



Ineffective Leadership and the Challenges of Bad Governance: A Case Study in the Puntland State of Somalia

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of ineffective leadership on governance in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in northeastern Somalia. Established in 1998, Puntland has grappled with challenges of political instability, corruption, weak institutions, and tribal tensions that impede effective governance. The study utilized a case study design, capturing responses from a demographically diverse sample of Puntland residents to assess leadership effectiveness, governance quality, and public sentiment regarding governance structures. Results reveal a predominant dissatisfaction with leadership, with 45.2% of respondents deeming the current leadership ineffective, largely due to corruption and lack of accountability. Governance issues manifest in limited public service access and human rights concerns, with 45.2% of respondents attributing the primary challenge to corruption. Despite some positive views on governance quality, nearly half of respondents feel excluded from meaningful participation in decision-making processes. The study highlights transparency and accountability as the most valued leadership qualities, with a preference for reforms that enhance public involvement and accountability measures. Respondents recommend strengthening accountability mechanisms (40.3%) and increasing citizen participation in governance (24.2%) to improve leadership effectiveness. Citizens emphasize the importance of electoral participation, advocacy for transparency, and public education to promote better governance. The findings suggest that addressing transparency deficits, promoting inclusive governance, and empowering citizens are essential to overcoming Puntland's governance challenges. Such reforms could facilitate a governance model that aligns with public expectations and enhances leadership effectiveness, thereby contributing to Puntland's development and stability.

Subject Areas

Governance and Leadership, Corruption and Accountability, Civic

Participation and Inclusivity

Keywords

Ineffective Leadership, Bad Governance, Puntland State of Somalia, University of Bosaso, Garowe (UOBG)

1. Introduction

Puntland State of Somalia is located at the tip of the Horn of Africa, in the northeastern corner of Somalia. It borders the Indian Ocean to the east and the Red Sea (Gulf of Aden) to the north. To the northwest, it borders Somaliland, and to the southeast, it borders Ethiopia's Somali Regional State (the Western Somali region, also known as the Ogaden region). To the south, it borders Galmudug State of Somalia.

Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in Somalia, was officially established on August 1, 1998, when the central government of Somalia collapsed in 1991 and the civil war began. The establishment of Puntland aimed to provide a degree of self-administration and stability, allowing the region to address its own political, economic, social and security challenges. On the other hand, Puntland has since played a role in the efforts to bring stability to Somalia, and its establishment reflects the complex dynamics of governance and state-building in the country.

Since its establishment, the Puntland State of Somalia has faced significant leadership and governance challenges, with ineffective leadership contributing to the prolonged of social, economic, security, and political challenges as the other part of the country and as any other underdeveloped state. Puntland faces corruption in the public sector, political instability, and weak institutions—weaknesses in law enforcement, the judiciary, and other key institutions—undermine governance and the rule of law. Tribal tensions among clans in this state, cultural-political interference have worsened leadership and governance.

As leaders are very hungry for power and focus their personal interests over state interests, infrastructure deficiencies, limited access to quality education and healthcare services, high rates of youth unemployment, poor utilization of natural resources, and mismanagement of other social concerns, including climate, environmental, and terrorism challenges in the region become observable across this state.

As Puntland faces all the highlighted challenges that are basically the result of ineffective leadership in the state, this case study will explore the consequences of such ineffective leadership on the governance, development, and stability of the region.

2. Literature Review

The World Bank reinvented the term governance in a World Bank Report of 1998 to signal a new approach to development that was based on the belief that

economic prosperity is not possible without a minimum level of rule of law and democracy. Since then, the concept of good governance has been applied to international organizations, national governments and even non-state actors as well.

But as there are many international institutions promoting governance the content of the concept largely depends on the aims for which it is used. Financial institutions tend to focus more on economic reforms, whereas for the more political organizations the content of the concept finds its angle in human rights law [1].

According to Obeng-Odoom [2] now a days governance has become a fashionable term, especially when “good” is used to qualify it. However, the concept has remained difficult to define, with attempts leading to as many definitions as there are many researchers.

Governance (noun) is the action or manner of governing a state or organisation. It is a term closely associated with the concepts of ruling and controlling. The verb is *govern*; to conduct the policy, actions, and affairs of (a state, organisation, or people) with authority, by using and regulating influence to direct and control the actions and affairs of others.

According to the World Bank “Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.”

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines governance as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels.

3. Unlikeness of Good and Bad Governance

Good governance covers a set of principles and practices aimed at ensuring the effective, transparent, accountable, and inclusive management of public affairs. At its core, good governance involves the transparent and equitable exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to meet the needs of all members of society.

It emphasizes the rule of law, meaning that laws are applied equally to all citizens and that governmental decisions are made based on legal frameworks rather than arbitrary authority [3].

Additionally, good governance promotes participation, encouraging active engagement from citizens and stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered and incorporated. In good governance accountability is a fundamental aspect, where public officials and institutions are held responsible for their actions and decisions, subject to investigation and oversight from both the public and appropriate authorities. Similarly, inclusiveness is vital in all activities, specifically ensuring that the voices of marginalized and vulnerable groups are heard and their needs addressed. Ultimately, good governance is essential for promoting stability, fostering development, and enhancing the well-being of societies.

According to Michael Johnston, Good governance is: “A competent management

of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs."

Bad governance refers to the ineffective, corrupt, or unjust manner in which a government or organization operates and makes decisions. Additionally, we may define bad governance as a situation where an organization or state fails to adhere to principles and practices that ensure accountability, transparency, fairness, and effective oversight of its operations [3]. When state leaders lack accountability from public institutions and citizens, transparency is weak, personal interest is more important than public interest, and leaders neglect the needs and voice of the citizens in such a manner, we call it bad governance [4].

Good governance and bad governance represent two contrasting approaches to the management of public affairs, with well-defined characteristics and outcomes. Similarities between good governance and bad governance lie in their fundamental impact on society and the functioning of governmental institutions. Both concepts involve the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority, influencing the quality of governance within a society. Moreover, both good and bad governance affect the rule of law within a society, shaping the legal and institutional frameworks that govern behavior and decision-making processes.

Additionally, both concepts have implications for citizen participation and engagement, influencing the extent to which individuals are involved in decision-making processes and have access to public services and resources.

However, despite these similarities, good governance and bad governance vary significantly in their underlying principles, practices, and outcomes. *Good governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and responsiveness, nurturing trust in governmental institutions and promoting social cohesion. While, bad governance is often marked by opacity, corruption, nepotism, favoritism and lack of responsiveness to citizen needs, resulting in weakened public trust, social unrest, and economic stagnation.* Furthermore, while good governance prioritizes the rule of law and the protection of human rights, bad governance may encourage the arbitrary exercise of power, erosion of legal frameworks, and violations of basic rights and freedoms.

Another critical distinction between good governance and bad governance lies in their long-term effects on societal well-being and development. Good governance tends to promote stability, boost economic growth, and enhance the overall quality of life for citizens by ensuring effective service delivery, promoting social justice, and creating an environment conducive to investment and innovation [5]. Meanwhile, bad governance often leads to systemic inefficiencies, widespread corruption, social inequality, and political instability, hindering development efforts and preserving cycles of poverty and underdevelopment.

Good governance could play a catalytic role in creating an enabling working environment where the dream of sustainable human development can be fulfilled, whereas poor governance could erode individual capabilities to meet even the basic needs of sustenance for vulnerable sections of the population.

Governance challenges (see **Table 1**) in Puntland are complex and multifaceted, stemming from a combination of historical, political, economic, social, and institutional factors. Some of the key contributors to these challenges include:

Table 1. Factors that contribute to the governance challenges in Puntland.

Governance Challenges in Puntland				
Historical Challenges	Political Challenges	Social Challenges	Economic Challenges	Institutional Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonial Legacy • Government misconceive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffective leaders • Political Instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepotism • Unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Misuse of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak Institutions • Corruption

3.1. Historical Challenges

Puntland is a region of Somalia that shares a colonial legacy and governance problems with the country, as discussed below:

3.1.1. Colonial Legacy

The legacy of colonialism has had large impacts on Somali governance structures, as have many other Africans. Somalia is bordered by Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. Land ownership-based conflicts began as Somalia became independent, between Somalia and Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, and even Somalia and Yemen as perceived stages via Socotra Island. Apart from these external legacies, the colonial division impacted Somalia internally, as the northern regions of the country (British Somaliland) are now complaining about splitting from the other part of the country (Italian Somaliland).

Such colonial border-based conflicts are one of the major political challenges in Puntland, as this region borders the northern regions of Somalia (Somaliland), which claims to be independent from Somalia. And there's a colonial legacy border conflict over the British border between the two states of Puntland and Somaliland.

3.1.2. Government Misconceive

More than 20 years of lacking an effective state government since the establishment of Puntland in 1998 that works and serves the well-being of society, failing to see a government that works for the protection of individual rights and liberties, the rule of law, and the welfare of its citizens, which includes providing essential services such as education, healthcare, the provision of drinkable water, sustainable peace, youth employment opportunities, and social assistance. Failing to see a state investing in infrastructure, public transportation, utilities, and economic development of the society shaped and damaged the public opinion of young-aged communities in Puntland.

As a result of the above, ordinary people misconstrued government and became hopeless about it, believing that government is an institution where a group of people come and work for their own benefits before their term ends. Such misconceptions among people about government are caused by poor visionaries and greedy leaders.

3.2. Political Challenges

The study divided the political challenges of this region into two major hindrances, which are ineffective leaders and political instability.

3.2.1. Ineffective Leaders

A lot of research concentrated on what makes a good leader a good leader. Far less research has been conducted to reveal the dark sides of being an ineffective leader. One of key factors that leads organizations or nations to success is a leader. Numerous books, articles, and features on leadership have extensively provided information about attributes that make a great leader, but a few have pointed out what makes a bad leader [6].

Barbara [7] wrote the book entitled “Bad Leadership: What It is, How It Happens”, which is seen as the only book in this area that places its emphasis on bad leadership. Bad leadership can have various impacts on both individuals and organizations such as employees’ motivation and engagement, job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance [8].

Bad leadership significantly impacts organizations, leading to negative consequences that hinder overall performance and growth. One major effect of poor leadership is low employee morale, as workers often feel undervalued, unsupported, or mistreated. This can lead to decreased productivity and higher turnover rates, which disrupt organizational stability and increase recruitment costs. Additionally, bad leaders often fail to communicate effectively or make informed decisions, which can result in poor strategic planning and a lack of clear goals, ultimately impeding the organization’s progress. Toxic work environments, created by poor leadership practices, can also lead to increased workplace stress and diminished employee well-being. Furthermore, unethical or autocratic leadership styles can tarnish an organization’s reputation, leading to a loss of trust among stakeholders. Studies have consistently shown that strong leadership correlates with better organizational outcomes, whereas bad leadership has the opposite effect, creating long-term challenges for organizations [9].

Effective and great leaders learn how to avoid engaging in key qualities of bad leaders in order to successfully run organizations to accomplish the goals. Ineffective or poor leaders still never learn how to overcome these behaviors and improve themselves to become a better leader [10].

Many African countries have experienced prolonged periods of ineffective leaders and an authoritarian rule characterized by limited political freedoms, restrictions on civil society, and suppression of dissent. Weak democratic institutions and lack of meaningful checks and balances contribute to a lack of accountability among political leaders.

Somalia fails to have an effective leader since the post conflict era of the nation and similarly Puntland don’t yet get an effective leader since its establishment historic period.

As many states and nations on the continent, tribalism, corruption, bias, and

affiliation with foreign countries that have perverse interests are the dominant criteria for leadership in this region. This has led to widespread poor governance, poverty, youth unemployment, corruption, private wealth gain, and public discontent.

3.2.2. Political Instability

Morrison and Stevenson [11] understood political instability as a condition in political arrangements in which institutional structure of authority breakdown and the expected compliance to political authority is replaced by political violence. The study further stressed that political instability involved the understanding of differences between the power of the national elite that rule the country and that of non-elite and as a result, there are three types of political instability: elite, communal and mass political instability.

Elite political instability is a situation in which individual or national elite who hold leadership position in the country's political system are forcefully removed from office usually through coups d'état, attempted or unsuccessful coups and plots. These have been witnessed in African post-independence and they are usually sponsored by military elites.

Communal political instability is an attempt by the communal group to either form a union/coalition with another country or form their own political sovereignty with a view of capturing present government apparatus. This kind of political instability is manifested in civil wars, irredentism, rebellions, religion and ethnic violence.

Mass political instability on the hand involves a situation in which members of the mass group or movement which are usually organised to pursue and maximize their well-defined objectives, violently attack national elites. The most important characteristic of membership in a mass group is that they believe in the goals and objectives of the movement, though membership can be homogeneous with respect to class level, power, rank and status but they do not possess a common communal trait. Until the activities of this group such as riots, strikes, revolutions among others threaten the stability of government or national polity, they are not regarded as part of mass political instability. It should be noted however, strike embarked upon by labour union in the political process of demanding for improved standard of living cannot be attributed to mass political instability.

In Puntland, although the region somehow has peace when compared to the southern central states but is not politically stable since from the first administration of 1998 to this current administration, clan-based violence, political-based conflicts, terrorist attacks, corruption and economic hardships increase the region's political instability, and it is very rational to turn it into mass political instability in any time as ineffective leaders continue to serve.

3.3. Social Challenges

In Somalia, particularly in Puntland, there are so many social challenges. This study emphasizes nepotism and unemployment, which are deeply interconnected social challenges that have far-reaching negative consequences. Nepotism in

government and private sectors often leads to unqualified individuals securing positions, discouraging merit-based selection of candidates, while unemployment contributes to poverty and social unrest, pushing many young people to migrate outside of the country searching for better work opportunities or, in some cases, join criminal groups or extremist organizations as detailed below.

3.3.1. Nepotism

Nepotism, the practice of favoring family members or close associates in appointments, promotions, and resource allocation, has long been a source of social challenges in Somalia. It undermines meritocracy, breeding resentment among individuals who are marginalized despite possessing the requisite skills and qualifications. As a result, disenfranchised groups, especially the youth and educated segments, often feel disconnected from opportunities, leading to frustration and brain drain, as many seek better opportunities abroad [12].

In Somalia, nepotism has also been linked to the erosion of trust in public institutions. When jobs and resources are distributed based on kinship rather than competence, public trust diminishes, as many perceive that the government serves only the interests of a few powerful families or clans. This undermines national cohesion and deepens societal divisions, exacerbating already fragile relationships between clans [13].

Moreover, nepotism perpetuates inequality in Somalia by limiting access to public services for those who are not connected to influential figures. This unequal access exacerbates poverty and stifles economic growth, as individuals without the right connections are denied opportunities that could contribute to their personal and the country's development. This leads to a cycle of poverty that affects marginalized communities disproportionately [14].

Finally, nepotism weakens the effectiveness of governance in Somalia. When leaders are chosen based on family ties rather than expertise, government institutions become inefficient and corrupt. This inefficiency hinders the government's ability to address pressing issues like security, healthcare, and education. Consequently, Somalia remains trapped in cycles of instability and underdevelopment, with its public systems struggling to meet the needs of the people [15].

3.3.2. Unemployment

Ineffective leadership and poor governance in Somalia, particularly in Puntland State, have significantly contributed to high unemployment rates. Weak leadership often results in a lack of clear policies and strategies for economic development, hindering job creation. Without effective governance, government institutions may struggle to implement and enforce regulations that support small businesses and attract foreign investment, both of which are crucial for job growth [16]. In Puntland, this has led to a stagnant economy where opportunities for employment remain limited. The absence of strong leadership has also resulted in poor management of resources, preventing the establishment of industries that could generate employment.

Corruption is another aspect of ineffective governance that directly affects employment rates in Puntland. When resources meant for development projects are misused or embezzled, the opportunities for job creation diminish [17]. Public funds intended for infrastructure projects that could employ thousands of people are often diverted for personal gain, leaving the state without the necessary investments to boost employment sectors. This corruption also discourages international donors and investors from supporting the region, further limiting job opportunities.

Moreover, poor governance affects the quality of education and vocational training programs, which are essential for workforce development. In Puntland, ineffective leadership has resulted in inadequate funding and management of educational institutions, leading to a skills gap among the youth [18]. Without access to quality education and skills training, the young population is left unprepared for available jobs, increasing unemployment rates. Consequently, many young people migrate to urban centers or leave the country entirely in search of better opportunities, further exacerbating the unemployment crisis.

Lastly, insecurity, political instability and extremists, often consequences of weak governance, create an environment where businesses are hesitant to operate or expand. Puntland has experienced periods of instability due to ineffective leadership, which has contributed to a lack of investor confidence [19]. Without a stable and secure environment, businesses struggle to thrive, leading to fewer job openings. As a result, the lack of governance not only affects existing employment but also prevents the creation of new opportunities in the private sector.

3.4. Economic Challenges

Puntland is currently facing the worst economic challenges than before, primarily stemming from widespread poverty and the misuse of resources. High poverty rates are driven by inadequate employment opportunities, low literacy levels, and the impacts of prolonged disrupted economic stability and growth. In Puntland, limited access to education and healthcare services further exacerbates poverty, trapping communities in a cycle of economic hardship. Additionally, the misuse of resources, such as illegal fishing and minerals, and misuse of community taxation by leaders increase the hardship and economic challenges of the region.

3.4.1. Poverty

Poverty in Puntland, Somalia, is a complex economic challenge shaped by various interconnected factors, including historical instability of the country, limited access to resources, and environmental vulnerabilities. Decades of clan conflicts and political disturbance have weakened the region's economic foundation, resulting in a lack of stable employment opportunities and insufficient public services.

The government's limited capacity to provide essential services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure has contributed to high poverty levels, as communities struggle to access the resources needed for economic growth and development.

Furthermore, Puntland's economy is largely dependent on traditional sectors such as livestock, fishing, and agriculture, which are highly vulnerable to

environmental challenges like drought and climate change. These recurring droughts not only diminish agricultural productivity but also lead to water scarcity, forcing people to migrate and intensifying poverty levels.

In addition to that, a lack of investment and inadequate regulatory frameworks have stifled economic diversification and development, making it difficult for the region to overcome poverty. External factors, such as illegal fishing by foreign entities and unregulated exploitation of other natural resources, also deprive local communities of potential income sources.

Lastly, to effectively reduce poverty, Puntland requires a coordinated effort involving both local governance and international support to build infrastructure, promote sustainable development, and strengthen institutional capacity [16] [17].

3.4.2. Misuse of Resources

The misuse of resources is a significant economic challenge in Puntland, where weak governance, corruption, and limited regulatory frameworks have contributed to inefficient resource management. Public resources, including taxes and assets, are often misallocated due to bribery and corruption among officials, leading to a lack of transparency and accountability.

For instance, it's very obvious during elections to see tax revenues that could be used to build essential infrastructure or provide public services are frequently diverted for personal gain by those in power. Illegal fishing activities are another critical issue; foreign vessels, often with the tacit approval of local leaders in exchange for bribes, exploit Puntland's maritime resources, depriving the local economy of substantial revenue. This unregulated exploitation not only harms the livelihoods of local fishermen but also contributes to the depletion of marine resources, which impacts long-term economic sustainability.

In addition, corruption and the exchange of illegal gains create an environment where public trust in institutions diminishes, further discouraging investment and economic growth. Addressing the misuse of resources requires stronger legal frameworks, transparency initiatives, and international cooperation to promote sustainable resource management and combat corruption [16] [20].

3.5. Institutional Challenges

Ineffective leadership and poor governance have significantly contributed to institutional challenges in Puntland, Somalia. Leaders who lack transparency, accountability, and competence have hindered the region's development by failing to implement sound policies and maintain stability. This has led to widespread corruption and mismanagement, where resources meant for public services and infrastructure development are misused and diverted, and this has led to weak institutions and the spread of corruption, as elaborated below.

3.5.1. Weak Institutions

Ineffective leadership and poor governance have importantly adjusted to the development of weak institutions. One of the key issues is the generality of

unqualified staff in government offices. Many of these individuals attain their positions through nepotism and favoritism rather than merit, which undermines the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations. Studies highlight that nepotism erodes the professionalism within institutions and leads to a lack of accountability and transparency, ultimately affecting public trust and service delivery [21]. Furthermore, favoritism in hiring practices means that the government is often unable to attract or retain skilled personnel who could bring about much-needed reform and modernization in public administration.

Another major issue is the poor infrastructure and lack of proper equipment in government offices. Many institutions in Puntland operate in poorly constructed or dilapidated buildings that do not meet the standards required for effective governance. Offices are often not equipped with modern technology or facilities, which impedes productivity and hinders the ability of government workers to perform their duties efficiently. This lack of infrastructure reflects broader governance challenges where funds allocated for development are often mismanaged or diverted, preventing the implementation of essential improvements that could strengthen public institutions.

Additionally, Puntland's institutions suffer from outdated working systems that have not evolved to match international standards. For example, the use of manual record-keeping instead of digital databases limits efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Research shows that outdated systems not only slow down processes but also increase the likelihood of corruption and mismanagement as records are difficult to track and verify [22].

The failure to adopt new technologies reflects a lack of leadership commitment to modernize governance structures and align them with global standards, further weakening institutions in Puntland.

Moreover, Puntland's institutions lack strong linkages with international organizations and global governance bodies, which further isolates the region and limits its development potential. Without these connections, Puntland's institutions miss opportunities for capacity building, knowledge exchange, and access to global best practices that could help improve governance and institutional strength [23]. The absence of public international partnerships also means that Puntland remains disconnected from the global economy and political networks, which are crucial for attracting investment and promoting socio-economic development.

3.5.2. Corruption

Corruption remains a significant challenge in Somalia, ranking as one of the most corrupt countries in the world according to global indices. The 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International ranked Somalia at the bottom of the list for the 16th consecutive year, indicating a severe lack of transparency, accountability, and effective governance mechanisms [24]. Puntland, an autonomous region within Somalia, has not been immune to this widespread corruption. Leadership in Puntland is often characterized by individuals gaining power not through merit or competence, but rather through corrupt practices

such as vote-buying, manipulation of clan loyalties, and undue influence over the electoral process [25]. This has undermined the legitimacy and effectiveness of leadership, as those who assume office may prioritize self-interest over public service, leading to widespread corruption and misuse of resources [26].

The governance structure in Puntland suffers from a poor separation of powers among government institutions, which further exacerbates corruption. The executive branch exerts significant influence over the judiciary and legislature, undermining checks and balances that are essential for good governance and accountability [16]. Weak rule of law is another critical issue, as the judiciary often lacks the independence and resources needed to hold corrupt officials accountable. In such an environment, laws are selectively applied, and officials are rarely prosecuted for corrupt practices, which perpetuates a culture of impunity [26]. The absence of a robust legal framework and an independent judiciary significantly hampers efforts to combat corruption and promotes a cycle where public officials act with impunity [24].

Moreover, leaders in Puntland often fail to fulfill their social responsibilities, neglecting the provision of essential public services and infrastructure development. This neglect is partly due to leaders' focus on personal and clan interests rather than the collective good [16]. The lack of a culture of transparency and accountability among public officials further fuels corruption. There are minimal measures in place to ensure public access to government information, and oversight bodies are either absent or ineffective [25]. Consequently, the public has little trust in government institutions, which leads to disengagement and an overall lack of pressure for reform.

Building a culture of transparency and accountability requires strong leadership, effective laws, and an informed public; however, these elements are currently missing in Puntland, creating an environment where corruption thrives unchecked [26].

3.5.3. Design

In this study, the researcher employed a case study research design to achieve a comprehensive and significant understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, particularly in relation to its real-life context. This design was specifically chosen due to its effectiveness in exploring complex issues that encompass multiple interrelated variables. These variables include leadership traits, governance challenges, social dynamics, and citizens' perceptions, all of which play a critical role in shaping the overall scenery of governance in Puntland, which may be difficult to fully capture through other research methods.

4. Results

Table 2 presents the demographic information of respondents across different regions in Puntland. This distribution allows for a comprehensive analysis of perspectives across age, gender, location, educational background, and occupational sectors.

This **Table 2** shows us that the majority of respondents, 67.7%, fall within the 25 - 30 years age range, indicating that the study sample is primarily composed of younger adults. A smaller percentage, 12.9%, are in the 31 - 35 years range, while 19.4% are aged 36 and above. This distribution suggests that the data collected may primarily reflect the perspectives of the younger generation of Puntland.

The gender distribution is nearly balanced, with 51.6% male and 48.4% female respondents. This close-to-even split provides a good representation of both genders, allowing for gender-sensitive analysis if required.

The respondents of this study were spread across five main locations in Puntland, with the highest representation from Bosaso (29.0%) and Garowe (27.4%). Other locations include Galkaio (19.4%), Gardo (14.5%), and Badhan (9.7%). This spread suggests a diverse sample from different geographic areas, which may help capture regional variations in perspectives or experiences.

Table 2. Demographic information of respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Age	25 - 30 years	42	67.7%	67.7%
	31 - 35 years	8	12.9%	80.6%
	36 and above years	12	19.4%	100%
Gender	Male	32	51.6%	51.6%
	Female	30	48.4%	100%
Location	Bosaso	18	29.0%	29.0%
	Badhan	6	9.7%	38.7%
	Gardo	9	14.5%	53.2%
	Garowe	17	27.4%	80.6%
	Galkaio	12	19.4%	100%
Educational Background	HE (Diploma, Bachelor, or higher)	62	100.0%	100.0%
Occupation	Government Staff	16	25.8%	25.8%
	Private Employees	31	50.0%	75.8%
	Local NGOs/INGOs Workers	15	24.2%	100.0%

In educational background, all respondents (100%) have attained higher education, including a diploma, bachelor's degree, or a higher qualification. This high level of educational attainment suggests that the study participants are well-educated, which could positively influence their knowledge, skills, experience, and professional capabilities.

Lastly, the occupation distribution shows that half of the respondents (50%) work as private employees, making it the largest employment category among the participants. Government staff make up 25.8% of the sample, while 24.2% are employed by local NGOs or INGOs. This indicates a diverse workforce with a significant proportion working in the private sector, followed by government roles and non-profit organizations.

Table 3 indicates that 45.2% of respondents view the current leadership in Puntland as ineffective. This is the largest group, suggesting a general dissatisfaction with leadership effectiveness. Meanwhile, 30.6% of respondents were neutral, indicating a moderate level of indifference or uncertainty. Only 24.2% find the leadership effective. Overall, a high percentage of respondents rated the current leadership in Puntland as ineffective, and this suggests potential issues in governance or public services.

Table 3. Effectiveness of current leadership in Puntland.

Rating	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Effective	15	24.2%	24.2%
Neutral	19	30.6%	54.8%
Ineffective	28	45.2%	100%
Total	62	100%	

Table 4 highlighted that nearly half (46.8%) of the respondents selected “Transparency and Accountability” as the most important quality for a leader, emphasizing a strong desire for openness and responsibility in governance. This may indicate that the public values clear communication and ethical governance. Visionary thinking and communication (24.2%) are also important, followed by patriotism (16.1%) and integrity (12.9%). The preference for transparency suggests that respondents may feel current leadership lacks this trait, aligning with the previous findings about perceived ineffectiveness.

Table 4. Key quality expected from a leader.

Quality	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Integrity	8	12.9%	12.9%
Patriotism	10	16.1%	29.0%
Transparency and Accountability	29	46.8%	75.8%
Visionary Thinking and Communication	15	24.2%	100%
Total	62	100%	

The majority of respondents (58.1%) attribute ineffective leadership to “Corruption & Lack of Accountability”, indicating that these issues are perceived as the primary obstacles to effective governance in Puntland. Other factors like lack of experience (21.0%) and poor communication (11.3%) are also noted but are less significant (see **Table 5**). The emphasis on corruption highlights a potential trust deficit in the leadership, which might contribute to the high percentage of respondents viewing the leadership as ineffective in the first table. This suggests that addressing corruption and promoting accountability could be key areas for improving public perception of leadership effectiveness.

How would you describe the overall state of governance in Puntland?

In this **Table 6**, the responses show that opinions on governance in Puntland are relatively balanced, with 45.2% rating it as “Good” or “Very Good”. However, a significant portion (29.1%) rate it as “Poor” or “Very Poor”, indicating dissatisfaction among almost a third of the participants. The most common response is “Average”, with 25.8% selecting this option, suggesting that many view the governance as neither particularly strong nor weak.

Table 5. Main reason for ineffective leadership.

Reason	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Lack of Experience	13	21.0%	21.0%
Poor Communication	7	11.3%	32.3%
Corruption & Lack of Accountability	36	58.1%	90.3%
External Influences	6	9.7%	100%
Total	62	100%	

Table 6. The overall state of governance in Puntland.

Response	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very Good	13	21.0%	21.0%
Good	15	24.2%	45.2%
Average	16	25.8%	71.0%
Poor	12	19.4%	90.4%
Very Poor	6	9.7%	100.0%
Total	62	100%	

What major challenge have you experienced as a result of poor governance?

The primary challenge reported due to poor governance is “Corruption”, with 45.2% of respondents identifying it as the major issue. “Limited access to public

services” follows at 30.6%, showing that basic service delivery is also a critical area affected by governance issues. A smaller percentage cite “Human rights violations” (14.5%) and “Economic hardship” (8.1%), highlighting other areas of concern but with less frequency (see **Table 7**).

Do you believe that the current governance structure in Puntland allows for citizen participation?

When asked about citizen participation in governance, responses were mixed. Nearly half (48.4%) of respondents do not believe the current governance structure allows for meaningful citizen participation, while 41.9% feel it does. A small portion, 9.7%, are unsure, indicating some ambiguity or lack of awareness about participatory opportunities. This split suggests a need for greater transparency and potential reforms to increase public involvement in governance decisions (see **Table 8**).

Table 7. Major challenge have you experienced as a result of poor governance.

Response	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Limited access to public services	19	30.6%	30.6%
Corruption	28	45.2%	75.8%
Human rights violations	9	14.5%	90.3%
Economic hardship	5	8.1%	98.4%
Other(s)	1	1.6%	100.0%
Total	62	100%	

Table 8. The overall state of governance in Puntland.

Response	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	26	41.9%	41.9%
No	30	48.4%	90.3%
Unsure	6	9.7%	100.0%
Total	62	100%	

The majority of respondents (40.3%) believe that strengthening accountability mechanisms is the most effective way to improve leadership effectiveness in Puntland. This suggests a significant perception that leaders may lack sufficient accountability, potentially leading to ineffective or untrustworthy leadership practices. Following this, 24.2% of respondents recommend enhancing public participation in decision-making, indicating a demand for a more inclusive approach to governance. A smaller percentage (19.4%) supports leadership training programs, emphasizing the importance of skill development for leaders. Lastly, 16.1% of respondents see value in establishing regular performance evaluations, which could

offer a systematic way to monitor and improve leadership effectiveness over time (see **Table 9**).

These responses in **Table 10** indicate that the most popular way for citizens to contribute to better governance is through participation in elections, with 41.9% of respondents selecting this option. This reflects an understanding of the importance of democratic engagement in governance. Additionally, 29.0% of participants highlight the role of advocating for transparency and accountability, underscoring a desire for openness and honesty from leaders. Educating citizens about their rights is chosen by 25.8%, suggesting that increased awareness and knowledge can empower citizens to demand better governance. Only 3.2% of respondents see social media as an effective tool for promoting governance, which may indicate limited confidence in its impact or reach within Puntland.

Table 9. Leadership effectiveness improvement recommendations in Puntland.

Option	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Leadership training programs	12	19.4%	19.4%
Strengthening accountability mechanisms	25	40.3%	59.7%
Enhancing public participation in decision-making	15	24.2%	83.9%
Establishing regular performance evaluations for leaders	10	16.1%	100.0%
Total	62	100%	

Table 10. Citizen contributions to better governance in Puntland.

Option	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Participating in elections to choose effective leaders	26	41.9%	41.9%
Advocating for transparency and accountability	18	29.0%	70.9%
Educating citizens about their rights	16	25.8%	96.7%
Using social media platforms to promote good governance	2	3.2%	100.0%
Total	62	100%	

5. Discussion/Conclusion

The findings from this study highlight critical issues in leadership effectiveness and governance quality within Puntland. The majority of respondents (45.2%) perceive the current leadership as ineffective, a sentiment underscored by

dissatisfaction with governance practices, including limited transparency, accountability, and poor service delivery. This perception of ineffective leadership is further reinforced by the identified leadership traits valued by respondents, with 46.8% emphasizing “Transparency and Accountability” as essential qualities, followed by visionary thinking (24.2%) and patriotism (16.1%).

The prioritization of transparency suggests that citizens may feel that these attributes are currently lacking in Puntland’s leadership, aligning with the reported dissatisfaction in governance.

Corruption and lack of accountability emerged as the main reasons for ineffective leadership, with 58.1% of respondents citing these as significant obstacles. This result points to a systemic issue that may erode public trust and exacerbate governance challenges. Additionally, limited access to public services (30.6%) and human rights violations (14.5%) were noted as direct consequences of poor governance, indicating that the impact of ineffective leadership extends beyond administrative inefficiencies to affect citizens’ daily lives.

The overall assessment of Puntland’s governance is mixed; 45.2% rated it as “Good” or “Very Good”, while 29.1% rated it as “Poor” or “Very Poor”. This distribution suggests that, while some positive aspects of governance are acknowledged, a significant portion of the population feels that governance standards are inadequate. Additionally, nearly half of the respondents (48.4%) believe that the current governance structure does not allow for meaningful citizen participation. This split response highlights a perceived lack of inclusivity in decision-making processes, a key area for potential reform.

Recommendations for improving leadership effectiveness in Puntland were strongly centered on strengthening accountability mechanisms (40.3%), which could help address public concerns around transparency and responsibility. Enhancing public participation in decision-making was also viewed favorably (24.2%), signaling that greater inclusivity could improve trust and public satisfaction with governance. Leadership training programs (19.4%) and regular performance evaluations (16.1%) were also suggested, underscoring a need for both skill development and consistent monitoring of leaders.

Citizen contributions to governance improvement reveal an awareness of the importance of democratic engagement, with 41.9% of respondents emphasizing the need to participate in elections to select effective leaders. Advocacy for transparency (29.0%) and citizen education (25.8%) were also highlighted, suggesting that a more informed and engaged citizenry could support better governance outcomes.

In conclusion, the study reveals significant challenges in Puntland’s leadership and governance, rooted in a perceived lack of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. To address these issues, reforms focusing on accountability mechanisms, public participation, and citizen empowerment are essential. Strengthening these areas could enhance a governance structure that not only better meets public expectations but also promotes a more transparent and effective leadership

model for Puntland.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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