

## Research Paper

## Explaining the Foundations of Development Management in Light of the Paradigmatic Transformation of Development Schools: From Theory to Practice

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Receive: 23 Jul 2025

Revise: 05 Sept 2025

Accept: 13 Sept 2025

Published online:

21 Sept 2025




### Abstract

Development Management, as an interdisciplinary and applied field, plays a pivotal role in the analysis, planning, and execution of development projects and policies. This research aims to elucidate the theoretical foundations and key components of Development Management, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method and a library-based study. The findings indicate that development is a dynamic, multidimensional, and structural process that extends beyond mere economic growth to encompass cultural, social, political, human, and environmental dimensions. The paradigmatic shift in development schools of thought—from modernization and dependency theories toward institutionalism, sustainable development, human development, and good governance—reflects a transition from universalist models to multidimensional approaches. Development Management acts as an eclectic “toolkit,” integrating various theories and methods to accelerate the development process, empower communities, optimize resource allocation, and strengthen institutions through a systematic cycle encompassing goal setting, strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and learning. The success of this process is contingent upon adhering to prerequisites such as good governance, inter-sectoral coordination, decentralization, and effective leadership.

### Keywords:

Development,  
Development Management,  
Components

**Please cite this article as (APA):** Kazempour Teymourloy, M & Zarandi, S. (2025). Explaining the Foundations of Development Management in Light of the Paradigmatic Transformation of Development Schools: From Theory to Practice. *Journal of Governance studies & development management*, 2 (1), 430-447.

Sponsored by: Institute of Somamos Publications	<a href="https://doi.org/10.22034/jgsdm.2026.569872.1026">10.22034/jgsdm.2026.569872.1026</a>	
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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

In the contemporary rapidly changing world, development is widely understood as a dynamic, multidimensional, and structural process that plays a central role in societal progress. Development is not a linear or single-dimensional phenomenon limited to economic growth; rather, it represents a complex transformation encompassing cultural, social, political, economic, and human dimensions. It is simultaneously a process in transition, an actual condition, and a latent potential. Successful development processes empower people to actively shape their own history and geography by enhancing their capabilities, choices, and agency.

As development entails profound structural transformations, its realization requires conscious, systematic, and knowledge-based management. Consequently, development management has emerged as an interdisciplinary and applied field aimed at training professionals equipped with the theoretical and practical skills necessary for analyzing, planning, implementing, and evaluating development policies and projects. Rooted historically in developmental public administration, development management has evolved alongside shifts in development paradigms. This study seeks to explain the theoretical foundations and key components of development management in light of the paradigmatic transformation of development schools of thought. The main research question guiding this article is: On what theoretical foundations and core components can development management be conceptualized in the context of evolving development paradigms?

### Research Method

This study adopts a descriptive–analytical research design based on qualitative document analysis. The primary research approach relies on an extensive review of academic literature, including scholarly articles, books, policy reports, and international development documents published in both national and international journals. Sources were selected through systematic library research and database searches focusing on development management, public administration, and development theories. The analysis synthesizes theoretical perspectives to construct an integrated conceptual framework for development management.

### Theoretical Foundations and Findings

The concept of development has been interpreted differently across international institutions and academic traditions, leading to diverse policy implications. While organizations such as the World Bank have historically emphasized economic indicators, the United Nations Development Programme has promoted broader measures such as the Human Development Index, incorporating education, health, income, and human rights. Scholars distinguish between development as a long-term historical process of social transformation and development as deliberate interventions aimed at progress.

Over time, various schools of development thought have emerged, including modernization

theory, dependency theory, world-systems theory, institutionalism, sustainable development, human development, and governance-oriented approaches. These paradigms reflect a clear shift from linear, universal, and growth-centered models toward multidimensional, context-sensitive, human-centered, and sustainability-oriented frameworks. Institutional and governance-based approaches emphasize local capacities, quality of institutions, participation, accountability, and ethical considerations as key determinants of development outcomes.

Building on these paradigmatic shifts, development management is conceptualized in this study as an integrated and context-based toolbox. It encompasses the management of human resources, financial and material resources, development processes and projects, and normative dimensions such as values, principles, and ethics. Development management operates through a dynamic and systematic cycle involving goal setting, operational planning, strategy formulation, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring, documentation, dissemination of results, and organizational learning.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that development is an ongoing, complex, and non-terminating process whose meaning varies across societies based on values, needs, and capacities. Accordingly, development management cannot rely on a single theory or method; rather, it requires an eclectic and flexible approach that bridges theory and practice. Development management functions as a critical intermediary between development theories and policy implementation, translating abstract paradigms into actionable strategies.

Effective development management depends on key prerequisites, including good governance, intersectoral coordination, decentralization, convergence of efforts, and effective leadership. When these conditions are met, development management contributes to accelerated development processes, empowerment of individuals and communities, optimal resource utilization, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and sustainable outcomes.

Ultimately, this study positions development management as a normative and operational framework grounded in ethical responsibility, social justice, democratic participation, and environmental sustainability. By conceptualizing development management as a structured yet adaptive toolbox, the article offers a comprehensive framework that enhances understanding of how development policies and projects can be effectively designed, managed, and sustained across diverse contexts.