Governance, Public Sector Reforms and Sustainable Development in Uganda: Insights and Implications from Descriptive Survey Analysis

Kobusingye Hasifah[1] and **Uzomba Peter Chika[2]**
[1]Department of Political Science, Islamic University in Uganda
[3]Department of Economics, Federal University Lokoja, Nigeria & Islamic University in Uganda

Abstract

This paper examines the efficacy of governance and public sector reforms in guaranteeing sustainable development in Uganda. Using descriptive survey research design, the study utilizes the opinions of senior and junior civil servants on the subject matter. The study anchors Stewardship-Insitutionalism-Public Sector Reforms Theoretical framework. The study administers government and public sector reforms questionnaire (GPSRQ) research instrument on 32 senior and 68 junior civil servants in Mbale, Uganda. Data generated from the filed survey are analyzed using statistical tools of mean, standard deviation, mean set and rank order, independent sample Z-test statistical tool for data analysis. The analysis reveals that governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in output, gross fixed capital formation, growth in exports, GDP per capita and employment rate. They equally increased access to education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, access to utilities, the population living below the national or international poverty line, income inequality and increased, but have reduced life expectancy in Uganda. Lastly, there is no significance difference in the mean scores of the senior and junior civil servants on the effect of governance and public sector reforms on economic growth, social justice and ways of attaining sustainable development in Uganda. The study concludes that governance and public sector reforms have somewhat effect on sustainable development in Uganda. The study therefore recommends that Ugandan government should strengthen anti-corruption measures and public financial management systems.

Keywords: Governance, Public Sector Reforms, Sustainable Development, Descriptive Statistics.

Introduction

Governance and public sector reforms are firmly established within public policy debates. However, the dynamics, nature and implications of the relationship are fiercely contested. In the world over, governance encompasses activities that transcend national boundaries at the international, transnational, and regional levels and is based on rights and rules that are enforced through a combination of economic and moral incentives (Abhijit, 2020). Governance is refers to the systems, processes, and structures used to direct and manage an organization, community, or country (Ostrom & Elinor, 2020). It involves decision-making, accountability, transparency, and the implementation of policies to achieve objectives (Olken, Benjamine & Pande, 2022). Governance can take various forms depending on the context, such as: corporate governance, public governance, global governance, information and technology governance, and environmental, social, and governance.

Essentially, governance is crucial for ensuring fairness, accountability, and long-term sustainability, regardless of the specific context. The governance framework of Uganda is guided by its 1995 Constitution, which emphasizes democratic principles, the rule of law, and decentralization (Grindle & Merilee, 2021). The Uganda's governance system has a political structure with three branches -   Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. Through a universal suffrage the President is elected as the Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief for a five-year term; with no tenure and age limits. The Vice President is the second-highest official, while the Prime Minister assists in coordinating government functions, and the cabinet composed of ministers appointed by the President and approved by Parliament (Kanfmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2020).

The Legislative branch of the governance system in Uganda has a Unicameral Parliament made up of elected representatives and special interest groups (women, youth, persons with disabilities, and workers); in which each member of the parliament serves five-year terms. This branch within the conventional practices is responsible for making laws, approving the budget, and providing checks on the Executive (Heeks & Richard, 2022). The Judiciary operates independently, as mandated by the Constitution. The highest courts include: Supreme Court: Handles constitutional matters and appeals; Court of Appeal: Also acts as the Constitutional Court; High Court: Handles significant civil and criminal cases; Magistrates' courts and Local Council Courts provide justice at lower levels (Olken & Benjamin, 2017).

Boliria, Faguet and Jean-Paul (2024) noted that Uganda has adopted a decentralized governance system, enshrined in the Constitution, to empower local governments. The local government councils govern districts, municipalities, and villages. They are responsible for service delivery in areas like education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and operate at five levels (from LC1 at the village level to LC5 at the district level). This decentralization aims to bring governance closer to citizens, though challenges like resource constraints and corruption persist.

Uganda's governance system continues to evolve, balancing centralized leadership with decentralized initiatives. While progress has been made, the country faces ongoing challenges in ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable development. Governance and public sector reforms in Uganda have undergone significant transformations, marked by both successes and challenges (Mauro & Paolo, 2019. The decentralization policy, initially praised for enhancing local governance, has faced recentralization trends that undermine local autonomy and services delivery (Biryomumeisho, 2024). Despite some progress in public finance management frameworks, issues like corruption, ineffective citizen's participation, and misallocation of resources persists (Gumisiriza & Mukasa, 2022). Furthermore, the adoption of New Public Management (NPM) practices has not led to the expected efficiency improvements, highlighting the need for strategic human resources management to enhance operation performance (Eyamu, 2021).

Public sector reforms in Uganda have been a significant focus of governance and development efforts aimed at improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of government institutions. These reforms have spanned various areas, including decentralization, civil service restructuring, public financial management, and anti-corruption measures (hood & Christopher, 2019). Uganda embarked on a robust decentralization programme in the 1990s to enhance local governance and bring services closer to the people.

This reform featured the Local Government Act (1997), being a legal framework for decentralization, granting local governments autonomy in decision-making and resource allocation. It also emphasized fiscal decentralization which empowered local governments to generate and manage their own revenues, although dependency on central government transfers remains high Pollitt, Christopher & Geert, 2021). There is equally an aspect of citizen participation that strengthens platforms for community involvement in local governance, including participatory planning and budgeting processes (Shirley, Mary & Patrick, 2020).

In Uganda, public sector reforms have sought to improve the efficiency and professionalism of public servants with concentration on staff rationalization (reduction of redundant staff and restructuring of government ministries and departments to streamline operations), capacity building (investments in training and skills development for public servants to improve service delivery) and performance management (introduction of performance contracts and appraisal systems to enhance accountability) (Olken & Benjamin, 2017). There is a noticeable aspect of the reforms centres on public financial management (PFM). Heek and Richard, (2022) noted that efforts to strengthen PFM systems have focused on transparency, accountability, and efficient use of resources. Major initiatives, according to Megginson, William and Jeffreyr (2021) include integrated financial management system (IFMS) (with focus on digital platform for real-time management of public funds), public procurement and disposal of public assets authority (PPDA) with emphasis on regulatory body established to ensure fairness and efficiency in government procurement; and budget reforms that covers transition to program-based budgeting to align expenditures with national development priorities.

As part of package to ensure that the public sector reforms meet expected outcomes, the Ugandan government equally embarked on anti-corruption measure by implementing several strategies to combat corruption, but this remains a significant challenge. Institutions such as Inspectorate of Government (IG), Whistleblower Protection Act (2010) and Public Awareness Campaigns were established to investigate and prosecute corrupt practices, encourages reporting of corruption by protecting whistleblowers respectively, and sensitize citizen on the negative impact of corruption and promote a culture of accountability respectively (Ostrom & Elinor, 2020).

It is further noted by (Abhijit, 2020) that in order to improve the quality of public services, reforms have targeted key sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure. The health sector reforms focused on implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme and decentralization of health services; education reforms which centred on universal primary education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) programmes to enhance access to education; reforms on public facilities in a manner of investments in roads, electricity, and ICT to support economic growth and service delivery. Mauro and Paolo (2019) noted that Uganda has embraced technology to improve transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement. Platforms like the National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI) and e-Government Portal have been launched to improve access to government services; and the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) manages biometric data to streamline service delivery and enhance security (Hood & Christopher, 2019.

Despite notable progress public sector reforms in Uganda has not given expected results. The shortcomings in Uganda's public sector reforms are evident in various sectors, indicating weaknesses in implementation and sustainability. Uganda ranks poorly on the

corruption perceptions index by transparency international (Shirley, Mary & Patrick). In 2022, the country was ranked 142 out of 180 countries, indicating high levels of perceived corruption. Institutions like the inspectorate of government (IG) and anti-corruption court face challenges of underfunding, political interference, and lack of independence, undermining their effectiveness, quality of education remains low (Ostrom & Elinor, 2020). Reports indicate high dropout rates, teacher absenteeism, and inadequate infrastructure (Kanfmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2020). Again, decentralization reforms have not effectively addressed issues such as stock-outs of essential medicines, understaffed facilities, and poor service delivery in rural areas. While there have been investments in roads and electricity, delays, cost overruns, and poor-quality work due to corruption and inefficiency remain widespread (Heeks & Richard, 2022).

In view of this, it becomes evident that the present governance in Uganda has not produced expected outcomes of public sector reforms and makes it impossible for the country to be on the path of attaining sustainable development. Hence it becomes necessary to examine the effect of governance on public sector reforms with the purpose of x-trying some insights and implications for attaining sustainable development in Uganda with emphasis of integrating strategies that balance economic growth and social equity as measures of sustainable development. Consequently, this study seeks to address these questions; how governance and public sector reforms have affected economic growth and social equity? In what ways can Uganda attain sustainable development in view of governance and public sector reform? Providing empirical answers to these questions is the forms the crux of the study. The rest of the paper is documented in subsequent sections 2, 3, 4 and 5, under literature review, method of study, result and discussion, and concluding remarks

Literature Review

Governance theories are analytical tools that help us understand the world around us by examining how governance is designed, implemented, and evolves. They can also help us understand how different actors interact to make decisions, and how governance can be improved. Governance theory is based on building solutions to collective action problems (Ostrom, 2005). Societies require instruments for steering the boat, focusing on the process of goal selection, coordination, implementation, feedback, and accountability (Peters, 2011). On basis, the study reviews certain theories in relation with governance and public sector reforms as well as sustainable development.

Stewardship Theory:

The Stewardship Theory was primarily developed and articulated by Donaldson and Davis in the 1990s. It emphasizes the role of managers or leaders as stewards who prioritize the organization's long-term success and the welfare of stakeholders over their personal gain. It contrasts with agency theory, which assumes that managers may act in self-interest, requiring external controls to align their actions with shareholder interests. Heeks and Richard (2022) argues that stewardship theory anchors on the principles of intrinsic motivation, trust and empowerment, alignment of interest, long-term focus.

This theory posits that stakeholders such as government officials are managers that derive satisfaction from contributing to the country's success and achieving goals, reducing the need for strict monitoring. They are leaders are trusted to act in the best interests of the

organization, and they are empowered with autonomy to make decisions (Bolivia, Faguet & Jean-Paul, 2024). The theory assumes that the goals of the managers (stewards) naturally align with those of the stakeholders, such as shareholders, employees, and the community (Hood & Christopher, 2019). It places emphasis on sustainable growth and organizational stability over short-term gains (Mauro & Paolo, 2019).

It could be inferred from the theoretical proposition that public sector reformers are seen as trustworthy and motivated by country success rather than personal benefits. It encourages open communication, cooperation, and shared vision among stakeholders, and reduces the need for detailed oversight and external governance mechanisms because stewards are assumed to act responsibly. Abhijit (2020) argues that stewardship theory presents a governance framework where reformers work collaboratively for the country's benefit, emphasizing trust and mutual goals rather than control mechanisms, focuses on encouraging participative and transformational leadership, where leaders focus on empowering teams and fostering organizational commitment. it is insinuated from the foregoing that the governance and public sector should be operated in non-profit contexts, where mission-driven goals align leaders with the broader interests of society.

This informs the adoption of this theory in the study because when governance and public sector reforms are taken from the point of view of stewardship, it could engender builds trust and reduces conflict between managers and stakeholders, promotes innovation and creativity by granting leaders autonomy, encourages long-term planning and sustainability and reduces costs associated with monitoring and controlling managers. It will advocates for trustworthy, strategic alignment with goals, autonomy, collaboration, long-term country's success, lowers governance cost, and a shared vision, making it a useful framework for fostering sustainable and harmonious governance and development.

Institutionalism

The classical institutionalism was development by Thorstein Veblen, John R. Commons, and Émile Durkheim, while the new institutionalism was developed by Douglass C. North, Philip Selznick, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell as documented in (Olken & Benjamin, 2017). In study however, both classical and new institutionalism are taken as one because of great similarity that exists in both of them. Institutionalism is a theoretical approach that emphasizes the role of institutions - formal and informal rules, norms, and structures - in shaping human behavior, social interactions, and organizational practices. It is widely used in political science, sociology, economics, and organizational studies to explain how institutions influence the actions of individuals and groups and how they evolve over time. Ostrom and Elinor (2020) argue that institutions are understood as systems of established and prevalent social rules, conventions, or formal organizations that structure social, political, and economic interactions.

It is on basis that governance was rightly construed as systems, processes, and structures used to direct and manage an organization, community, or country (Pollitt, Christopher, 2019). Institutionalism often explores how institutions contribute to the stability and predictability of social systems by recognizing that past decisions and established practices influence current and future institutional behaviour, leading to resistance to change, and while institutions are often stable, they can evolve through adaptation, reforms, or external pressures (Megginson, William & Jeffryr, 2021). The justification for the inclusion of

the theory in this study is that it focuses on how institutions structure behavior and distribute power through examined formal rules, laws, and organizational structures within governments and organizations by emphasizing the role of institutions in structuring individual choices to achieve specific goals, often assuming rational actors through reforms in both public and private sectors – which wraps the thrust of this study as it seeks to unravel the dynamic effect of governance on public sector reforms through the attainment of sustainable development. Institutionalism provides a valuable lens for understanding how formal and informal systems influence behavior, governance, and social order. Its various strands offer diverse perspectives, making it a versatile tool in analyzing societal and organizational dynamics.

Public Choice Theory
Public Choice Theory was primarily developed by James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock**,** who formalized its principles in their seminal 1962 book, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. The theory emphasizes the importance of constitutional rules in shaping political behavior and protecting public interests and highlights how individuals and groups expend resources to secure economic gains through the political process rather than through productive activities (Mauro & Paolo, 2019. Public Choice Theory is now a well-established field, combining insights from economics, political science, and law to understand and improve governance systems (Bardhan, Pranab, Dilip & Mookheriee, 2022). This theory challenges the traditional assumption that political actors always act in the public interest and instead assumes they act out of self-interest, much like individuals in economic markets (Mauro & Paulo, 2019). The theory centres on understanding how self-interest shapes policies and their outcomes and design systems to reduce inefficiencies and limit the negative impacts of self-interested political behaviour. Public Choice Theory has significantly influenced fields like economics, political science, and public administration, providing tools to critically analyze public sector reforms.

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework that underpins the thesis of this study is on the arguments of the Stewardship-Insitutionalism-Public Sector Reforms Theories. The framework argues that when Ugandan government officials as managers act as responsible stewards of the country's resources and interests, aligning their behaviour with the goals of the principal (citizens); then the country will be on the path of attaining sustainable development. By so doing, the country would have established formal and informal rules, norms, and practices - shape social, economic, and political behaviour through the application of economic principles to political decision-making with the purpose of achieving public sector reforms for sustainable development. This theoretical framework offers distinct lenses for analyzing governance, organizational behavior, and policy-making, each grounded in specific assumptions about human behavior and institutional dynamics.

Review of Empirical Literature
Empirical studies on public sector reforms analyze the effectiveness and impact of initiatives aimed at improving governance, efficiency, accountability, and service delivery in the public sector. These studies often explore reforms like decentralization, privatization, performance

management, e-governance, and public-private partnerships. Using evidence from Bolivia, Faguet and Jean-Paul (2024) sought to find out how decentralization increase government responsiveness to local needs. The findings of the study reveals that decentralization in Bolivia improved resource allocation, with funds increasingly directed toward local priorities (e.g., education, water, sanitation). However, the impact varied based on institutional capacity and local governance structures. This implies that the success of decentralization depends on robust local governance and accountability mechanisms. Taking an overview, Bardhan, Pranab, Dilip and Mookherjee (2022) studied decentralization, corruption and government accountability. They argue that decentralization reduced corruption in some contexts by bringing decision-making closer to citizens but increased it in others due to weak local institutions. Hence, suggesting that institutional safeguards are necessary to prevent misuse of decentralized power.

Shirley, Mary and Patrick (2020) examined the current state of the debate on the effects of public versus private ownership. The study revealed that privatization improved efficiency and service delivery in sectors like telecommunications and utilities but had mixed results in healthcare and education due to accessibility and equity concerns. It could be discerned from the findings that the success of privatization is sector-specific and depends on regulatory frameworks and market conditions. In a similar way, Megginson, William and Jeffreyr (2021) did a survey of empirical studies on privatization from state to market. Using descriptive survey research design, the study revealed that privatized firms often perform better than state-owned enterprises in terms of profitability, efficiency, and investment. However, outcomes depend on market competition and regulatory quality. This implies that in every setting of reforms, privatization should be accompanied by strong regulatory oversight to ensure public benefits.

Pollitt, Christopher and Geert (2021) did a comparative analysis on public management reform in United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand. By adopting descriptive research method of analysis, they argued that new public management such as performance-based incentives, outsourcing, improved efficiency and customer satisfaction in countries like the UK and New Zealand. However, they sometimes led to fragmented services and accountability issues; hence, the need for balancing efficiency with accountability and equity. Hood and Christopher (2019) examine a public management for all seasons by introducing business-like practices into the public sector but encountered resistance in traditional bureaucratic settings, and submit that reform success depends on cultural and organizational compatibility. Heeks and Richard (2022) examined the promises and practices of e-Government in Africa. The argument of the study is that e-governance initiatives improved transparency and service delivery in some African countries but often faced challenges like low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and resistance to change. This goes to suggest that e-governance reforms must address local infrastructure and capacity challenges.

Mauro and Paolo (2019) examined effects on *c*orruption on growth and argued that anti-corruption reforms improved governance and economic growth by reducing inefficiencies and promoting public trust. This implies that addressing systemic corruption requires institutional reforms and enforcement mechanisms. In a likewise manner, Olken and Benjamin (2017) used evidence from field experiment to monitor corruption in Indonesia. The study argued that community monitoring of infrastructure projects reduced corruption but was less effective without institutional support. This implies that citizen engagement must be

paired with strong enforcement for sustained impact. Mauro and Paolo (2019) reports document that effective reforms are underpinned by strong political will, citizen participation, and institutional capacity. This implies that aligning incentives for reform actors improves outcomes.

Using cross-country data, Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2020) links governance quality - measured by indicators like rule of law, government effectiveness, and corruption control - to economic growth and development. Higher governance quality is associated with better economic performance. Grindle and Merilee (2021) argue that in fragile states, prioritizing achievable governance reforms over idealistic frameworks is critical. Context-specific strategies focusing on incremental improvements often yield better results than ambitious but impractical initiatives. Thus, governance strategies need to align with a state's capacity and social realities. Olken, Benjamin and Pande (2022) empirically show that that governance reforms emphasizing transparency and accountability can reduce corruption. Community monitoring and technology-based interventions were particularly effective. Governance reforms aimed at increasing community participation in public programs had mixed results.

Engagement improved in well-functioning governance systems, it was ineffective where institutions were weak (Abhijit, 2020). Hence, strengthening institutional frameworks is essential for participatory governance success. Empirical studies of local communities managing natural resources demonstrate that decentralized, polycentric governance structures often outperform centralized systems in sustainability in Nepal (Ostrom & Elinor, 2020). E-governance initiatives improved accountability and transparency but faced challenges like digital divides and resistance from entrenched interests (Heeks & Richard, 2022). These studies illustrate the diverse dimensions of governance, showing how reforms can improve outcomes depending on institutional quality, social context, and implementation strategies and lead to ultimate end of sustainable development.

Several public sector reforms (PSR) have taken place in Africa over the last few decades with varying degrees of success; these range from very excellent performance, to limited success and then failure. However, regardless of the evaluation results, they have without a doubt had an impact on the way we understand and shape public management on the African continent. Inevitably, a number of insights and lessons have been gained on the subject matter. In this article, we shall empirically examined the opinions of critical stakeholders on how public sector reforms affect economic growth, social equity and environmental protection; and the possible ways of sustaining development in Uganda.

Method of Study
This study adopts descriptive survey research design and utilizes primary data sourced with the help of a research instrument known as government and public sector reforms questionnaire (GPSRQ) meant to examine the effect of governance on public sector reforms with a view to x-raying perceptions that would put Uganda on the path of attaining sustainable development. The population of the study covers all the senior statesmen in Mbale, Eastern Region of Uganda. The population totals 100 civil servants – 32 senior and 68 junior staff. The validity of the research instrument is ensured by recoding a high content validity index – which serves as a quantitative assessment of the degree items is content valid as confirmed by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. For the reliability co-efficient to be

obtained, GPSRQ is subjected to a pilot study using 5 junior civil servants in Mbale. Using the test retest strategy and Cronbach's Alpha correlation statistical tool, GPSRQ has a 0.74 coefficient. This suggests that the instrument is significant to about 74% and considerably reliable to be used to examine the effect of governance on public sector reforms.

The instrument was administered using the services of three research assistants. Responses from the research instrument are analyzed using statistical tools of mean, standard deviation, mean set and rank order. The tenability of the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the opinions of the stakeholders was tested using independent sample Z-test statistical tool. The decision rule on the research questions was based on whether or not an item is accepted or rejected or agreed or disagreed with in relation to the research questions. In order to achieve this, weighted response scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 was added together and divided by 4, and the result was taken as the break-even point known as the criterion mean score or cut-off point or benchmark for accepting or rejecting an item. Practically, it was calculated as: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = {}^{10}/_4 = 2.5$. By implication, it means that any questionnaire item whose mean score is 2.5 and above is adjudged positive and accepted in favour; if otherwise, it is adjudged negative and rejected in relation to the research question under consideration.

On the other hand, the tenability of the null hypotheses at 5% will either be retained or dropped was determined by comparing the p value or significance level in the output directly with your chosen alpha. Based on this therefore, each null hypothesis was rejected if the p value is equal to or less than the chosen alpha. Conversely, if the p value is greater than the chosen alpha, retain or do not reject the null hypothesis. It is also important to state that certain clarifications are made in terms of analysis and interpreting the result of the independent samples Z-test analysis. Some of such discussions are based on "Equal Variance Assumed (EVA)" and "Equal Variance Not Assumed (EVNA)". To decide on which one to be used in interpreting the tenability of the hypothesis the following considerations are made: (i) The statistical figures under Equal Variance Assumed (EVA) are used for the interpretation whenever the significance value (p value) of Levene's test is greater than 0.05 alpha. In other words, this is used when the difference in variances of the two groups is not statistically significant. (ii) On the contrary, the statistical figures under Equal Variance Not Assumed (EVNA) are used for the interpretation whenever the significance value (p value) of Levene's test is less than 0.05 alpha. In other words, this is used when the difference in variances of the two groups is statistically significant.

Presentation of Results and Interpretation
Research Question One: What is the effect of governance and public sector reforms on economic growth?

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics Results of Research Question One.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Senior Civil Staff (N = 32)				Junior civil Staff (N = 68)				Mean Set	Decision
		X_1	SD	Sum	Rank Order	X_2	SD	Sum	Rank Order		
1	Governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in output.	3.16	1.05	101	3rd	3.18	1.05	216	2nd	3.17	Accept
2	Governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in GDP per capita.	2.81	1.09	90	5th	3.22	0.83	219	1st	3.02	Accept
3	Governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in employment rate.	2.94	1.05	94	4th	2.90	0.93	197	5th	2.92	Accept
4	Governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in growth in exports.	3.19	0.86	102	2nd	3.06	0.83	208	3rd	3.13	Accept
5	Governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in Gross Fixed Capital Formation.	3.31	0.93	106	1st	2.97	1.04	204	4th	3.14	Accept
	Average Scores	3.08	1.00	99		3.07	0.94	209		3.08	

Source: Research's Computation from Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.1 reports the result of the responses sought to address research question one. Research question one sought to address the effect of governance and public sector reforms on economic growth of Uganda. This research question was addressed with five questionnaire items which were responded to by 32 senior civil staff and 68 junior civil staff of Ugandan civil service. From the table, the mean values of the responses of the senior civil staff were 3.16, 2.81, 2.94, 3.19, and 3.31; while the standard deviation scores were 1.05, 1.09, 1.05, 0.86 and 0.93 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. For the senior staff the items were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 5, 4, 1, 3 and 2 respectively.

On the other hand, the mean values of the responses of the junior civil staff were 3.18, 3.22, 2.90, 3.06 and 2.97; while the standard deviation scores were 1.05, 0.83, 0.93, 0.83 and 1.04 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. The responses of the junior civil staff were ranked in the order of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 2, 1, 4, 5 and 3 respectively. The mean set (which is the average mean score of the two sets of responses for each questionnaire item) stood at 3.17, 3.02, 2.92, 3.13 and 3.14 for questionnaire items 1 to 5. Since the mean set values of the five questionnaire items are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the five of them are therefore accepted as the effects of governance and public sector reforms on sustainable development in Uganda. Therefore, the civil servants in Mbale are of the opinions

that effects of governance and public sector reforms on sustainable development in Uganda include that governance and public sector reforms have led to increase in output, gross fixed capital formation, growth in exports, GDP per capita and employment rate. From the average value of mean set, 3.08, it could be statistically inferred that governance and public sector reforms have somewhat effect on economic growth in Uganda. This is statistically implicative because the value is more than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question Two: How has social equity been affected by governance and public sector reforms?

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics Results of Research Question Two.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Senior Civil Staff (N = 32)				Junior Civil Staff (N = 68)				Mean Set	Decision
		X_1	SD	Sum	Rank Order	X_2	SD	Sum	Rank Order		
6	Governance and public sector reforms have increased income inequality in Uganda.	2.18	1.09	90	5th	2.84	0.94	193	5th	2.83	Accept
7	Governance and public sector reforms have increased the population living below the national or international poverty line.	2.94	1.01	94	4th	3.44	0.87	234	1st	3.19	Accept
8	Governance and public sector reforms have increased access to education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.	3.47	0.76	111	1st	3.21	0.78	218	4th	3.34	Accept
9	Governance and public sector reforms have reduced life expectancy in Uganda.	3.03	0.90	97	3rd	3.34	0.86	227	3rd	3.19	Accept
10	Governance and public sector reforms have increased access to utilities.	3.16	0.99	101	2nd	3.37	0.96	229	2nd	3.27	Accept
	Average Scores	**2.96**	**0.95**	**99**		**3.24**	**0.89**	**220**		**3.16**	

Source: Research's Computation from Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4.1 reports the result of the responses sought to address research question two. Research question two sought to how social equity been achieved in view of governance and public sector reforms. This research question was addressed with five questionnaire items which were responded to by 32 senior civil staff and 68 junior civil staff of Ugandan civil

service. From the table, the mean values of the responses of the senior civil staff were 2.81, 2.94, 3.47, 3.03 and 3.16; while the standard deviation scores were 1.09, 1.01, 0.76, 0.90 and 0.99 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. For the senior civil staff the items were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 3, 5, 4, 2 and 1 respectively.

On the other hand, the mean values of the responses of the junior civil staff were 2.84, 3.44, 3.21, 3.34 and 3.37; while the standard deviation scores were 0.94, 0.87, 0.78, 0.86 and 0.92 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. The responses of the junior civil staff were ranked in the order of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 2, 5, 4, 3 and 1 respectively. The mean set (which is the average mean score of the two sets of responses for each questionnaire item) stood at 2.83, 3.17, 3.34, 3.19 and 3.27 for questionnaire items 1 to 5. Since the mean set values of the five questionnaire items are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the five of them are therefore accepted as how social equity been achieved in view of governance and public sector reforms. Therefore, civil servants in Mbale, Uganda, are of the opinion that governance and public sector reforms have increased access to education across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, access to utilities, the population living below the national or international poverty line, income inequality and increased, but have reduced life expectancy in Uganda. The average value of mean set (3.16) suggests that the social equity has been affected by governance and public sector reforms as perceived by the sampled civil servants in Mbale, Uganda.

Research Question Three: In what ways can governance and public sector reforms lead to attainment of sustainable development?

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics Results of Research Question Three.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Senior Civil Staff (N = 32)				Junior Civil Staff (N = 68)				Mean Set	Decision
		X_1	SD	Sum	Rank Order	X_2	SD	Sum	Rank Order		
11.	Governance and reforms that integrate data analytics into policy design and monitoring improve the effectiveness of interventions.	2.91	1.12	93	3rd	3.25	0.95	221	1st	3.08	Accept
12.	Integrated policymaking ensures alignment across economic, social, and environmental objectives.	3.19	1.00	102	1st	2.96	0.94	201	4th	3.08	Accept
13.	Strengthening environmental governance and reforms.	2.94	1.05	94	2nd	3.10	0.79	211	3rd	3.02	Accept
14.	Decentralization reforms enable local governments to address community-specific needs.	2.88	1.04	92	4th	3.24	0.79	220	2nd	3.06	Accept
15.	Welfare reforms and targeted subsidies address poverty and social exclusion.	2.75	1.08	88	5th	2.82	0.86	192	5th	2.79	Accept
	Average Scores	**2.93**	**1.06**	**94**		**3.07**	**0.87**			**3.01**	

Source: Research's Computation from Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.3 documents the result of the responses sought to address research question three. Research question three sought to ways governance and public sector reforms can lead to attainment of sustainable development in Uganda. This research question was addressed with five questionnaire items which were responded to by 32 senior civil staff and 68 junior civil staff of Ugandan civil service. From the table, the mean values of the responses of the senior civil staff were 2.91, 3.19, 2.94, 2.88 and 2.75 while the standard deviation scores were 1.12, 1.00, 1.05, 1.04 and 1.08 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. For the senior civil staff the items were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 2, 3, 1, 4 and 5 respectively.

On the other hand, the mean values of the responses of the junior civil staff were 3.25, 2.96, 3.10, 3.24 and 2.82; while the standard deviation scores were 0.95, 0.94, 0.79, 0.79 and 0.86 for questionnaire item 1 to 5 respectively. The responses of the junior civil staff were ranked in the order of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th for questionnaire items 1, 4, 3, 2 and 5 respectively. The mean set (which is the average mean score of the two sets of responses for each questionnaire item) stood at 3.08, 3.08, 3.02, 3.06 and 2.79 for questionnaire items 1 to 5. Since the mean set values of the five questionnaire items are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the five of them are therefore accepted. Hence, the civil servants in Mbale are of the opinions that ways governance and public sector reforms can lead to attainment of sustainable development in Uganda are that governance and reforms that integrate data analytics into policy design and monitoring improve the effectiveness of interventions, integrated policymaking ensures alignment across economic, social, and environmental objectives, decentralization reforms enable local governments to address community-specific needs, strengthening environmental governance and reforms and welfare reforms and targeted subsidies address poverty and social exclusion. As evident in the value of average mean set of 3.01, which is greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50, it could be statistically discerned that there are numerous ways the governance and public sector reforms can lead to sustainable development in Uganda, as perceived by the sampled civil servants in Mbale.

Results of Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One H_{01}: There is no significant mean score difference in the perceptions of senior and junior civil servants on the effect of governance and public sector reforms on economic growth.

Table 4.4: Results of Independent Samples T-Test for the Null Hypothesis One

Independent Samples Test

Descriptive Statistics				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
Senior Civil Staff Responses (SCSR) N = 32	Junior Civil Staff Responses (JCSR) N = 68											95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Mean = 3.08	Mean = 3.07			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
SD = 1.00	SD = 0.95	VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	3.497	.098	2.983	8	.018	.22800	.07643		.05175	.40425
SEM = 0.70	SEM = 0.03		Equal variances not assumed			2.983	5.560	.027	.22800	.07643		.03733	.41867

Chosen Alpha Level = 5% (0.05)
Source: SPSS Hypothesis Results Extract from Field Survey, 2024

The table 4.4 has shown that the senior civil servants responses of group (1) has five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 3.08 mean, 1.00 standard deviation (SD) and 0.70 standard error of mean (SEM). The junior civil staff responses of group (2) has five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 3.07 mean, 0.95 standard deviation (SD) and 0.03 standard error of mean (SEM). From the table, it can be discerned that the Equal variance assumed, Leven's Test for Equality of Variance (F) is 3.497, P value (Sig.) of 0.098, t-ratio of 2.983, degree of freedom of 8 (df), p value of 0.018 (Sig. for 2-tailed), Mean Difference of 0.22800, Standard Error of Difference of 0.07643, Lower and Upper Confidence Interval of 0.05175 and 0.40425 respectively at 95% certainty.

Based on this result, the p value (Sig.) of 0.018 (approximately 0.02) for 2-tailed test is less than the chosen alpha of 0.05; hence the null hypothesis of no significance difference in the mean scores of the senior and junior civil servants on the effect of governance and public sector reforms on economic growth is accepted. This implies that the difference helped by the senior and junior civil servants on the effect of the subject matter is statistically not significant; In other words the mean of SCSR = 3.08; minus the mean of JCSR = 3.07; = 0.01. The value of 0.01 is statistically less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05; hence the tenability of the accepted of the null hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis Two H$_{02}$: There is no significant mean score difference in the perceptions of senior and junior civil servants on how governance and public sector reforms affect social justice in Uganda?

Table 4.5: Results of Independent Samples T-Test for the Null Hypothesis Two

Independent Samples Test

Descriptive Statistics				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
Senior Civil Staff Responses (SCSR) N = 32	Junior Civil Staff Responses (JCSR) N = 68										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Mean = 2.96	Mean = 3.24			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SD = 0.95	SD = 0.89	VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	1.736	.224	.338	8	.744	.03200	.09462	-.18618	.25018
SEM = 0.77	SEM = 0.06		Equal variances not assumed			.338	7.259	.745	.03200	.09462	-.19012	.25412

Chosen Alpha Level = 5% (0.05)
Source: SPSS Hypothesis Results Extract from Field Survey, 2024

The table 4.5 has shown that the senior civil servants' responses of group (1) has five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 2.96 mean, 0.95 standard deviation (SD) and 0.77 standard error of mean (SEM). The junior civil servants' responses of group (2) have five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 3.24 mean, 0.89 standard deviation and 0.06 standard error of mean (SEM). From the table, it can be discerned that the Equal variance assumed, Leven's Test for Equality of Variance (F) is 1.736, P value (Sig) of 0.224, t-ratio of 0.338, degree of freedom of 8 (df), p value of 0.744 (Sig for 2-tailed), Mean difference of 0.03200, Standard Error Difference of 0.09462, Lower and Upper Confidence Interval of 0.18618 and 0.25018 respectively at 95% certainty.

Based on this result, the p value (Sig) of 0.744 (approximately 0.74) for 2-tailed test is greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis of no significance difference in the mean scores of the responses of senior and junior civil servants on how governance and public sector reforms affect social justice in Uganda is accepted. This implies that the difference observed in the opinions of senior and junior civil servants on the subject matter is statistically not significant. In other words the mean of SCSR = 2.96; minus the mean of JCSR = 3.24; = -0.28. The value of -0.28 is statistically less than the chosen alpha of 0.05, even in absolute terms; hence the tenability of the acceptance of the null hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis Four H$_{04}$: There is no significant mean score difference in the perceptions of senior and junior civil servants on the ways governance and public sector reforms can lead to attainment of sustainable development in Uganda.

Table 4.6: Results of Independent Samples T-Test for Null Hypothesis Three

Independent Samples Test

Descriptive Statistics				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Senior Civil Staff Responses (SCSR) N = 32	Junior Civil Staff Responses (JCSR) N = 68											
Mean = 2.93	Mean = 3.07			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SD = 1.06	SD = 0.87	VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	026	.876	-1.019	8	.338	-.15800	.15513	-.51572	.19972
SEM = 0.11	SEM = 0.11		Equal variances not assumed			-1.019	7.977	.338	-.15800	.15513	-.51590	.19990

Chosen Alpha Level = 5% (0.05)
Source: SPSS Hypothesis Results Extract from Field Survey, 2024

The table 4.14 has shown that the senior staff responses of group (1) has five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 2.93 mean, 1.06 standard deviation (SD) and 0.11 standard error of mean (SEM). The junior civil servants' responses of group (2) have five subjects or research questionnaire items (N), 3.07 mean, 0.87 standard deviation and 0.11 standard error of mean (SEM). From the table, it can be discerned that the Equal variance assumed, Leven's Test for Equality of Variance (F) is 0.026, P value (Sig) of 0.876, t-ratio of 1.019, degree of freedom of 8 (df), p value of 0.338 (Sig for 2-tailed), Mean difference of 0.15800, Standard Error Difference of 0.15513, Lower and Upper Confidence Interval of 0.51572 and0.19972 respectively at 95% certainty.

Based on this result, the p value (Sig) of 0.338 (approximately 0.34) for 2-tailed test is greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis of no significance difference in the mean scores of the responses of senior and junior civil servants on the effect of the ways governance and public sector reforms can lead to attainment of sustainable development in Uganda, is accepted. This implies that the opinions helped by the senior and junior civil servants on the subject matter are statistically not significant. In other words the mean of SCSR = 2.93; minus the mean of JCSR = 3.07; = -0.14. The value of -0.14 is statistically less than the chosen alpha of 0.05; hence the tenability of the acceptance of the null hypothesis is confirmed.

Insights and Implications of the Result for Sustainable Development in Uganda
Governance and public sector reforms are critical drivers of economic growth, as they address inefficiencies, enhance institutional quality, and create an enabling environment for development. The result of the study as presented in table 4.1 and 4.4 suggest that the

responses of senior and junior civil servants on the subject matter have no significant difference. This points to the fact that reforms can enhance transparency and reduce corruption, fostering trust among businesses and citizens. This improves investment climates and attracts both domestic and foreign investment.

Moreso, streamlining bureaucracies reduces costs and delays, leading to better delivery of essential services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. It could be further inferred that public sector reforms signal stability and good governance attract foreign direct investment (FDI). For example, reducing regulatory burdens or improving legal frameworks creates confidence among investors. This is because simplified regulations and tax reforms reduce the cost of compliance, encouraging entrepreneurship and private sector growth, nurtures innovation through research funding, intellectual property protection, and incentivized private sector participation. A reform that improves budgetary practices, reduce wasteful spending and enhance resource allocation stabilizes the economy, agile and transparent governance helps economies better respond to shocks like financial crises or pandemics. Governance and public sector reforms, when well-designed and implemented, have transformative effects on economic growth by creating a robust institutional framework, enabling efficiency, and fostering sustainable development.

Insights from the results in table 4.2 and 4.5 suggests that governance and public sector reforms have profound implications for social justice, as they shape how resources, opportunities, and rights are distributed within a society. These reforms can either advance social equity or, if poorly designed, exacerbate inequalities, or soothe equality if well designed. The opinions of the civil servants further suggests that targeted reforms can address inequality by ensuring equitable access to services, improving human capital development and long-term productivity. It could be instructive to put forward that reforms aimed at decentralizing governance or targeting marginalized groups can improve access to essential services like healthcare, education, and housing, reducing systemic disparities.

Public sector reforms that ensure localized governance structures can afford communities the opportunity to have a greater say in policies affecting their lives, improving responsiveness to their needs. Governance reforms that promote equal treatment in public institutions help dismantle systemic biases based on gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Governance and public sector reforms, when rooted in principles of equity, transparency, and inclusivity, have the potential to create a fairer society. They align public institutions with the goals of social justice, ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to lead a dignified and fulfilling life. However, achieving these outcomes requires political commitment, adequate resources, and active civic engagement

Reported results in tables 4.3 and 4.6 buttress the fact that governance and public sector reforms play a critical role in achieving sustainable development by aligning institutional practices and public policies with the goals of economic, social, and environmental sustainability, known as integrated balance. They can create an enabling environment for sustainable growth, equitable development, and environmental stewardship. Improved governance fosters a culture of planning for future generations, avoiding short-termism in policy decisions; facilitate a shift from dependency on finite resources to sustainable industries like renewable energy, circular economies, and green technologies.

Reforms enhance participation of underrepresented populations in decision-making, ensuring their needs are met. Reforms fostering open governance allow citizens to monitor

and influence sustainability efforts, enhancing public trust and compliance and governance reforms enable countries to align with international frameworks like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facilitating access to global funding and technical support. Governance and public sector reforms contribute to the attainment of sustainable development by fostering resilient institutions, equitable societies, and a balanced approach to environmental management. They ensure that policies are people-centered, resource-conscious, and future-oriented, creating a foundation for prosperity that benefits both current and future generations.

Concluding Remarks
Uganda's public sector reforms represent an ongoing effort to build a responsive, accountable, and efficient government. While progress has been made in decentralization, financial management, and service delivery, addressing persistent challenges such as corruption and capacity gaps is critical for sustained success. It is on this note that this study sought to examine the effect of governance and public sector reforms on sustainable development in Uganda. The analysis revealed that governance and public sector reforms are crucial enablers of sustainable development. By improving governance, equity, efficiency, and accountability, they align government actions with sustainability goals, fostering resilience and prosperity for future generations.

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that governance and public sector reforms have somewhat effect on sustainable development in Uganda. The study therefore recommends the Ugandan government should strengthen anti-corruption measures and public financial management systems to ensure effective utilization of resources, empower local governments to manage resources and implement development projects tailored to community needs and reduce dependence on agriculture by promoting industries such as tourism, technology, and renewable energy. This will enable the achievement of sustainable development in Uganda through a comprehensive strategy that integrates economic and social priorities.

References
Abhijit, F. A. (2020). Governance as an interplay between corruption and polity: Conceptualizing from a national perspective. *International Journal of Economies, 11, (3), 65 – 79.*

Bardhan, G. K., Pranab, P. G., Dilip, H. K. & Mookherjee, W. F. (2022). *Rediscovering institutions: the organizational basis of politics.* New York: Free Press/Macmillan. .

Biryomumeisho, W. U. (2024). Strategic change leadership. *International Journal of Management Decision 38(8), 550–62.*

Bolivia, A. P., Faguet, V. T. & Jean-Paul, S. O. (2024). The diffusion of the civil service reform Act of 1978 in OECD Countries: A Tale of Two Paths to Reform. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 28(6), 282–99*

Eyamu, P. H. (2021). Improving sub-saharan African access to climate change finance: An alternative view. JSTOR. 10p, Available

online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28355 (accessed on 22 December 2023). Grindle, A. L. & Merilee, P. D. (2021). Descriptive and prescriptive analyses of aid allocation: Approaches, issues, and consequences. *International Review of Economics & Finance, 13(9), 275–92.*

Gumisiriza, H. Q. & Mukasa, D. K. (2022). Performance, pay and productivity. *American Economic Review, 9(12), 1346–61.*

Hood, Q. K. & Christopher, E. L. (2019). Managing change and innovation in public service organizations (London: Routledge, 2005).

Karjeija, G. K. (2012). Public sector reforms in Africa: What lessons have we learnt? Forum for Development Studies 39(1):105-124. DOI:10.1080/08039410.2011.635378

Heeks, D. P. & Richard, H. P. (2022). The middle aging of new public management: into the age of paradox? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 14(3), 268-79.*

Heeks, D. P., Richard, A. K. (2022). Who gives foreign aid to whom and why? *Journal of Economic Growth, 5(7), 33–63.*

Kaufmann, Q. E. Kraay, G. H. & Mastruzzi, S. A. (2020). Corrupt governments do not receive more state-to-state aid: Governance and the delivery of foreign aid through non-state actors. *Journal of Development Economics, 114(5), 20–33.*

Kennett, P. (2019). Global perspectives on governance. Imprint Routledge, Pages 17 eBook ISBN9780203861684

Mauro, W. H. & Paolo, D. P. (2019). A vertical case study of global policy-making: early grade Literacy in Zambia. *Published by Wiley Blackwell: MA.*

Megginson, Q. H. William, K. S. & Jeffreyr, P. D. (2021). Performance-related pay, empirical research, and the perils of persistence. *Public Administration Review, 69(8), 39–51.*

Olken, E. H. & Benjamin, F. S. (2017). Agile bodies: a new imperative in neo-liberal governance. *Journal of Education Policy 26 (2): 207–223. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2010.508177.*

Olken, E. H., Benjamin, B. X. & Pande, P. D. (2022). Business strategy for climate change: An asean perspective. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management Review, 23(4), 213–27.*

Ostrom, K. S. (2005). On the estimation and inference of a cointegrated regression in panel data. In Nonstationary Panels, Panel Cointegration, and Dynamic Panels. *Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 179–222.*

Ostrom, K. S. & Elinor, D. K. (2020). The nexus between renewable energy, environmental pollution, and economic growth across BRICS and OECD countries: A comparative empirical study. Energy Reports 10, (6): 3800–13.

Peters, Y. I. (2011). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review 50(8), 367–73.*

Pollitt, H. J., Christopher, M. O. & Geert, E. K. (2021). The causal texture of organizational environments. *International Journal of Human Relations, 18(2), 21–32.*

Shirley, F. H. Mary, Q. E. & Patrick, D. H. (2020). Financial engineering of green finance as an element of environmental innovation management. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Education, 12(8), 232–46.*

Thomas, S. & Karl, H. B. (2017). Trust and verification: balancing agency and stewardship theory in the governance of agencies. *International Journal of Management Science, 650 - 676. https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2018.1553807.*