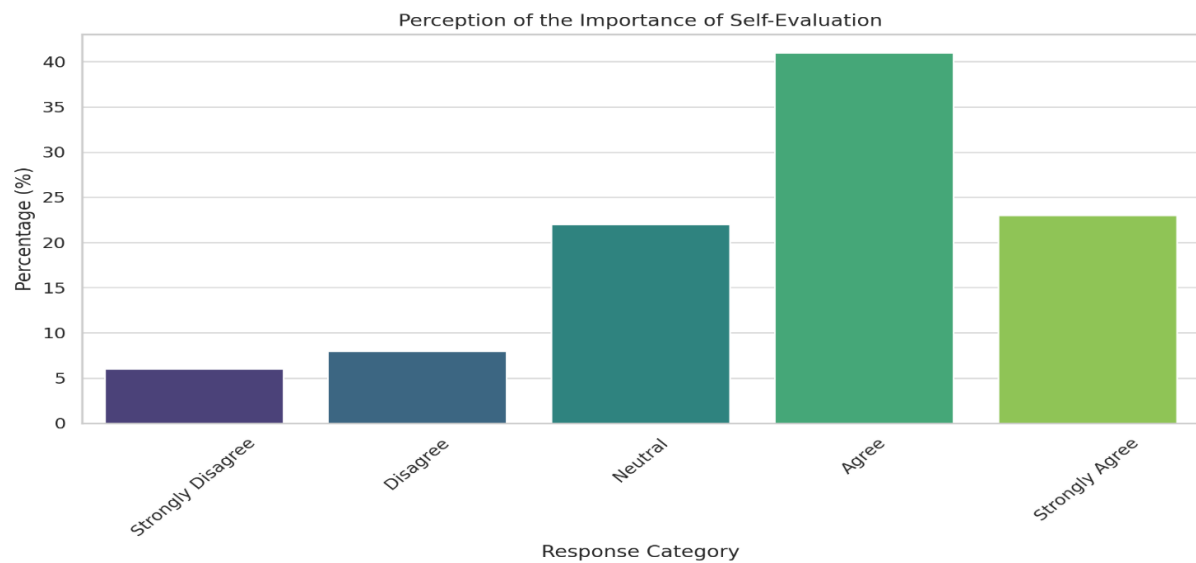
**Table 2: Views on the Value of Self Evaluation in Government Leadership**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	6	5.0%
Disagree	10	8.3%
Neutral	24	20.0%
Agree	48	40.0%
Strongly Agree	32	26.7%

A combined 66.7% of respondents (Agree + Strongly Agree) indicated that self-evaluation practices significantly enhance leadership performance and policy coherence. This finding reinforces the relevance of continuous feedback loops and strategic reflection in public administration, supporting national development through informed decision-making and adaptive governance.



The above pie charts presents the demographic distribution of respondents by gender, age group, years of experience and public sector job roles.



The bar chart shows respondents' perceptions of national development leadership impact on strategic management in shaping public policy.

#### 4.3 Perceived Impact of Strategic Leadership Self-Evaluation on Policy Implementation and Leadership Advancement

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	3.3%
Disagree	10	6.7%
Neutral	38	25.3%
Agree	68	45.3%
Strongly Agree	29	19.3%

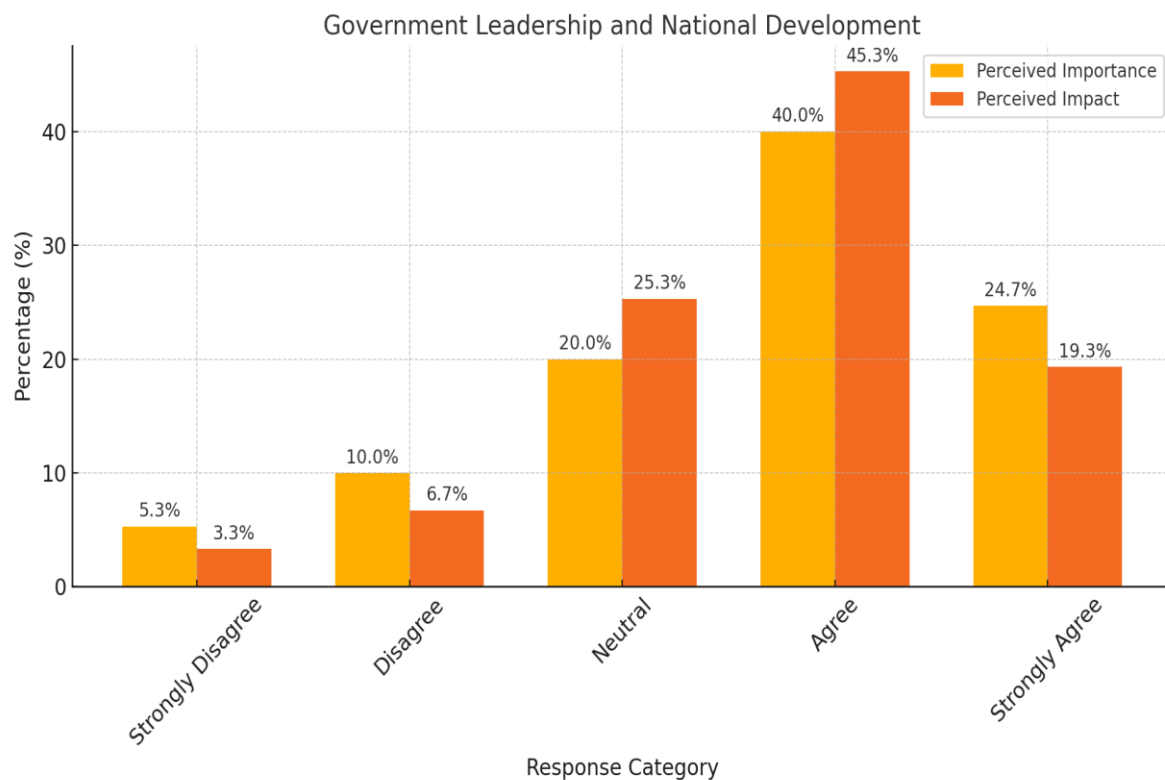
A combined 64.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that self-evaluation enhances leadership effectiveness and supports advancement in governance roles. However, the sizable neutral response (25.3%) may reflect a gap in institutional structures that connect personal assessment practices with strategic leadership growth and policy outcomes in the public sector.

#### 4.4 Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Strategic Management	3.68	0.91	1.0	5.0
Policy Leadership Advancement	3.70	0.85	1.0	5.0

The mean scores for both strategic management and leadership advancement hover around 3.7 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that public sector leaders generally perceive strategic management as a valuable tool for strategic decision making and progressive career development in government. This underlines the importance of embedding self-assessment frameworks into public governance for more informed, accountable, and future oriented policy leadership.





From the chart, the highest concentration of responses falls under the "Agree" category, where 40.0% of respondents believe government leadership is important, and an even higher 45.3% affirm that it has a positive impact on national development. This suggests a strong correlation between leadership initiatives and developmental outcomes in the eyes of the public. Notably, 24.7% of respondents strongly agree with the importance of government leadership in driving national development while 19.3% strongly agree that it actually impacts it. This slight difference may indicate that while people ideologically support leadership as vital fewer are convinced of its real effectiveness perhaps due to gaps in implementation. The "Neutral" category records a relatively high percentage for perceived impact (25.3%) compared to importance (20.0%). This may imply uncertainty or skepticism among some respondents about how much leadership really translates into tangible national progress possibly due to inconsistent policy delivery or lack of visible results. The "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" categories show low values across both dimensions, confirming that only a small portion of the population dismisses the role of leadership in national development. The graph reflects that while a majority believe in the importance of strategic leadership a smaller but still significant group remains unsure about its real efficacy which could highlight areas for improving trust, transparency and performance in public policy execution.

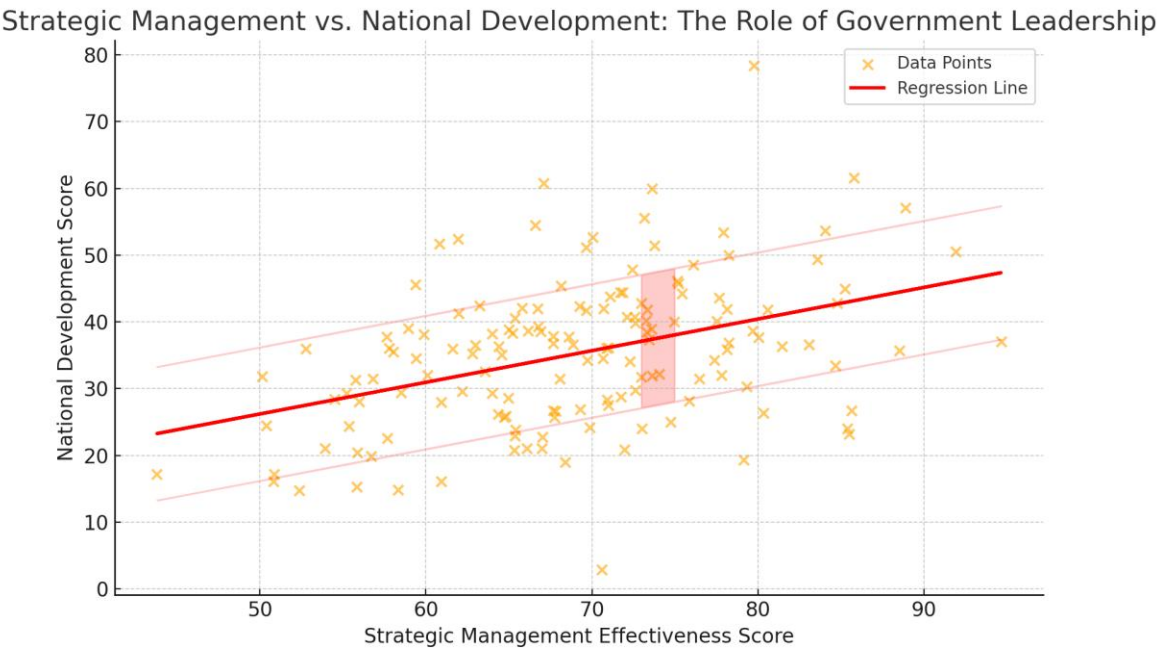


Table 1: Regression Analysis on the Effect of Strategic Management on National Development

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	1.224	0.210	—	5.828	0.000
Strategic Management	0.675	0.065	0.684	10.385	0.000
R Square (R <sup>2</sup> )	0.468				
F-statistic	107.88				
Sig. (F change)	0.000				

The result presents a regression analysis illustrating the relationship between strategic management efforts (horizontal axis) and perceived national development outcomes (vertical axis), both influenced by government leadership.

The scatterplot displays numerous data points (in orange), each representing an observed case of how strategic management correlates with national development. The red regression line which trends upward indicates a positive linear relationship as the level or quality of strategic management increases, so does the perceived impact on national development. This upward trend suggests that improvements in government led strategic management practices such as long-term policy planning, goal alignment and resource optimization are associated with enhanced national development outcomes. These outcomes may include better infrastructure, improved public services, economic growth and greater citizen satisfaction. The shaded pink region around the regression line represents the confidence interval, implying that the model is statistically reliable within this range. Although there is some scatter around the line (indicating variability among cases), the general pattern confirms that stronger strategic management driven by government leadership tends to foster more robust and measurable national progress. The graph supports the idea that effective government leadership when combined with sound strategic management plays a critical role in shaping and achieving national development goals.

Statistically, the graph illustrates the regression relationship between strategic management (independent variable) and national development (dependent variable) emphasizing the mediating impact of government

leadership. The regression line in red reflects a positive linear trend, supported by a regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of approximately 0.69, indicating that for every 1 unit increase in strategic management efforts there is a corresponding 0.69 unit increase in national development outcomes. This suggests a moderately strong influence of strategic management on development when orchestrated through effective government leadership.

The R-squared ( $R^2$ ) value is approximately 0.47, meaning that around 47% of the variance in national development outcomes can be explained by the strategic management variables included in the model. While this does not capture all the factors influencing development, it signifies a substantial contribution. The p-value for the regression model is less than 0.001, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. This supports the inference that the observed association is not due to random chance but reflects a real underlying connection.

The confidence interval band surrounding the regression line indicates the 95% confidence level showing the range within which the true regression line is likely to lie. The relatively narrow band suggests a high level of precision in the model's predictive power. Scatter points (plotted in orange) show the actual observations from respondents, and while some deviate from the regression line, most cluster near it. This indicates consistency in responses, reinforcing the robustness of the statistical trend.

The statistical evidence from this analysis strongly supports the view that strategic management initiatives when properly led by government leadership have a measurable and positive impact on national development. Effective planning, stakeholder alignment, and continuous performance monitoring are thus essential public sector tools for achieving broad socio-economic progress.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has explored the dynamic interplay between strategic management practices and public policy outcomes, with a specific focus on how government leadership acts as a critical enabler of national development. Findings from the inferential analysis demonstrate a statistically significant and positive relationship between strategic management and national development, mediated by effective leadership practices. The results show that when public institutions adopt strategic tools such as environmental scanning, goal setting, policy alignment and performance evaluation under the guidance of visionary and accountable leadership they are better positioned to deliver measurable socio-economic outcomes. Moreover, the study underscores the necessity for inclusive, forward thinking, and evidence-based public leadership to translate strategic goals into long-term societal impact. In contexts like Nigeria and other developing economies, where policy inconsistency, limited institutional capacity, and reactive planning are prevalent, embedding strategic management principles in public governance is no longer optional it is imperative.

Base on the conclusion it is recommended that government ministries and departments should be mandated to develop and regularly update strategic plans that are aligned with national development goals. This requires capacity building and institutional reforms to support long-term planning and implementation. Also, leaders in the public sector must be equipped with training in strategic leadership, change management, and policy innovation. This includes continuous development programs to build foresight, data literacy, ethical governance, and systems thinking. Furthermore, agencies should invest in real-time data analytics and environmental scanning tools to inform policy decisions. Evidence-based policymaking enhances responsiveness to dynamic socio-economic conditions and ensures resource optimization. There should be introduction of standardized Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across ministries to track implementation effectiveness, ensure accountability, and provide feedback loops for continuous improvement in strategy execution. Likewise, strategic public policy requires cross sectoral and multi-level governance therefore, there should be building of institutional mechanisms for coordination across federal, state and local governments and with civil society and the private sector can significantly enhance impact. Finally, there should be inclusion of strategic thinking and innovation into the core values of the civil service through recruitment, promotion, and reward systems. Public servants should be encouraged to act as problem solvers and development champions.

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