

The Value of Research Methods and Approaches in Modern Public Administration Research

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Submitted: 07 November 2025

Revised: 10 February 2026

Published: 09 March 2026

Abstract:

The 21st century has immensely shaped the face and art of governance with the rise of globalisation, technological innovations, and rising public expectations. Research methods, designs, and approaches have emerged as foundational pillars for advancing modern public Administration for practice and scientific research. Modern Public Administration faces countless challenges and problems, ranging from policy misalignments and service delivery failures to the lack of citizen participation and engagement, and many others that require systematic and analytical approaches. Thus, these research methods, designs, and approaches serve as a backbone for understanding and resolving societal problems, enabling public administrators to make evidence-based decisions. This employed a qualitative approach relying on secondary data and thematic content analysis of relevant scholarly literature and documents. This analysis revealed that well-applied research methods and designs enable public administrators to trace and resolve public policy and other public administration problems. The study found that research methods extend beyond academic research and that these methods are practical solutions for the existing governance challenges. The study concluded that Afrocentric approaches and methods are central to resolving African governance problems and Public Administration shortfalls.

Keywords: Accountability; Citizen Engagement; Governance; Mixed-Methods; Public Administration

INTRODUCTION

Public Administration has undergone significant transformation in the 21st century due to globalization, the emergence of digital technologies, and ever-changing public expectations, which have changed the face of government and public affairs. In modern society, government officials and public administrators operate in a complex world of challenges such as policy misalignments, fiscal constraints, inequality, urbanization, climate change, and poor planning mechanisms (Eakin et al, 2022; Kapucu et al, 2024; Mamokhere, 2022). These dynamics have changed the scope of the demands placed on the field of Public Administration, which demonstrates that foundational and traditional administration methods as prescribed by Scholars such as Woodrow Wilson, Henri Fayol, and Luther Gullick are no longer sufficient on their own (Selepe, 2022; Sebola, 2022).

In South Africa, Public Administration has been shaped and guided by historical inequalities and imbalances (Klaaren et al, 2022; Mamokhere et al., 2022; Shava and Mazenda, 2021). At the moment, South Africa faces several challenges, which include poverty, unemployment, corruption, poor institutional capacity, policy misalignment, tokenistic citizen engagement, political interference, and cadre deployment (Heintz and Naidoo, 2021; Nkgapele and Mofokeng, 2024; Shava and Chamisa, 2018; Swanepoel, 2022). This highlights the inadequacy and gap in existing foundational public

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administration approaches. This further shows the importance of applying new approaches and rigorous research methods, which are context-based and tailored to the needs of different communities in South Africa and around the world.

Previous studies by Eichmann et al. (2019), Reed et al (2021), and Reed and Rudman (2023) have demonstrated that research is at the centre and core of meaningful planning and problem solving in different studies, fields, and contexts. Within the context and field of Public Administration, research serves as a critical foundation for problem tracing, solving, and other critical functions such as public policy and finance (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2019; Vyas-Doorgapersad and Shava, 2021). The conducting of this research depends on selection, application of relevant research methods and approaches ranging from qualitative to quantitative approaches, and the increasingly emerging mixed-methods approach, which integrates qualitative and quantitative (Barrett et al. 2025; Tenny et al. 2022; Barroga et al, 2023; Taherdoost, 2022). The circumstances or challenge under investigation shape the choice of method. The quality, credibility, relevance, and actionability of findings also depend on these methods' selection and rigorous application (Lim, 2025; Peterson, 2019).

Furthermore, previous studies such as Van Thiel (2014), Rassel et al. (2020), McNabb (2017), and Luton (2015) have focused on advancing the differences and application of research methods within the context of Public Administration. For example, Van Thiel (2024) emphasized the significance and need for using comprehensive research methods in Public Administration and Management within a European setting. On the other hand, Luton (2015) advocates for using qualitative research methods as a convenient method for research. This highlights the need for studies that focus on contextualisation research methods from a post-apartheid South African perspective. Secondly, there is a lack of studies that focus on the nexus and intersection of qualitative and quantitative approaches from a governance, power, and inclusion perspective.

This study makes three key contributions to the existing body of knowledge on Public Administration research methods. First, it synthesises qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches to demonstrate their practical value beyond academic inquiry, positioning research methods as operational tools for addressing real-world governance and service-delivery challenges. Secondly, the study contextualises these research approaches within South African and broader African administrative realities to respond to calls for methodological frameworks that are sensitive to historical inequalities, power relations, and governance constraints in developing and transitional systems.

Thirdly, the study foregrounds Afrocentric and context-specific approaches, including indigenous knowledge systems and participatory mechanisms, and advances a decolonial methodological perspective that remains underexplored in mainstream Public Administration research. In doing so, the paper bridges theoretical debates and applied governance practice, contributing to both methodological scholarship and public sector problem-solving. From an objective perspective, the study aims to:

1. Critically examine the value and application of diverse research methods in Modern Public Administration.
2. Bridge the gap by contextualising research methods and approaches for South African realities.

Evolution of Public Administration Research

Public Administration as a field of study has experienced significant evolution and transformation, which has been shaped by global changes, societal conditions, academic debates, and grassroots struggles that defined governance in South Africa and around the world (Klaaren et al, 2022; Shophola et al., 2024; Koliba et al., 2017). The field of public Administration emerged as a result of Woodrow Wilson's 1887 essay, which prayed for the separation of Administration and politics (Wilson, 1887). Scholars such as Henri Fayol and Luther Gullick emphasized rationality, efficiency, and effectiveness through the introduction of models such as bureaucracy, classical management, and Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, Budgeting (POSDCORB) (Nhema, 2015). These scholars argue that public Administration is independent from politics and political science to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. These early arguments were normative and

lacked empirical evidence and grounding. In the late 1960s, Public Administration was further transformed through the emergence of the New Public Administration, which was focused on the inclusion of citizens, social equity, and responsiveness as a way of responding to political economies, civil rights movements, and administrative inefficiencies (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2019).

Moreover, the late 20th century saw another historical shift with the emergence of the New Public Management (NPM), which was focused on performance management, markets, and efficiency (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). Moreover, during this era Roberts conducted a bibliometric study of Public Administration to review the gradual thematic and paradigm shifts within the field of Public Administration which discovered a sharp move from hierarchical control towards pluralism, governance and policy implementation studies in a period which saw the reintegration of public Administration into social sciences intertwined with sociology, political sciences, economics and organizational studies (Roberts, 2024).

In the context of South Africa, Scholars such as Cloete, Cameron, McLaverty, Chipkin, and Meny-Gibert have contributed towards shaping and directing the trajectory of Public Administration within a South African context, with studies on the impact of an apartheid state, the reforms across various government entities and departments (Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, 2012). Chipkin and Meny-Gibert (2012) argued that for South African Public Administration to be effective, research is needed to investigate the historical lens of governance and the impact of race, power, and inequalities. Further Studies, such as Mofokeng and Nkgapele (2025), argued that there is a need for transformation in Public Administration, which is researched and taught in institutions of higher learning, to redirect it to serve the needs of communities. Altogether, these studies evaluate the evolution of public Administration, highlighting that Public Administration has shifted from a prescriptive, efficiency-driven approach to a more participatory and context-sensitive paradigms, which need to be guided by research and constant adaptation.

Table 1. Major Authors and Contributions in Public Administration Research

Author(s)	Contribution	Context/Focus
Woodrow Wilson	Politics-administration dichotomy, scientific management	Foundational, classical bureaucracy
Henri Fayol, Luther Gulick & Urwick	Administrative principles, POSDCORB	Classical management theory
Meier	Historical analyses of discipline evolution	Foundations and evolution
Dunleavy and Hood	New Public Management	Focused on improving efficiency through performance management
Guy & Rubin	Emergence of emergency management research	Crisis governance focus
Comfort	Data-driven governance, network analysis	Modern governance complexity
Chipkin & Meny-Gibert	Historical inequalities and transformation in South Africa	South African Public Administration
Cameron & McLaverty	State of the academic field and research in South Africa	Localization and resource challenges

Author(s)	Contribution	Context/Focus
Ndaguba & Ijeoma	Socio-political governance issues in South Africa	Applied, context-sensitive research

Source: Authors Compilation

Table 1 analytically illustrates the historical and conceptual evolution of Public Administration research, demonstrating a clear shift from classical, efficiency-driven administrative principles toward more pluralistic, governance-oriented, and context-sensitive approaches. The progression from foundational scholars such as Wilson, Fayol, and Gulick to contemporary scholars shows how research in Public Administration has increasingly incorporated empirical inquiry, methodological diversity, and contextual awareness. This evolution reinforces the paper's core argument that modern governance challenges cannot be adequately addressed by singular or traditional approaches alone but require the deliberate application of diverse and adaptable research methods.

The Role of Research in Public Administration

Research plays a central and transformative role in ensuring that public Administration is effective (Akopian et al. 2024; McDonald et al. 2022; Ospina et al. 2018). Research as a process enables public institutions and departments to understand the concerns and challenges faced by citizens, and promotes evidence-based decision-making, which enhances accountability and transparency (Sari, 2023; Ospina et al, 2018). Previous studies have shown that effective research, with credible and well-applied methodological approaches, enables government officials to identify and resolve community challenges (Akopian et al., 2024; McDonald et al., 2022). A study by Russell et al. (2020) argues that well-conducted data collection and analysis can improve the relevance and implementation of policies. This is because, with appropriate data collection tools in relevant contexts, researchers can obtain the most meaningful outcomes and feedback, which has the potential to address the challenges faced by modern public Administration.

In addition, Sari (2023) argues that transparent and accessible research results build trust between researchers (government) and participants (citizens), fostering citizen engagement whilst ensuring continued trust and understanding of challenges, which enables governments to develop solutions and interventions for current and future challenges. These studies show that research plays a significant role in legitimizing a government through its participatory nature. Furthermore, these studies demonstrate that applying a rigorous research process enables public administrators to anticipate and understand societal challenges in advance.

Conceptualising Research methods, designs, and Paradigms

Aspects such as research methods, designs, approaches, and paradigms are central to the credibility, applicability, and relevance of any research. Firstly, research methods refer to the systematic processes and techniques used to collect, analyse, and interpret data to answer research questions and achieve an objective (Tenny et al. 2022). Scholars such as Peterson (2019) view research methods as the backbone of a study or investigation, encompassing a range of tools, techniques, and processes that enable researchers to gather information in a replicable, structured manner. Research methods are not chosen out of choice or preference. This sentiment is further echoed by Lim (2025), who argues that research methods should align with the nature of the challenge under investigation, the study's context, and the objectives.

This demonstrates that research methods are context-sensitive tools and techniques used to address a challenge using an inquiry or research. In the context and scope of Public Administration Research, many relevant research methods are used in research processes such as data collection and analysis (Cameron, 2008). This is supported by the findings of Wessels and Thani (2021), who further argue that research methods and approaches are defined and differentiated by their application, purpose, and characteristics. This aligns with the perceptions of Wessels (2023) and Van Thiel (2014), who coined the term "research methods as individual techniques used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This is reinforced by Bryman (2016), who indicates that research methods are centred

on how data is collected and analysed, which is entirely different from research approaches, which include the how and why, with philosophical and practical weight behind them.

Previous studies have always viewed these approaches as the broader research strategy or plan that guides how the research is conducted. These sentiments are also echoed by Gaus (2017), Panke (2018), and Opie (2019), who group research approaches into the two main approaches: qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research focuses on getting an in-depth understanding, explanation, meaning, and context of a phenomenon under study (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Literature by scholars such as Luton (2015), Van Thiel (2014), and Tenny et al. (2022) further laments that qualitative research focuses on obtaining meanings, feelings, and experiences through data collection mechanisms and tools such as observations, secondary data, interviews, and focus groups. This approach allows researchers to be subjective in their social studies and explore phenomena more deeply (Lim, 2025).

On the other hand, quantitative data focuses on quantification, statistical analysis to test hypotheses, and understanding relationships between variables and sets of data. Quantitative research is important when conducting research on large populations, as it employs data collection methods such as surveys, questionnaires, experiments, and statistical modelling (Akopian et al., 2024). Studies view quantitative research as a time-consuming and resource-constraining approach. This approach is also referred to as a model that ensures objectivity, rigor, and the generalizability and replicability of results (Barroga et al., 2024; McNabb, 2017; Opie, 2019).

Moreover, these research methods are carried out in line with research designs, which are characterised as the blueprint and glue of the research process. Studies such as Asenahabi (2019), Sileyew (2019), and Dannels (2018) define a research design as a strategic framework that outlines the broader plan for conducting research, from formulating research questions to selecting appropriate research tools. This research design serves as a systematic guide that helps ensure the research problems, questions, objectives, methods, and techniques are coherent and relevant (Sileyew, 2019). This part of the study also enhances its reliability and validity. In Public Administration research, the most dominant research designs are case studies, descriptive, exploratory, experimental, and action research (Van Thiel, 2014). These designs are essential tools for bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Furthermore, within the same scope, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), Davies and Fisher (2018), and Tubey et al (2015) introduce and define research paradigms as philosophical frameworks and guidelines that shape how researchers view reality (Ontology), understand knowledge (epistemology), and select the relevant methodologies for research. These scholars view research paradigms as foundational belief systems that guide every research step. Within the context of Public Administration research paradigms, such as positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and pragmatism, are important for ensuring objectivity, understanding the meaning and context of phenomena, understanding the balance between power and inequity, practical problem solving, and methodological flexibility, respectively (Luton, 2015; Van Thiel, 2014; Lim, 2025).

Table 2. Key Research Paradigms in Public Administration

Paradigm	Ontology (Nature of Reality)	Epistemology (Nature of Knowledge)	Methodology
Positivism	Objective and singular reality	Objective observation and measurement	Quantitative methods
Interpretivism	Subjective and multiple realities	Understanding subjective meanings	Qualitative methods
Constructivism	Socially constructed realities	Knowledge is constructed through interactions	Qualitative methods

Paradigm	Ontology (Nature of Reality)	Epistemology (Nature of Knowledge)	Methodology
Critical Theory	Reality shaped by power structures	Knowledge as emancipatory and transformative	Participatory, critical methods
Pragmatism	Reality is practical and situational	Knowledge based on what works best	Mixed methods

Source: Authors Compilation

Table 2 provides an analytical framework for understanding how research paradigms shape methodological choices in Public Administration research. By contrasting paradigms such as positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and pragmatism, the table demonstrates that methodological decisions are not neutral but are rooted in ontological and epistemological assumptions. This reinforces the paper’s argument that addressing complex governance and service delivery challenges, particularly in developing and transitional administrative contexts, requires methodological pluralism and flexibility, as exemplified by pragmatic and mixed methods approaches.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the value and significance of research methods, approaches, and designs in Public Administration research. The study relied on secondary data from scholarly books and peer-reviewed research papers sourced from credible and relevant academic databases, including JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, Wiley, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and various institutional repositories and academic libraries. To ensure methodological rigor and relevance, the selection of sources followed explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sources were included if they: (i) focused on Public Administration, governance, or public sector research; (ii) engaged directly with qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, or context-specific research approaches; (iii) contributed to debates on research design, paradigms, or methodological application; and (iv) were published in peer-reviewed journals, academic books, or reputable institutional publications.

Priority was given to recent and widely cited studies, while seminal classical works were retained for theoretical grounding. Sources were excluded if they: (i) lacked direct relevance to Public Administration or research methodology; (ii) focused exclusively on unrelated disciplines without methodological transferability; (iii) consisted of non-academic opinion pieces or non-scholarly sources; (iv) were published in languages inaccessible to the researcher; or (v) did not contribute to methodological advancement in modern governance contexts. The selected data were thematically analysed, coded, and interpreted to identify recurrent patterns and themes, enabling the synthesis of diverse academic perspectives into coherent analytical findings relevant to contemporary Public Administration research and practice.

RESULTS

The Value and Application of Research Methods in Public Administration

In the context of Public Administration, results from various studies have shown that applying research methods demystifies many contradictions. Studies by Rassel et al. (2020), Van Thiel (2014), and Akopian et al. (2024) illustrate that the use of research methods enables public administrators to unpack complexities and anticipate future challenges within the field of Public Administration and governance. Furthermore, a series of studies conducted as early as 1990 demonstrate that applying research methods, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, brings clarity to terrain rife with contradictions (Roberts, 1994; Cameron and McLaverty, 2008). Other studies further allude that the application and rigorous use of methodological tools and techniques equip the field of Public Administration with tested and relevant knowledge, which enables government officials and key

decision makers to make evidence-based decisions (Meier, 2015; McNabb, 2017; Van Thiel, 2014); Reed and Rudman, 2023. In South Africa, this is exemplified by SAPS quarterly bulletins in some provinces and regions. These quarterly bulletins are compiled using systematic approaches and tools, such as surveys, reports, and analytical techniques, which allow leadership within SAPS to monitor crime trends in their areas and design interventions to curb them (Perkins, 2022). These demonstrate that, within the field of Public Administration, research methods and approaches are more academic exercises than tools for developing modern Public Administration.

In addition, other studies have shown that research methods play a critical role in enhancing accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement (Reed et al., 2020; Sari, 2023; Wessels and Thani, 2021). The use of transparent methods enables citizens to hold public institutions accountable, thereby improving public trust in government and public institutions whilst also fostering greater citizen engagement, which leads to sustainability and ownership through citizen participation (Akopian et al., 2025; Wessels, 2023; McDonald et al., 2022). This link between accountability and research methods is evidenced by the use of suggestion boxes in many government offices, which are intended to solicit citizen opinions on the quality of service received, in line with the Batho Pele principles (Naidoo and Ramphal, 2019). Moreover, using research methods within the academic and practical context of Public Administration is advantageous in policy processes, as it enables informed participation through qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews, which support steps such as policy design and evaluation. These findings show that research methods are important beyond inquiry and knowledge generation as enablers for bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Mixed-Methods and the Nexus of Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Mixed methods have emerged as a solution at the intersection of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Studies revealed that mixed-methods research bridges the longstanding gap between quantitative and qualitative approaches. A study conducted by Panke (2018) argues that, through the deployment of mixed-methods research, studies can capture deeper meaning and understanding as fundamental benefits of qualitative research, while concurrently achieving systematic rigor, objectivity, and generalizability as core pillars of quantitative research. Along the same lines, Barroga et al. (2023) noted that mixed-methods research is grounded in the recognition that qualitative and quantitative research offer unique strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to compensate for each other's shortcomings. For example, qualitative studies offer contextual richness and unpack hidden meanings, whereas quantitative studies are advantageous for providing generalizable results and testing hypotheses.

Further studies showed that within the scope of Public administration, the complementary nature of these studies can be advantageous and assistive to both academic and practice (Wessels, 2023; McNabb, 2017; Van Thiel, 2014; Cameron and McLaverty, 2008). Quantitative studies can map broad trends, and qualitative studies can deeply explore why and how. The combination of these approaches shapes the overall research outlook of the study, including aspects of research (McNabb, 2017; Van Thiel, 2014). Barroga et al (2023) and Wessels (2023) argue that this integration enables triangulation and enriches the research process. For instance, in the City of Johannesburg, the municipality relies on quantitative surveys to measure citizens' satisfaction with community safety. It uses qualitative focus groups and staff interviews to understand why targeted interventions fail. This combination enables the municipality as a researcher to understand statistical and social phenomena more deeply through the convergent use of different methods that complement each other (Barolsky et al. 2013). This demonstrates that mixed methods from a Public Administration perspective enhance the scope, depth, and impact of research.

The Rise of Afrocentric and Context-Specific Approaches

The rise of Afrocentric and context-based research approaches across various fields in South Africa and across the African continent reflects the urgent need for good governance, development, and research focused on African case studies. From an African context, several scholars and theorists have argued for Africanised approaches to problem-solving and life, as opposed to universal approaches that ignore crucial historical inequalities, challenges, thoughts, and aspirations (Chaka et al., 2022;

Mutongoza et al., 2018). For instance, African approaches and methodologies prioritize indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), languages, and cultural systems as subjects of inquiry (Blaser-Mapitsa, 2022). This is backed by Makalela (2016), who theorizes ubuntu translanguaging and contends that this phenomenon, from a linguistic point of view, is a resource and a philosophical frameworks that allow researchers, scholars, and general people to engage in culturally relevant contexts that are authentic and contextually grounded in Ubuntu as an African practice. This underscores the importance of designing systems and approaches that address the needs and lived experiences of African people from their comfort zones, using IKS.

In addition, the development of Afrocentric approaches to research within the context of Public Administration would be a ground-breaking solution for longstanding practical and academic challenges, such as community participation. The development of Afrocentric approaches would recognize research methods such as those used by Imbizo. This would extend beyond data collection to facilitate community participation in culturally relevant, inclusive, and resonant ways (Belone et al. 2016). Altogether, this demonstrates that Afrocentric approaches to research within Public Administration are more than mere practical necessities; they are enablers of inclusivity and decolonial research assets.

Linking Research Methods to Governance and Service Delivery Outcomes

The integration of research methods and approaches is central to translating research findings into actionable policies to improve the quality of governance and service delivery. Findings revealed that the combination of research methods in the field of Public Administration stands to significantly improve service delivery (Belardinelli and Mele, 2020; Sari, 2023; Van Thiel, 2014). Firstly, Belardinelli and Mele (2020) indicate that the use of integrated approaches or mixed methods allows the government or Public Administrators to make targeted interventions based on findings consolidated from a multidimensional approach rather than relying on quantitative approaches, which solely focus on what might have happened, ignoring the why and how elements, which are introduced by qualitative approaches. The use of mixed methods combines these advantages to deeply diagnose challenges of governance and service delivery (Comfort et al. 2012; Guy and Rubin, 2015; Luton, 2015). For instance, in a municipality such as the City of Johannesburg, where the customer satisfaction survey and qualitative methods are blended, it was able to get the gist of what is wrong and the underlying issues around this problem.

In addition, from a service delivery and governance perspective, the use of research methods such as mixed methods introduces an element of continuous improvement through periodic surveys, suggestion boxes, questionnaires, and digital service delivery exit slips, which assist Public Administration in theory and practice. (Belardinelli and Mele. 2020; Vyas-Doorgapersad and Shava, 2021). The implementation of these mechanisms solves immediate service delivery challenges and promotes improvement, as well as needs-based, targeted interventions. Altogether, this demonstrates that research methods and approaches, whether combined or single-handedly, promote continuous improvements in governance, service delivery, and policy alignment.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings reaffirmed the critical role of research methods, approaches, and designs in shaping theory and practice in modern Public Administration. Firstly, the study's findings revealed that research methods are not merely instruments for academic research but also fundamental tools for real-world applications. This is exemplified by SAPS's systematic data collection and analysis approach to monitor and track crime in South Africa. This reflects the perceptions of various scholars who contend that research methods and approaches extend beyond university and academic settings. Secondly, the findings suggest that mixed-method research is a significant bridge that enhances the validity and reliability of findings through triangulation. The findings further lament that the use of mixed-method research improves overall understanding and reasoning in research, as demonstrated by the City of Johannesburg, where methods such as surveys and interviews are used simultaneously to understand challenges.

Thirdly, the study's findings highlighted the need for Afrocentric research approaches, citing the urgent need for those centred on IKS and African contexts. The findings also mention Ubuntu translanguaging as a linguistic and philosophical approach that fosters community-centred research and knowledge generation, rooted in linguistic and cultural freedom and expression. The study's findings further reiterate the importance of developing and recognising African approaches and methods, such as imbizos, as platforms for data collection beyond community engagement. In addition, these findings offer a new lens, viewing research methods as tools for continuous improvement in governance and service delivery within the public sector. These findings show that research methods have significant value in Public Administration, both theoretically and practically. Moreover, these findings suggest that mixed-method research is fundamental in resolving the administrative and policy challenges within Public Administration. Lastly, the findings demonstrated the need for the integration and development of Afrocentric approaches to governance, conceptualising Imbizo as a research method capable of changing the data-collection process in African contexts. In conclusion, these findings show that qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches are central to the development and advancement of Public Administration, both practically and theoretically..

CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the critical role and value of research methods in shaping the practice and theory of Modern Public Administration. The literature argued that research methods are fundamental, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods, in shaping governance and service delivery. The study relied on qualitative methods, including secondary data and thematic analysis. The limitation of the study is that the researcher relied solely on secondary data; therefore, future research should focus on empirical studies and primary data. The study found that research methods extend beyond academic research and are practical solutions to existing governance challenges. The study concluded that Afrocentric approaches and methods are central to resolving African governance problems and Public Administration shortfalls.

Therefore, the study's proposed recommendations are directly informed by the findings, particularly the demonstrated value of mixed-methods research, Afrocentric approaches, and methodological capacity-building in improving governance, accountability, and service delivery outcomes:

Recommendation	Finding	Practical Implications for Public Administrators
Integrate Afrocentric research approaches into Public Administration research and practice	Context-specific/IKS approaches enhance citizen participation and policy relevance	Incorporate culturally grounded mechanisms, such as imbizos, into policy design, implementation, and evaluation
Improve methodological literacy and training among public administrators	Effective decision-making depends on the application of empirical evidence application	Capacitate officials in basic qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods tools (surveys, interviews, data analysis) for routine governance
Revitalise research units within public institutions	Systematic data collection supports evidence-based governance/accountability	Strengthen institutional capacity for real-time data to inform policy, service monitoring, and performance management
Encourage consistent use of mixed methods	Methodological triangulation improves diagnostic accuracy	Combine quantitative indicators with qualitative citizen feedback

Recommendation	Finding	Practical Implications for Public Administrators
and participatory research approaches	and public trust	for targeted, responsive interventions

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This study received no external funding

How to cite:

Mofokeng, S. (2026). The value of research methods and approaches in modern public administration research. *International Journal of Law, Social Science, and Humanities (IJLSH)*, 3(1). 392-405. <https://doi.org/10.70193/ijlsh.v3i1.276>.

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