

Institutional Coordination and Service Delivery Outcomes in Urban Public Transport Systems: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The rapid urbanisation in rapid growing cities has increased the strain on public transport systems, revealing structural vulnerabilities in governance, institutional coordination, and service delivery outcomes. Whereas infrastructural shortages and operational inefficiencies are often studied, the impact of institutional coordination, as a systems factor in service delivery, is scattered across previous empirical studies. The current systematic review fills this gap by analysing the roles of horizontal and vertical institutional coordination in service reliability, operational efficiency, accessibility, and user satisfaction in fast-developing urban transport systems. The review relied on the Dimensions database during the initial review phase. The Dimensions database was searched to conduct the review in accordance with PRISMA 2020 requirements. Three thousand five hundred eighty-two records have been identified and filtered using pre-set inclusion and exclusion criteria, including research area, publication type, language, topicality, open access and availability. The eligibility criteria were 30 peer-reviewed articles, which were synthesised using qualitative thematic analysis. The review addresses the absence of a synthesis linking horizontal and vertical institutional coordination mechanisms to measurable service-delivery outcomes in rapidly urbanising cities. Results indicate that disjointed governance, overlapping mandates, poor regulatory fit, and less inter-agency cooperation all play a major role in deteriorating service provision performance. On the other hand, the enhanced reliability, operational efficiency, and passenger satisfaction are related to the possibility of integrated planning authorities, unified regulatory frameworks, coordinated multimodal systems, and shared information platforms. The review also establishes institutional alignment as a mediating factor between infrastructure investment and service outcomes. This review further advances the literature by developing a governance-based conceptual framework that explains the relationship between institutional coordination and the delivery of urban transport services. It provides policy-specific suggestions to enhance inter-agency collaboration and governance harmonisation, with a focus on sustainable urban mobility in fast-growing cities.

Keywords: institutional coordination; city public transport; governance, inter-agency collaboration; urban mobility systems; service delivery outcomes

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1. Introduction

The transport system in urban areas has been a major concern for enhancing economic productivity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability in big cities worldwide. With the increasing rate of urbanisation, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Public transportation is under pressure to provide efficient, reliable, accessible, and responsive services to a diverse range of users with diverse needs. Nonetheless, these

objectives are achieved not only through investment in infrastructure and technology but also through the efficiency of the governance systems underpinning transportation systems and the extent of institutional coordination among the stakeholders of the public sector (Rhodes, 1996; Osborne, 2010).

Urban public transport governance worldwide is typified by the presence of many organisations at different administrative levels and functional scopes, such as central government authorities, local government authorities, regulatory authorities, public-private partnerships, and service providers. Such institutional complexity requires successful horizontal coordination among government agencies and vertical coordination among the national, regional, and local levels (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). According to empirical studies in industrialised nations, strong institutional coordination facilitates policy coherence, reduces role redundancy, and improves service delivery, especially when transport systems are integrated (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Christensen & Laegreid, 2020). Despite this acknowledgement, institutional coordination remains a persistent issue. Decision-making and accountability processes are often hindered by fragmented mandates, overlapping authorities, and conflicting organisational interests, leading to inefficiencies and service-quality gaps (Rhodes, 2017; Bovens, 2007). As urban transportation systems increasingly adopt network-based and collaborative governance models that require ongoing interagency cooperation, these problems have become more urgent in recent years (Osborne, 2010; Ansell et al., 2021).

The situation is particularly acute in developing and fast-urbanising countries, where institutional capacity is insufficient, decentralisation reforms are underway, and political-administrative confrontations occur, making governance systems more complex. The institutional contexts of urban transportation systems are fragmented, with a lack of intergovernmental alignment, managerial incompetence, and policy inconsistency in most cities across Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Smoke, 2015; Awortwi, 2016). Despite the fact that the aim of decentralisation reforms was to make the process of service delivery more efficient by moving the decisions closer to citizens, the empirical studies demonstrate that the lack of responsibility allocation and the lack of coordinating mechanisms tend to have the reverse effect and promote uneven performance and disjointed service delivery (Dickovick, 2011).

Moreover, ineffective institutional coordination directly affects service delivery in developing countries. Weak alignment among planning, regulation, and operations tends to result in unreliable services, limited access for low-income populations, poor use of resources, and reduced user satisfaction (Beerli et al., 2019; Chan et al., 2016). Among the broader international policy commitments threatened by these challenges is the Sustainable Development Goals, which highlight the need for inclusive, secure, and sustainable urban transportation systems (United Nations, 2015).

Despite the growing literature on issues in urban transportation governance, the literature remains scattered across subject areas and contextual settings, and there is no synthesis of how institutional coordination processes are systematically applied to service-delivery outcomes. Specifically, the development-country setting lacks integrated information that links horizontal and vertical coordination to real performance indicators, such as efficiency, reliability, accessibility, or user satisfaction. To bridge this gap, the present systematic review gathers the available empirical evidence in the area of institutional coordination and service delivery outcomes in urban Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) systems, particularly, the areas of managerial, policy, and governance that contribute to or impede effective coordination in fast urbanising cities like Dar es Salaam, Cairo, Nairobi, and Johannesburg, to name a few.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Design

This study was a systematic review design to synthesise empirical data on institutional coordination and service delivery outcomes of urban public transportation systems. The review process was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020, which provided assurance of transparency, accountability, reproducibility, and

methodological rigour (Page et al., 2021). The information used in this paper is a systematic review of scholarly articles related to the subject of interest.

2.2. Data Source and Search Strategy

This paper conducted a systematic review of academic articles on the topic. An extensive and intensive literature search was conducted in the Dimensions database, which was chosen for its detailed coverage of peer-reviewed materials in public administration, management, and governance. The search was limited to studies on institutional coordination, governance, and service delivery of the rapidly expanding urban public transportation systems, published between 2015 and 2025.

Search terms were developed to align with the study's concepts and aims. The keywords used in combination were institutional coordination, urban public transportation, service delivery outcomes, governance, inter-agency collaboration, and urban mobility. The search and retrieval precision were enhanced using the Boolean operators (AND/OR). Dimension was selected for its comprehensive, multidisciplinary indexing and citation linking, which aligns with the interdisciplinary nature of public administration research.

2.3. Eligibility Criteria

The studies included in the review met the following inclusion criteria: they were published as peer-reviewed journal articles, indexed in recognised databases, classified under Field of Research 3507 (Strategy, Management, and Organisational Behaviour), published in English, and available as open-access publications.

The analytical relationship between institutional coordination and service delivery results of the urban public transportation system was studied. The exclusion criteria comprised published articles, conference proceedings, books, seminar papers, editorials, policy briefs, and dissertations publications. Studies published in languages other than English were excluded. Additionally, studies published outside the defined time frame were omitted. Articles whose thematic focus did not address institutional coordination or service-delivery outcomes in urban public transportation systems were excluded. Studies that focused solely on rural transport systems or on unrelated sectors were also removed during the screening process.

2.4. Study Selection Process

A multi-stage screening strategy was used to select the research, following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Initially, 3,582 entries were found in the Dimensions database. No redundant records were detected, as there were no multiple databases. The first screening of entries was based on the field of research, and 273 entries were generated in the category of Strategy, Management and Organisational Behaviour (3507). The search by publication type yielded 64 journal articles, but the number of studies decreased to 40 when the open-access condition was applied. The sample was narrowed down to 35 English-language articles through language screening. One last relevance screening on thematics filtered out 5 articles, and 30 articles that fit all inclusion criteria were included in the qualitative synthesis. The screening and selection outcomes are summarised in Table 1 and illustrated using a PRISMA 2020 flow diagram Figure 1.

Table 1. PRISMA summary.

Screening Stage	Records Screened	Records Excluded	Records Remaining
Dimensions database Identification	3,582	–	3,582
Field of Research	3,582	3,309	273
Publication Type (Articles only)	273	209	64
Open Access	64	24	40
Publication Year (2014–2025)	40	0	40
Language (English)	40	5	35
Thematic Relevance (Full-text eligibility)	35	5	30
Studies included in the qualitative synthesis	30	–	30

2.5. Data Extraction

Data extraction was conducted systematically to ensure consistency, transparency, and analytical alignment with the objectives of the review. Following the final eligibility screening under the PRISMA 2020 procedure, all 30 peer-reviewed articles included in the qualitative synthesis were retrieved in full and carefully examined. A structured data extraction matrix was developed in spreadsheet format to organise and standardise the collection of relevant information across studies. The use of a matrix enhanced comparability and ensured that extracted data directly addressed the analytical focus of the review, namely, the relationship between institutional coordination mechanisms and service delivery outcomes in rapidly growing urban public transportation systems.

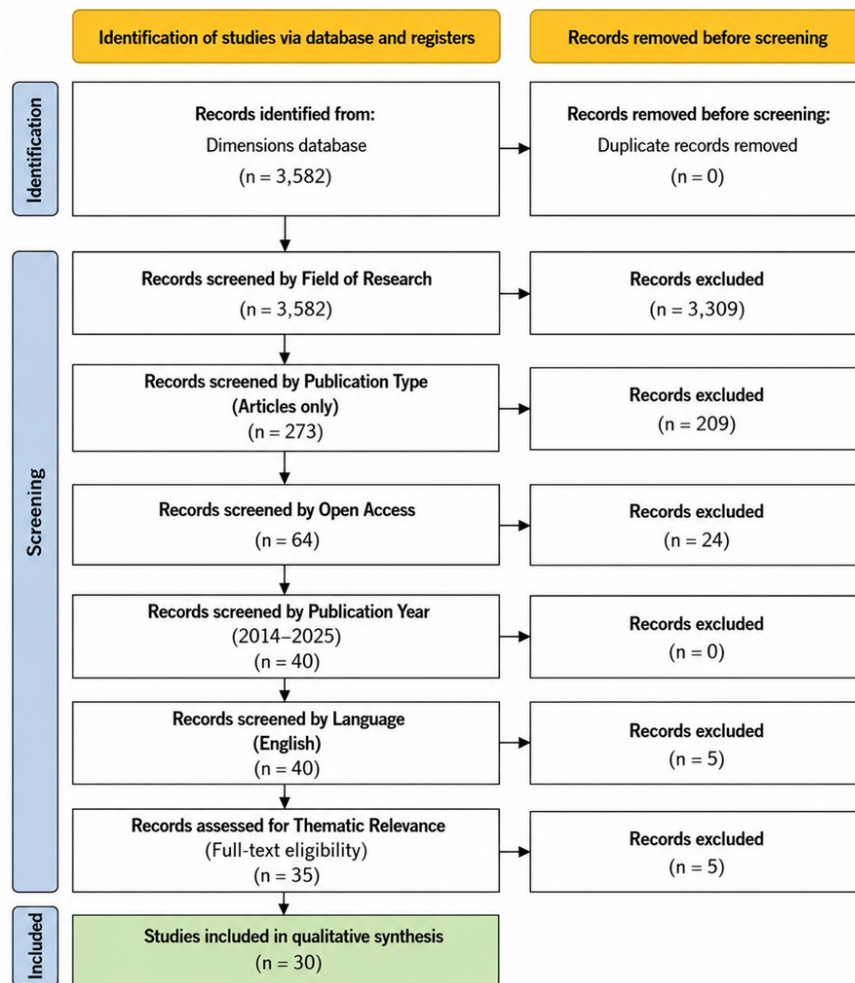


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart.

The extraction process captured several categories of variables. First, bibliographic details were recorded, including authors' names, year of publication, article title, and journal source. Second, contextual information was extracted, particularly the country and city of study, as well as the type of urban transport system examined (e.g., Bus Rapid Transit systems, multimodal transport networks, or integrated urban mobility systems). This enabled geographical and contextual mapping of empirical evidence across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Third, methodological characteristics were documented for each study. These included research design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), data collection techniques (such as interviews, surveys, document review, case studies, or secondary data analysis), and analytical approaches (e.g., thematic analysis, regression analysis, governance assessment, or institutional analysis). This enabled assessment of the methodological diversity and robustness of the included studies.

Fourth, governance and institutional variables were systematically extracted. Particular attention was given to the type of institutional coordination examined (horizontal coordination among agencies at the same

administrative level, vertical coordination across national and local levels, or both). The governance models underpinning the studies, such as network governance, multi-level governance, decentralised systems, or integrated transport authorities, were also recorded. In addition, specific coordination mechanisms were identified, including mandate clarity, regulatory alignment, operational integration, and information synchronisation. Reported coordination challenges, including fragmented mandates, overlapping authorities, weak regulatory enforcement, and political interference, were also noted.

Finally, service delivery outcomes were extracted as key dependent variables. These included indicators such as service reliability, operational efficiency, accessibility, affordability, user satisfaction, and overall resource utilisation. The main empirical findings of each study were summarised, with particular emphasis on evidence demonstrating linkages between institutional coordination and measurable service outcomes. Where applicable, mediating or moderating factors, such as policy coherence, organisational capacity, and political support, were also recorded.

The completed data extraction matrix served as the primary analytical tool for cross-study comparison and thematic synthesis. By organising studies according to coordination type, governance structure, and reported performance outcomes, the matrix facilitated the identification of recurring patterns, convergences, and contextual variations. This systematic extraction and organisation of data provided the empirical foundation for the qualitative thematic analysis and supported the development of the governance-based conceptual framework advanced in this review.

2.6. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The paper draws on Institutional Theory, Network Governance Theory, and Multi-Level Governance Theory to examine how institutional coordination affects BRT System service delivery outcomes in rapidly growing urban-based public transportation systems. The framework is presented as an adaptation and synthesis of existing governance theories and evidence from reviewed studies. The use of the institutional Theory provides a platform for interpreting how formal rules, regulatory frameworks, organisational mandates, and administrative norms influence behaviour in public systems. Within the framework of urban transport governance, institutional misalignment results from fragmented mandates, institutional overlaps, regulatory arbitrariness, and poor enforcement structures, which impede service reliability, operational efficiency, and overall performance. Consequently, institutional weaknesses do not only represent a lack of administration but a constrained structure that influences service delivery.

Network Governance Theory adds to this analytical approach by considering urban public transport systems as a network of governance rather than an independent administrative unit. Such systems are usually characterised by a number of interested parties such as local governments, regulatory agencies, operators, planners, and technology suppliers. The quality of services, in turn, depends not only on infrastructure investment but also on the quality of inter-organisational coordination, the development of trust, the exchange of information, and the making of decisions together. Inadequate horizontal coordination among these actors is a common cause of disjointed planning, role duplication, and inconsistencies in service standards.

Moreover, Multi-Level Governance Theory also explains the vertical complexity of transport systems in fast-growing cities, where national ministries, municipal authorities, regional control bodies, and local operators can communicate across different levels of administration. The lack of compatibility between national transport policies and local implementation mechanisms often leads to inefficiencies, delays, and accountability gaps. Hence, vertical coordination is essential to preserve policy coherence, maintain regulatory consistency, and enhance implementation.

Based on these theoretical premises, the study formulates a conceptualisation of institutional coordination as a capability of governance rather than just an administrative arrangement. There are four coordinating mechanisms intertwined in institutional coordination: mandate clarity, regulatory alignment, operational integration, and information synchronisation. Mandate clarity is about specifying the roles and responsibilities of transport institutions to avoid duplication and conflicts. Regulatory alignment refers to the integration of

law and policy regimes across agencies to achieve consistency in decision-making. The focus of operational integration is coordinated planning and alignment of multimodal systems, particularly in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and integrated urban mobility systems. Information synchronisation refers to the creation of common data platforms and communication networks to support timely, evidence-based decision-making.

This research hypothesises that these coordination mechanisms have a direct impact on core service provision outcomes such as service reliability, operational efficiency, accessibility, and user satisfaction. Moreover, institutional coordination is theorised as an intermediary between the infrastructure investment and performance results. This point of view can help explain why even substantial investments in infrastructure do not necessarily lead to better service delivery in most rapidly developing cities. The problem is that, in the absence of governance alignment and institutional coherence, the infrastructure expansion might not result in the desired service enhancements.

Although infrastructure, policy framework and financial resources are key structural inputs, their effectiveness will be determined by the quality of coordination among the institutional actors. When mandates overlap, and communication between agencies is poor, service reliability and efficiency suffer, even with heavy investment. On the other hand, with stronger governance alignment, driven by a clearer mandate, regulatory harmonisation, operational integration, and harmonised information systems, urban transport systems will be more reliable, more accessible, and more satisfying to users. It is thus a conceptualisation of institutional coordination as a dynamic governance capacity that circumscribes the effectiveness of urban mobility reforms.

2.7. Conceptual Framework to Guide the Review

The conceptual framework, used to conduct the systematic review, is presented in Figure 1 and was formulated on the basis that institutional coordination mechanisms (both horizontal and vertical) are associated with service delivery outcomes in urban public transportation systems. The framework is presented as an adaptation and synthesis of existing governance theories and evidence from reviewed studies. The concept of institutional coordination was characterised as horizontal cooperation between the public and vertical cooperation across governance levels. All these coordination mechanisms influence managers' responsibilities, including joint planning, information exchange, coherence in decision-making, and resource mobilisation. Service delivery results were measured in terms of operational efficiency, service reliability, service accessibility, service affordability, and user satisfaction. The moderators of the relationship between coordination and performance were contextual factors, including policy coherence, regulatory clarity, political support, and organisational capacity.

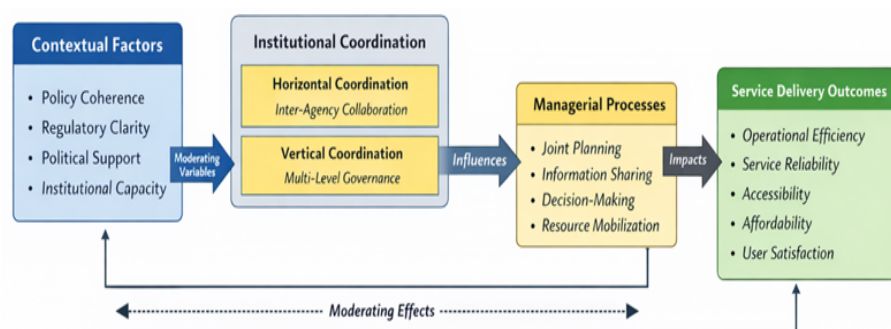


Figure 2. Conceptual framework for institutional coordination and service delivery outcomes.

Source: Author's synthesis based on PRISMA 2020 systematic review approach.

The conceptual framework (Figure 2) guided both the organisation and interpretation of the review findings. The framework identifies stakeholder engagement as the central mechanism through which institutional arrangements influence climate action outcomes. Consequently, the thematic analysis of the selected studies was structured around the principal components of the framework, including institutional governance, stakeholder participation mechanisms, collaboration processes, policy implementation, capacity development, and climate action outcomes. This alignment ensured that the synthesis remained theoretically

grounded while enabling systematic comparison across the reviewed literature. The framework is theoretically informed and empirically synthesised from reviewed literature, not independently invented. The compound coordination problems in the rapidly growing cities of developing countries stem from institutional fragmentation, a lack of administrative capacity, political interference, and shifting mobility demands. Formal regulatory institutions in most African cities are complex, with informal or semi-formal transport operators, thereby creating hybrid forms of transport governance that hinder effective coordination. The infrastructure development programmes, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) programmes, are often characterized by implementation delays and performance variability that can be attributed not only to resource constraints but also to institutional incompatibility and a lack of vertical integration between national ministries and local municipalities. In this regard, institutional coordination is identified as a key governance competence needed to align strategic transport planning with operational realities and user expectations.

2.7. Reporting Standards

The systematic review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 reporting guideline, as outlined by Page et al. (2021). The PRISMA flow diagram was used to support the search, screening of records, and inclusion and reporting of studies.

3. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis was organised according to the components of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2. Each theme represents a key institutional dimension influencing stakeholder engagement in climate action. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that effective governance depends on the interaction among institutional structures, Institutional Coordination and Service Delivery Outcomes in Urban Public Transport Systems in Rapidly Growing Cities. The following sections discuss each theme in detail. A systematic search was conducted, and the inclusion criteria were applied using PRISMA 2020, resulting in the identification of 30 articles that met the eligibility criteria. These articles are empirical data on institutional fit and its implications on service-delivery performance in urban transit systems. The next section presents the results of the thematic synthesis, which illuminate the trends in horizontal and vertical coordination processes, managerial processes, and contextual factors, as well as their policy and practical implications.

3.1. Characteristics of included Studies

3.1.1. Publication Trends

According to Figure 3, the number of publications related to institutional coordination and service delivery in urban public transportation was low in 2016 and 2017 ($n=1$; $n=0$, respectively) and in 2019 ($n=0$). There was a slight growth between 2020 and 2024 and a significant growth in 2025 ($n=30$). This tendency can be viewed as a late but accelerating intellectual response to the growing global and regional policy issues regarding the governance of urban mobility.

The early scarcity of publications, as defined in the Underlying Factors and Reasons of Growth, can be explained by the historical conceptualisation of urban transportation as a technical or engineering issue, with little attention to institutionalised coordination and governance (Hull, 2010). The consistent growth since 2020 has been driven by several overlapping factors. To begin with, international policy frameworks, especially SDG 11 on sustainable cities, explicitly state that sustainable cities should have integrated, participatory, and institutionally coordinated urban transportation systems, thereby prompting research that takes a governance-oriented approach (United Nations, 2015).

Second, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted institutional fragmentation in the global public transportation system, prompting a systematic evaluation of coordination, resilience, and inter-agency governance (Ansell et al., 2021). The sharp increase in 2025 is symptomatic of the growing body of empirical data on large-scale metropolitan transportation improvement initiatives in lower-income economies, particularly in Africa. The Dar Es Salaam BRT, Lagos BRT, and Johannesburg Rea Vaya case studies have generated governance lessons

that can be analysed retrospectively at the institutional level when operational data are available (Gwilliam, 2013). The massive growth of empirical research over the past few years can be explained by the availability of open-access publishing and the necessity to fund research of policy interest.

The increasing trend in the number of publications indicates a paradigm shift in the research on urban transport towards infrastructure-based to governance-based research. In urban Africa, this pattern strengthens the knowledge base that needs to be reconfigured to restructure the fragmented institutional arrangements witnessed during the COVID-19 outbreak and to promote policy learning in fast urbanising settings. However, the fact that the studies are concentrated in the later period indicates that policy implementation is usually followed by a thorough analysis of governance, and thus, there is a need to integrate institutional coordination research into transportation planning earlier.

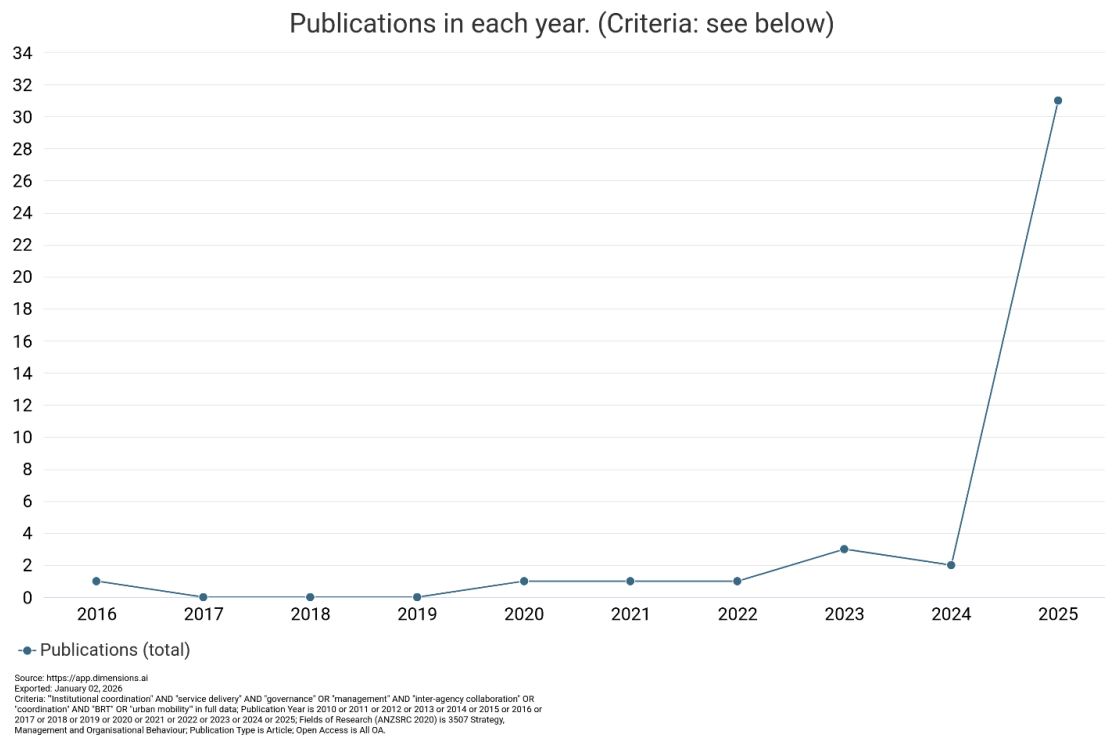


Figure 3. Indicates publication trend between 2015 to 2025.

Source: Author's conceptualisation based on PRISMA 2020 systematic review.

3.1.2. Area of Scope: Trends, underlying Factors and Implications

The PRISMA 2020 screening reveals that the body of literature on strategy, management, and organisational behaviour in relation to urban transport has been found to focus quite literally in recent years (Figure 4). The quality of scholarly production was relatively low in previous decades; nevertheless, the last few years have been characterised by rapid growth in the number of publications on governance and coordination. This tendency is tied to the increasing recognition that the set of challenges related to service delivery in urban public transport systems is more than a technical aspect, as it is also institutional, managerial, and governance-related.

The temporal variation and the themes of the studies can be attributed to several organised factors. To begin with, transportation in urban settings is now viewed as a governance issue requiring the integration of institutions, stakeholders, and responsibility in the context of global governance and development policy, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). In contrast to solitary sectoral interventions, SDG11 especially requires inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban mobility. Therefore, there is a greater need to study the coordination mechanisms between institutions and scholars.

Second, the advent of the New Public Management (NPM) approach, New Public Governance (NPG), and a philosophy of collaborative governance has led to a shift in research interest toward inter-organisational

coordination, networks, and cross-sector collaboration. These topics are naturally covered by the subjects of management and organisational studies, rather than the traditional engineering field of transport (Osborne, 2010; Ansell & Gash, 2008). This theory development explains the reason why current books are more often categorized under governance and management.

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed research forward into the areas of coordination, resilience, and crisis governance, whose implications are felt in the broken institutional forms of public transport systems (Ansell et al., 2021). The increase in publications at the beginning of the 2020s is an indication of this phenomenon. In addition, the introduction of large-scale BRT in developing nations, especially in Africa, has generated empirical data through post-implementation research, thereby providing a specialized body of academic literature that debates the achievements and failures of coordination (Gwilliam, 2013).

Moreover, the preponderance of management and governance research is an indicator of a paradigm shift from infrastructure-based to institution-based inquiry in urban transport. This trend has taught policymakers and development practitioners in developing countries the need to improve institutional coordination and physical investment. Academically, there is a call to be more multidisciplinary in transport governance, in collaboration with the public administration, to produce policy-relevant knowledge that may enhance service-delivery outcomes.

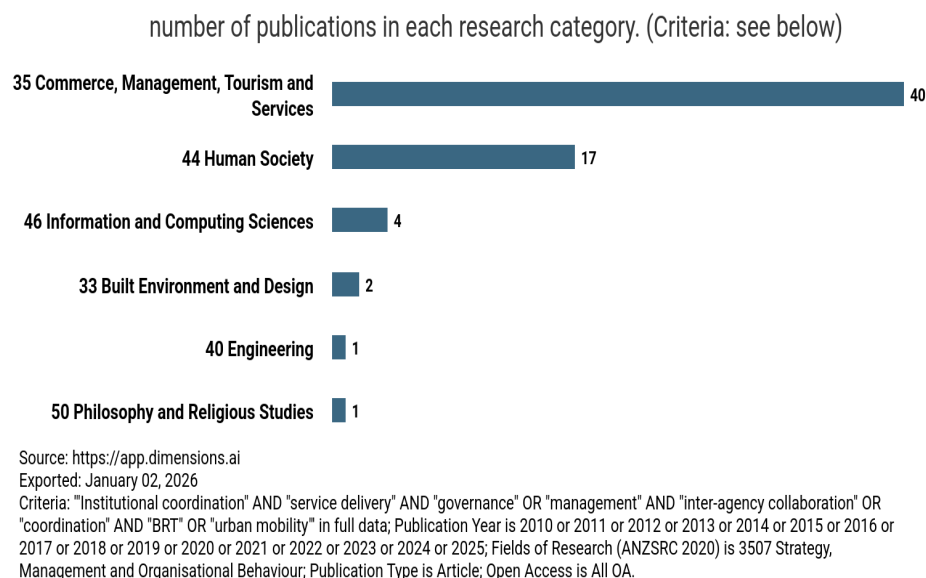


Figure 4. Publication field of research: trends, underlying factors, and implications.

Source: Author's synthesis based on PRISMA 2020 systematic review.

3.2. Urban Public Transport Governance and Mechanism of Institutional Co-ordination

The synthesis of the 30 articles introduced in this systematic review demonstrates that urban public transport institutional coordination and governance are primarily achieved through horizontal and vertical mechanisms, sometimes concurrently. Horizontal cooperation mostly involves transport authorities, metropolitan councils, road agencies, traffic police, regulators, and public-private partnerships. Inter-agency committees, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), joint planning unit and integrated transport authorities are always cited as the main coordination instruments that help harmonise mandates and operational functions (Marsden & May, 2006; Hull, 2010).

Vertical coordination involves integrating government ministries, municipal and local governments, and regulatory institutions in line with policies coordinated through a shared financial framework and assigning implementation roles to others. These frameworks are supported by the national policy direction, with decentralised local or urban operational authority (Gwilliam, 2013). The formal vertical coordination is usually incorporated into legislation and regulations governing transport and performance contracts between levels of government.

Examples include African urban transport systems, particularly Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The BRT governance framework of cities like Dar es Salaam, Lagos, Johannesburg, and Accra is typified by the existence of a central coordinating organisation that regulates and plans. The planning, traffic control, fare regulation, and infrastructure administrators should be coordinated, as activities are assigned to private or semi-public agencies (Salon & Gulyani, 2010). However, other literature points to fragmentation, which leads to role duplication and delays in implementation when coordination channels are poor or informal.

Both mechanisms and structures are needed to work effectively in terms of institutional coordination, as the data show. Horizontal coordination would promote service integration when facilitated by data-sharing technologies, regular decision-making platforms, and clearly defined interagency roles. Studies have shown that without these procedural supports, this results in inefficiencies and redundant responsibilities in areas of operation, especially in fare collection, route control, and enforcement (Hull, 2010).

Vertical coordination will be critical to aligning a country's urban transport policies with local implementation capabilities. The role of domestic coercion is very important (Acharya, 2016). City leadership through high vertical coordination, as found in African BRTs, allows the city to access national funding and achieve policy legitimacy. On the other hand, poor vertical coordination limits municipalities' autonomy and the implementation of projects (Gwilliam, 2013). Dar es Salaam BRT enjoyed strong political backing at the national level, and as a result, it was able to invest heavily. Nevertheless, the connection between the central ministries and the local authorities initially presented some operational problems.

The review suggests that the best models are hybrid coordination systems that integrate formal organisational structures with continual inter-agency interaction. The mechanisms of horizontal and vertical coordination should be enhanced to prevent governance fragmentation and improve service delivery in the fast-urbanising cities of Africa.

The organisational plan for the review is directly linked to the coordination mechanisms provided in Table 2. Horizontal and vertical institutional coordination are independent governance variables applied to managerial procedures through cooperative planning, information sharing, and coherent decision-making. These processes, in their turn, define the results of service delivery with regard to operational efficiency, objectivity, reliability, availability, and user satisfaction. The hybrid forms of coordination, i.e., both formal institutional arrangements and ongoing inter-agency cooperation, yield the greatest returns in terms of institutionalising service delivery, as observed in African BRT systems in rapidly growing cities. In contrast, the lack of coordination negatively affects results, exacerbates fragmentation, and slows the delivery of services and administration.

Table 2. Institutional coordination mechanisms in urban public transport governance.

Coordination Type	Core Mechanisms	Governance Effect	African BRT Evidence
Horizontal	Inter-agency committees; MoUs; joint planning units; shared data platforms	Improves service integration and operational efficiency; weak mechanisms cause duplication	Dar es Salaam, Lagos, Johannesburg
Vertical	Policy harmonisation; shared funding; delegated mandates; performance contracts	Enhances policy coherence and access to funding; weak alignment delays implementation.	Dar es Salaam, Accra
Hybrid	Formal legal frameworks + continuous inter-organisational interaction	Most effective in reducing fragmentation and improving outcomes	Johannesburg Rea Vaya; Lagos BRT

Source: Author's conceptualisation based on PRISMA 2020 systematic review (n = 30).

Figure 5 shows a theoretical framework of how the institutional coordination mechanisms relate to service delivery in urban transit systems in rapidly growing cities. Horizontal and vertical coordination affects managerial and governance processes, which in turn affect operational efficiency, reliability, accessibility, affordability, and customer satisfaction.

3.3. The effect of institutional Co-ordinated outcomes of service delivery outcome

The next section presents the results and discussion pertaining to the second objective: the synthesis of results from 30 empirical studies identified through the PRISMA 2020 screening method. The results are presented in thematic groups based on the service-delivery outcomes that were identified in the study objective: operational efficiency, service reliability, accessibility, and service quality. In the reviewed studies, horizontal and vertical institutional coordination were identified as key determinants of performance in urban public transport systems.

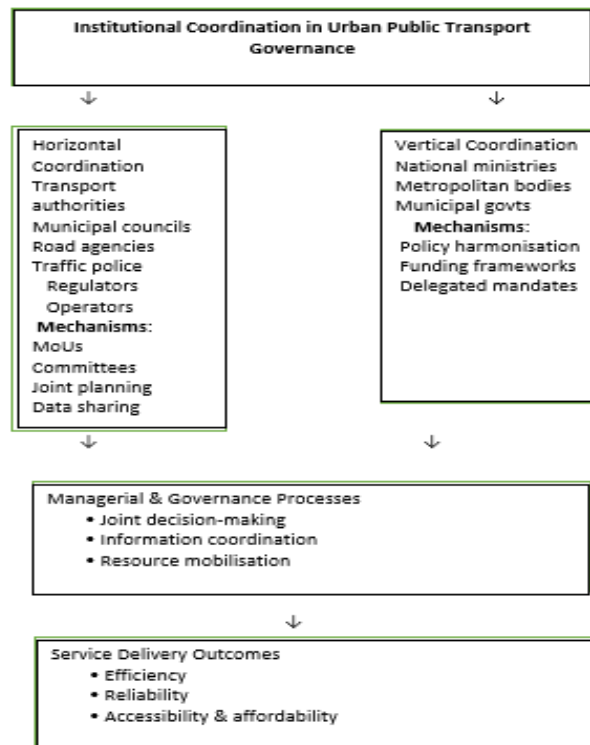


Figure 5. Conceptual framework linking institutional coordination mechanisms to service delivery outcomes in urban public transport systems.

Source: Author's conceptualisation based on systematic review findings.

3.3.1. Institutional Co-ordination and Work Efficiency

The most remarkable finding of the literature reviewed is that the efficiency of urban systems in public transport operations is significantly enhanced by strong institutional coordination. The introduction of joint planning committees, joint funding systems, integrated ticketing schemes, and coordinated governance structures was always associated with a reduction in role redundancy and interference, more effective utilization of resources, and improved cost control (Marsden & May, 2006; Mees, 2010). Empirical studies and investigations of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems show that the maximum efficiency benefits are achieved when there is a single coordinating agent or a well-established urban agency, as exemplified by the DART Agency in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which plans and coordinates activities. An analytical study of Curitiba and Bogotá reveals that this process of institutional integration among the planning authorities, operators, and regulators can improve route design, fleet management, and fare collection (Hidalgo & Gutierrez, 2013). Similar outcomes were found in the African setting, especially in the BRT (DART) system in Dar es Salaam. The creation of a special agency helped to regulate the operation of the previously disorganized minibs (DALA-dala) service more closely (Paget-Seukins & Tironi, 2016). Conversely, research on urban areas where horizontal coordination is limited, i.e., mandates overlap among municipal councils, road agencies, and traffic police, demonstrates widespread inefficiencies, such as service overlap, underutilisation of fleets, and rising operational costs (Pojani & Stead, 2015).

3.3.2. Service Reliability and Co-ordination in Institutions

The level of institutional coordination has a significant impact on service reliability, including schedule compliance, predictable travel times, and service continuity. Based on the evaluation, the national ministries, metropolitan authorities, and local governments should be vertically integrated to ensure consistency in policy execution and operational sustainability. Practice shows that the integration of policy, regulatory, and enforcement activities across various levels of government enhances operational interruption and schedule compliance in public-transport systems (Gwilliam, 2008). Transport authorities, as well as traffic police coordination, in African BRT systems played a decisive role in ensuring that exclusive bus lanes were maintained to reduce delays (Hensher & Golob, 2008). On the other hand, the online nature of fragmented governance structures, characterised by disjointed infrastructure, operations, and enforcement, leads to frequent service failures and unreliability. The same trend can be observed in a number of Sub-Saharan African cities, where national transport policies do not translate into operational practices of effective cities (Kumar & Barrett, 2008).

3.3.3. Coherence and Availability in an Institution

Institutional cooperation is closely associated with users' physical, geographic, and financial access to public transport services. Evaluation shows that cooperation among urban planning agencies, transportation agencies, and social-policy institutions increases network coverage and ensures equitable service delivery. Integrated land-use and transportation planning has been found to positively impact access for low-income and peripheral residents in Latin American and African studies (Suzuki, Cervero, and Iuchi, 2013). Dar es Salaam institutional programs created BRT lanes that served overcrowded areas, thus enhancing residents' access to jobs and social facilities (Mfinanga, 2019). However, due to a lack of coordination between transportation authorities and local governments, uneven service delivery is common, and peripheral settlements are often poorly served. Numerous reports support the view that spatial inequalities in the availability of urban transport are further exacerbated by unintegrated governance arrangements (Lucas, 2012).

3.3.4. Institute Co-ordination and Services Quality

Combined governance systems improve service quality, including safety, comfort, customer satisfaction, and information delivery. Monitoring and regulatory frameworks help implement standards that address the quality of services, the safety of vehicles, and customer service (van de Velde, 2014). The presence of well-structured institutional BRT systems facilitates the implementation of real-time passenger information systems, integrated fare media, and quality monitoring of services, thereby increasing user satisfaction (Hidalgo & Munoz, 2014). The case studies on Africa show that collaboration among regulatory bodies, operators, and municipalities improves safety and passenger experience (Salon & Gulyani, 2010). On the whole, the results have shown that institutional coordination is a decisive factor in service-delivery performance in metropolitan passenger-transportation systems. The research supports theoretical propositions in the field of public administration and governance by demonstrating that coherent systems contribute to overall performance, whereas incoherent institutional structures contribute to performance deficits, including reliability, accessibility, and service delivery.

3.4. Coordination: A Governance Mechanism of Improvement of Performance

The discussion supports the view that institutional coordination is an institutional mechanism of governance that balances actors, resources, and decision-making processes (Peters, 2015). Horizontal coordination encourages inter-agency coordination across similar government levels, whereas vertical coordination ensures policy uniformity at the national, metropolitan, and city levels. This type of cooperation helps lower transaction costs, address matters of accountability, and increase implementation capacity. The characteristics of institutional complexity and dependence on coordinated governance are evident in BRT systems, as highlighted in the literature through examples of BRTs. Successful BRT systems (e.g., Bogotá and Dar es

Salaam) are good examples of institutional coordination as a way of implementing governance changes to improve service delivery.

The evidence presented in Figure 6 of this systematic review presents everything related to thirty studies that were included in the study, summarising the effect of the institutional coordination mechanism on the outcome of service delivery in urban public transportation systems. The figure envisions two major coordination dimensions, horizontal between the sectoral and operational agencies on the one hand, and vertical between the national, the urban, and the municipal government on the other hand. Instances of such coordinating relationships are given as formal procedures including memoranda of understanding, joint committees, harmonisation of policies and funding mandate.

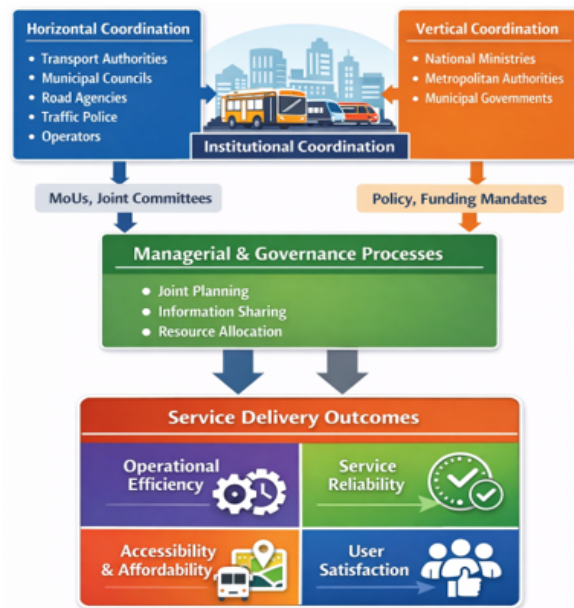


Figure 6. Influence of institutional coordination on service delivery outcomes in urban public transport systems.

Source: Authors' conceptualisation is based on a PRISMA 2020 systematic analysis of 30 peer-reviewed papers obtained from the Dimensions database (2015-2025).

The figure also indicates that institutional coordination improves managerial and governance processes especially joint planning, sharing of information and distributing resources in a consistent way. It is always found out in the research articles that the effect of coordination is mediated by these processes that impact on service delivery outcomes. Improved coordination has been linked with higher efficiency in operations, dependability of services, accessibility, low cost and satisfaction among the users in diverse urban environments, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the African cities.

On the other hand, poor coordination especially poor synchronisation of the horizontal and vertical processes was attributed to duplication of roles, regulatory conflict and inefficiencies in operations. This observation serves to support the main conclusion, that the workings of service delivery in urban public transport not only rely on the institutional structures but also on the ability to coordinate the mechanisms that would convert the structures of governance into the operational results.

4. Governance, Management and Policy Factors which determine Institutional Co-ordination

4.1. Facilitating Factors

Once the State courts and the State legislature make the corresponding ruling, one can state that the enactment of the new law by the State Assembly is going to take place within the forthcoming days. It is also clear that the new law is going to be passed by the State Assembly in the nearest future after the corresponding ruling is issued by the State legislature and the State courts.

Another goal is attained by the synthesis of the thirty papers used in this systematic review and it means that the combination of the governance arrangement, managerial capacities, and policy frameworks is what defines the coordination of the metropolitan public transportation systems in terms of the institutions. All these can be used as facilitators or constraints depending on the manner of its design, implementation, and integration with the situational environment.

4.2. Governance Factors

This theme corresponds to the Institutional Governance component of the conceptual framework (Figure 2), which emphasises the role of formal institutions, legislation, policies, and governance arrangements in shaping Institutional Coordination and Service Delivery Outcomes in Urban Public Transport Systems in Rapidly Growing Cities. Institutional mandates and a main body of coordination are the strongest identified governance facilitators in the literature. Studies have shown that the existence of explicit roles between transportation authorities, municipal authorities, regulators, and operators minimise the amount of inter-agency friction and enhances coordination (Marsden and May 2006; Peters 2015). The autonomy of metropolitan authorities that operate BRT systems in Bogotá, Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam (established through statute) has been found to improve coordination by centralizing the planning and regulation process (Hidalgo and Gutierrez 2013). On the contrary, ineffective governance arrangements whereby there is duplication of mandates, inconsistent laws and political interference are some of the prime sources of poor governance. A few case studies conducted in Africa show that poorly defined accountability relationships between the national ministries and the municipal governments hamper coordination, leading to project delays and unequal enforcement of transportation policies (Kumar & Barrett 2008; Salon & Gulyani 2019).

4.3. Managerial Factors

Consistent with the governance factors of Figure 2, the reviewed studies demonstrate that managerial enhances ownership, legitimacy, and implementation of Institutional Coordination and Service Delivery Outcomes in Urban Public Transport Systems in Rapidly Growing Cities. Managerial capability is one of the fundamental connections in the system of governance and coordination of results. The review demonstrates that systems of inter-organisational communication, technical skills, and leadership talent are all critical in the process of coordination. The effectiveness of coordinating decisions and operational coherence may be attained by using collaborative planning teams, common data centres, and regular inter-agency conferences. In fast urbanising cities, however, there are poor administrative institutions due to limited managerial capacity that hinder the process of coordination. A number of studies also show that poor training, excessive staff turnover and ad hoc practices of coordination are doing away with institutional learning and continuity (Pojani & Stead 2015). The issues with managerial shortcomings are associated with contract management, fare integration, and service monitoring despite the African BRT systems that have a well-developed coordination framework (Paget-Seekins and Tironi 2016).

4.4. Policy Factors

Institutional cooperation is usually generated by the regulatory stability and consistency of policies. The review notes that vertical coordination with respect to governance levels can be enhanced in cases in which urban transport policies are incorporated alongside land-use plans as well as plans of national development (Suzuki, Cervero, and Iuchi 2013). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is another international policy framework that enhances sustainable mobility and inclusive city development, which further fosters coordination (United Nations, 2015). There are unpredictability and frequent revisions of policies and, most importantly, lack of effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure coordination. As many studies have found, successful policy changes after political change disrupt coordination networks and undermine institutional trust, particularly in developing environments where profits in transportation are politicized (Gwilliam 2008). The outcomes reveal that the governance quality, managerial competence and consistency of policy are entrenched in the institutional alignment of public transport systems in urban settings. Based on the theories of public administration and governance, the review indicates that the products of the coordination process are the results of interactions, learning, and adaption to the complex urban systems (Rhodes 1996; Peters 2015).

The lack of cohesion between authorities and intrusive politics are the main characteristics of governance deficit, which generates serious coordination complications in developing countries and those experiencing the rapid urbanisation. In places where there are formal coordination mechanisms, the lack of managerial talent and consistent policies have a crippling effect on the formal coordination mechanisms. This is the reason why the African BRT systems have high planning coordination but are faced with operational issues when put in operation.

The other important aspect which is stated in the review is the importance of the hybrid coordinating models which are characterised by the flexible policy organisation, ongoing managerial participation and institutionalised systemic arrangements. These policies seem especially suitable in the environment of resources limitation where the issue of urban transportation governance may need to be solved.

4.5. Implication on the Governance of Urban Public Transport

The implications on the findings made to both practitioners and policymakers are significant. In order to improve institutional coordination, one needs to:

- i. Create clean standards of law accountability and procedures;
- ii. Keep investing in inter-agency communication systems and administrative capabilities; and
- iii. Encourage harmonious, long-term, policy frameworks that cut across every tier of governance.

Better coordination should therefore be a driver to the better performance of transport and the overall purpose of sustainability and social inclusivity of the city in African cities and other urbanising setting.



Figure 7. Governance, managerial, and policy factors influencing institutional coordination in urban public transport systems.

Source: Authors' conceptualisation based on a PRISMA 2020 systematic review of urban public transport governance and institutional coordination literature (n = 30 studies).

In order to have a figure, which shows the interaction of the elements of governance, management and policy to determine the efficacy of institutional coordination in metropolitan public transport system, Figure 7 is a synthesis of data obtained out of a systematic review. The structural basis of coordination comes through governance aspects which include accountability systems, a lead coordinating body and clear institutional requirements. Managerial attributes such as technical expertise, competency in leadership and success in inter-agency communication are determinants of the operational performance of the coordination mechanisms. The policy considerations that influence coordination efforts (either positively or negatively) are integrated urban transport policies, stability in regulations, and the alignment of national and local policies vertically.

The diagram indicates that institutional coordination can be achieved successfully when the three elements support each other. On the other hand, shortcomings in one area, e.g., divided mandates, inadequate administrative capacity, or policy misalignment and inappropriate policies, are impediments to cooperation and have an impact on fragmented governance. With proper coordination as shown at the bottom of the figure, there is heightened integration of the services, higher transportation performance, fairer access to urban areas, and greater accountability, which are especially relevant in emerging and faster urbanising situations.

5. Limitations of the Study

Although this systematic review explains the significance of institutional coordination in the provision of urban public transportation services, there are a number of limitations that should be considered. Firstly, the review is restricted to the papers written in English, and thus significant research in other languages might have been omitted. Second, the research relies largely on peer-reviewed articles in Dimensions database; therefore, grey literature and non-indexed research that might bring a lot of contextual information might have been missed. Third, the majority of the included studies consider bus-based systems in the framework of large, growing metropolitan settings, which may hamper the overall applicability of the results to small cities or other transportation modes. Lastly, the qualitative method of synthesis is useful in the uncovering of themes and patterns, only that it is not quantitative in terms of measuring an effect, so it does not provide the ability to make specific, evidence-based forecasts.

6. Future Research Guidelines

The next studies need to examine institutional coordination in the urban transportation systems in a variety of geographic and socioeconomic settings, such as small and medium-sized cities, as well as low-income metropolitan regions. A more in-depth insight into the coordination mechanisms could be reached by comparing different modes of transportation, i.e. buses, trains, and paratransit. Further, the mixed-method studies based on the combination of qualitative information with quantitative indicators of performance might shed some light on the cause-effect links between institutional structure and service delivery outcomes. Another interesting line of research is the use of emerging technologies, including Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), to improve coordination between agencies and their operational efficiency.

7. Policy Implications

The results highlight the issue of central importance of institutional coordination in the provision of effective urban transportation services. It is imperative that policymakers should be aware that fragmented governance systems, as well as weak inter-agency coordination, significantly erode reliability of the services, operational effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. Having a stronger horizontal and vertical coordination between transportation authorities, regulatory agencies, and local agencies can help to promote more informed decisions, minimize service disruption, and improve responsibility. The information provided herein shows that governance reforms that seek to enhance the performance within institutions are not just the administrative activities, but are the necessary catalysts of urban mobility.

8. Policy Recommendations

Based on the review results, the following recommendations can be offered in the area of the urban transport governance:

- Improve inter-agency coordination through implementing formal systems including joint planning committees and inter-agency task forces that will result in collaboration between transport operators and municipalities on one side and between regulatory agencies on the other.
- Co-ordinate policies and regulations so that there is a uniformity in jurisdictions so that conflicts are minimized and consistency in service standards is enhanced.
- Develop capacity through enhancing the technical and managerial capacity of the transport institutions to enable them to coordinate planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

- Embrace technology through advancing the adoption of data-driven management instruments and Intelligent Transport Systems to assist in real-time coordination and performance monitoring.
- Involve the people so that their feedback in decision making processes is considered in such a way that the coordination around institutions brings about improved user experiences.

9. Conclusion

This systematic review has indicated that institutional coordination is a critical aspect in influencing service delivery outcomes of the metropolitan public transport systems. Ineffective coordination cultivates discontinuous decision-making and underperformance, but strong coordination (both horizontal between the agencies and vertical between the governance levels) promotes reliability, efficiency of operations, and consumer satisfaction. The encouragement of sustainable urban mobility requires institutional fragmentation by enhancing cooperation, alignment of policy, and capacity building. In order to achieve better and fairer urban transportation services, policymakers, transportation authorities, and stakeholders should focus on governance reform that will encourage inter-agency cooperation.

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