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# EFFECT OF CONTROL ENVIRONMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT ON DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVE ATTAINMENT IN RIYOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA.

**Gong, Chai Deme[1], Salvation, Joshua Selven[2], Deshi, Nentawe Nengak[3], Timkat, Nanmak Peter[4] & Jan, Longji Ishaku [5]**

[1-5]Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Sciences, Plateau State University, Bocks,

Corresponding Author: chaigongdeme@plasu.edu.ng

***Abstract***

*This study examined the effect of control environment and risk assessment on developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was driven by concerns over the capacity of local governments to achieve developmental goals, deliver quality public services, and ensure accountability in the management of public resources. The study was anchored on system theory and complimented by contingency theory. A quantitative survey design was adopted. The study population comprised 268 staff members of Riyom Local Government Area, from which a sample of 73 respondents was selected using Yamane's sampling formula. Data were collected through structured questionnaires measured on a five-point Likert scale. A total of 69 valid responses were analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques were employed to test the hypotheses at a 5% significance level. The findings revealed that both control environment and risk assessment exert significant positive effects on developmental objective attainment. Control environment emerged as the strongest predictor, indicating that ethical values, management commitment, and organisational structure play a critical role in achieving developmental goals. Risk assessment also significantly enhanced developmental outcomes through the identification and management of potential threats. The regression model showed that the two variables jointly explained 53.8% of the variation in developmental objective attainment. The study concludes that strengthening internal control systems can improve accountability, service delivery, and grassroots development in local government administration.*

**Keywords:** *Developmental Objective attainment, Control Environment and Risk Assessment.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organisations globally continue to pursue the achievement of their strategic, operational, and developmental objectives. Despite these efforts, many organisations have been unable to realise their goals due to weak or ineffective internal control systems (COSO, 2013; Arens et al., 2017). Historical corporate failures such as Enron, WorldCom, and Shell demonstrate how deficiencies in internal control and corporate governance can undermine accountability and lead to the collapse of even large and seemingly stable institutions (Coffee, 2005; Solomon, 2020). In Nigeria, similar challenges have been observed within the banking sector, where the collapse of major banks including Oceanic Bank, Intercontinental Bank, and Bank PHB was largely

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attributed to poor internal control structures, weak risk management practices, and regulatory shortcomings (Sanusi, 2010; CBN, 2011). These events underscore the critical importance of robust internal control mechanisms in sustaining organisational stability and performance.

The consequences of weak internal controls are not limited to private organisations but extend significantly to public-sector institutions responsible for developmental governance. Across the world, weaknesses in governance systems have contributed to corruption, inefficient resource utilisation, project failures, and poor service delivery. In response to these challenges, governments and international organisations have increasingly emphasised the establishment of effective internal control systems as a prerequisite for achieving organisational and developmental objectives. The persistence of governance failures has therefore made internal control an important area of policy and academic discourse globally.

The widespread consequences of these failures stimulated the development and adoption of internationally recognised control frameworks aimed at strengthening governance and institutional accountability. Notable among these are the Sarbanes–Oxley Act (SOX) of 2002 in the United States, the Guidance on Control (COCO) issued by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1995, the committee of sponsoring organisation of the treadway commission (COSO) Internal Control Integrated Framework (updated in 2013), and the international organisation of supreme audit institutions (INTOSAI) Guidelines on Internal Control Standards for the Public Sector (INTOSAI GOV 9100, 2013). While COSO provides a comprehensive and widely applicable framework for internal control across sectors, INTOSAI adapts these principles specifically for public-sector institutions by emphasizing ethical conduct, leadership commitment, competence, and accountability as essential pillars of governance. Together, these frameworks highlight the central role of internal controls in promoting transparency, efficiency, and responsible stewardship of resources.

In Africa, weak public financial management (PFM) systems continue to constrain developmental progress despite ongoing reforms. The African Development Bank (AFDB) reports persistent challenges such as weak institutions, corruption, limited transparency, poor accountability, and inefficient public expenditure management, which undermine service delivery and inclusive development. In addition, weaknesses in budget execution, internal controls, procurement systems, and local government financial management hinder the attainment of development goals, often resulting in inefficient resource use, project delays or abandonment, poor service delivery, and reduced public trust in government institutions across the continent (AFDB, 2021; AFDB, 2024).

Nigeria faces similar challenges despite the implementation of several public financial management and accountability reforms, including the Treasury Single Account (TSA), Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), Public Procurement Act (2007), and the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), all aimed at improving

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transparency, accountability, and efficient public resource management (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2007; OAGF, 2020; World Bank, 2019). In addition, anti-corruption institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have intensified enforcement through investigation, prosecution, and asset recovery. Despite these reforms, governance challenges persist. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that Nigerians paid approximately ₦721 billion in bribes in 2023, reflecting persistent weaknesses in accountability systems (NBS & UNODC, 2024). Similarly, the EFCC reported thousands of investigations and convictions alongside significant asset recoveries in 2024, indicating ongoing institutional efforts to curb corruption, yet persistent governance gaps remain (EFCC, 2024). Collectively, these indicate that persistent control weaknesses continue to undermine effective developmental outcomes in Nigeria.

According to COSO (2013), internal control is defined as a process initiated by management to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives relating to operations, reporting, and compliance. The framework identifies five interrelated components: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. Similarly, the INTOSAI Subcommittee on Internal Control Standards (2025) conceptualises internal control as a process implemented by oversight bodies, management, and personnel within public entities to ensure the effective pursuit of institutional objectives, service delivery, reliable reporting, and compliance with laws and regulations. Within local government administration, effective governance is strongly influenced by the quality of the control environment and the robustness of risk assessment practices.

Empirical studies have consistently shown that strong ethical climates, sound managerial oversight, and systematic risk identification enhance organisational efficiency, financial integrity, and decision-making (Barros & Ferreira, 2022; Geke et al., 2025; Ronald et al., 2025). However, despite the availability of established frameworks, many Nigerian local governments, including those in Plateau State, continue to experience persistent weaknesses such as poor ethical standards, inadequate oversight, ineffective risk management, and weak accountability structures.

These deficiencies negatively affect budget implementation, project execution, service delivery, and overall developmental outcomes. In Plateau State, concerns relating to infrastructure deficits, inadequate social services, delayed project execution, and limited accountability in public resource management have continued to generate public dissatisfaction and calls for improved governance. As the tier of government closest to the people, local governments are expected to deliver essential services and facilitate grassroots development. Failure to achieve these objectives directly affects citizens through poor access to healthcare, education, roads, water supply, and other basic services.

Moreover, existing empirical literature has predominantly linked control environment and risk assessment to outcomes such as fraud prevention, financial performance, or reporting quality, with little emphasis on developmental objective attainment, including service delivery, administrative

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efficiency, and public accountability as evidenced in the works of Uwalomwa and Olamide (2020), Samuel et al. (2021), Li et al. (2022), Barros and Ferreira (2022), Oduwole and Akintoye (2023), Mahlangu et al. (2025), and Ronald et al. (2025). Context-specific challenges in Plateau State, including weak control environments and inconsistent risk management practices, further complicate the effective functioning of internal controls, yet remain underexplored in empirical research. Consequently, a significant empirical gap exists regarding how control environment and risk assessment influence developmental objective attainment in Nigerian local governments, particularly in Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State, where empirical evidence remains limited. This study therefore investigates the effect of control environment and risk assessment on developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area from 2015 to 2024.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1.1 Concept of Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA)

According to Uwalomwa and Olamide (2020), Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA) is the extent to which public-sector institutions, particularly local governments, achieve planned socio-economic goals such as effective service delivery, accountability, and efficient resource utilisation. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2019) views DOA as the realisation of sustainable development outcomes that improve citizens' welfare through transparent and responsive governance. In the same vein, Olorunfemi (2021) defines DOA as the ability of government institutions to translate development plans and policies into tangible socio-economic outcomes, including infrastructure development, transparency, and sustainable community growth. Therefore, Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA) refers to the extent to which local governments plan and successfully achieve their socio-economic goals. It is reflected in timely project execution, prudent management of public funds, quality service delivery, infrastructure development, efficient resource utilisation, transparency, accountability, sustainable community development, and improved community welfare.

### 2.1.2 Concept of Control Environment

The control environment comprises the actions, policies, and procedures that reflect top management's attitudes toward internal control and its importance (Arens et al., 2017). COSO (2013) similarly defines it as the standards, processes, and structures that form the foundation for effective internal control across an organisation. Thus, the control environment embodies management's attitudes, values, and behaviours that shape organisational culture and influence how employees perform their duties, including ethical standards, management philosophy, organisational structure, and adherence to policies and procedures. In this study, the control environment is operationalized through ethical leadership, clear organisational structures, accountability mechanisms, and policy compliance, which together promote transparency, operational efficiency, and the attainment of developmental objectives in local government administration.

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Accordingly, the study hypothesises that: H01: control environment has no significant effect on developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area, Plateau State.

### 2.1.3 Concept of Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the process of identifying and analysing risks that could prevent an organisation from achieving its objectives (Arens et al., 2017). COSO (2013) describes it as a dynamic, continuous process that adapts to internal and external changes, involving the definition of objectives, systematic risk identification across operational, financial, and compliance areas, consideration of fraud risks, and evaluation of change drivers such as policy reforms or socio-political shifts. In this study, risk assessment is reflected in the identification, evaluation, and mitigation of operational, financial, and compliance risks to ensure effective service delivery and project implementation. In local governments, common risks include political interference, weak oversight, administrative inefficiencies, and fiscal mismanagement. Proactive risk assessment enables these threats to be addressed early, enhancing the likelihood of achieving developmental objectives.

Therefore, the study hypothesises that: $H0_2$: Risk assessment has no significant effect on developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area, Plateau State.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

A theoretical framework provides the intellectual foundation upon which a study is built. It offers an explanation of how and why the variables of interest relate to one another based on established theories. This study is anchored on Systems Theory and complemented by the contingency.

### 2.2.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory, proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1940s and developed by Ross Ashby (1964), conceptualises organisations as open, interdependent systems composed of interacting subsystems whose collective functioning determines overall performance. In public sector administration, developmental objective attainment is therefore not an isolated outcome but the product of coordinated interactions among administrative structures, processes, and control mechanisms. In relation to this study, the internal control system is operationalised as a subsystem of organisational governance, while the control environment and risk assessment represent key functional components within that subsystem. The control environment provides the structural and behavioural foundation for system stability through ethical leadership, accountability mechanisms, and organisational structure. Risk assessment, in turn, ensures system adaptability by enabling the identification and mitigation of operational, financial, and compliance risks that may disrupt developmental processes.

From a systems perspective, developmental objective attainment is dependent on the functional integrity of these interrelated components. Where the control environment is weak, the system loses coherence, leading to poor coordination and accountability failures. Similarly, inadequate risk assessment disrupts feedback and adaptive mechanisms, resulting in inefficiencies and project underperformance. However, Systems Theory alone does not sufficiently explain why the effectiveness of these internal control components may vary across different organisational and environmental contexts, thereby necessitating the incorporation of Contingency Theory to account for contextual influences on the strength and direction of these relationships. The theory predicts a positive systemic relationship between internal control components and developmental outcomes, providing a direct theoretical justification for the hypotheses that control environment and risk assessment significantly influence developmental objective attainment.

### 2.2.2 Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory, advanced by Burns and Stalker (1961) and further developed by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Fiedler (1967), and Donaldson (2001), argues that organisational effectiveness is not universal but depends on the alignment between internal structures and external contextual conditions. It rejects one-best-way approaches and instead emphasises that managerial systems must be adapted to environmental uncertainty, organisational capacity, leadership style, and structural complexity. In relation to the COSO (2013) Internal Control Framework, contingency theory provides an explanatory lens for understanding variations in the effectiveness of internal control components, particularly the control environment and risk assessment. While COSO specifies ideal control structures, their practical effectiveness is influenced by contextual conditions within which they operate.

Applied to local government administration, these controls are not static but adaptive mechanisms whose effectiveness depends on factors such as political interference, resource constraints, bureaucratic capacity, and regulatory enforcement. A strong control environment is therefore effective only where supported by committed leadership, stable governance structures, and a compliance-oriented culture, while risk assessment enhances developmental outcomes only when aligned with institutional capacity and environmental uncertainty. Where these contextual conditions are weak, internal control systems may not translate into improved developmental performance despite formal compliance with COSO principles. Thus, Contingency Theory predicts a context-dependent relationship between internal control components and developmental objective attainment, providing a theoretical basis for examining how control environment and risk assessment influence developmental outcomes under varying institutional conditions.

## 2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### 2.3.1 Control Environment and Developmental Objective Attainment

Geke et al. (2025) examined the effect of control environment and internal audit on financial performance in Kenyan insurance companies using agency theory and regression analysis, finding that a strong control environment improves financial performance. While methodologically robust, the study is limited to private-sector financial outcomes and does not extend to developmental objective attainment in public-sector governance. Similarly, Ronald et al. (2025), in a study of Rwandan commercial banks, reported that control environment significantly enhances cash flow management. However, the banking context restricts its relevance to local government settings, where performance is measured in developmental and service delivery terms rather than financial liquidity.

Barros and Ferreira (2022) further demonstrated that control environments enhance strategic alignment and organisational performance in corporate settings. Although theoretically valuable, their findings are embedded in profit-oriented systems and do not account for public-sector developmental mandates. Oradi et al. (2020), focusing on the Sarbanes–Oxley Act, established that regulatory enforcement strengthens control environments and reduces fraud in U.S. corporations. While this highlights the role of institutional regulation, the study is context-specific to developed economies and does not address grassroots development outcomes.

Within the Nigerian context, Uwalomwa and Olamide (2020) found that effective internal control systems improve organisational performance in private firms, while Li et al. (2022) similarly reported that strong control environments enhance transparency and decision-making in corporate governance structures. However, both studies remain limited by their private-sector orientation, where profitability rather than developmental impact is the core performance indicator.

Dan'azumi, Yonla, Gani, Maram, and Ahmed, (2020) have discovered that anti-fraud policy mechanisms on financial performance have a greater contribution effect on financial performance (R 2 change =54.5%) compared to internal control (R 2 change =19.2%). The findings suggest that anti-fraud policy mechanisms matter a lot in explaining variations in the financial performance of banking industries.

In public-sector-related evidence, Yudiantoro and Nugroho (2025) found that control environment significantly improves organisational effectiveness in Indonesia, although risk assessment was insignificant. While relevant to public administration, differences in institutional and socio-political structures limit direct applicability to Nigerian local governments. Likewise, Nguyen and Duong (2024) reported that control environment significantly influences internal control effectiveness in Vietnamese commercial banks, but the financial sector focus reduces relevance to developmental governance outcomes. Further evidence by Amuzat et al. (2025) shows that control environment positively affects employee productivity in manufacturing firms, while Olorunfemi (2024) confirms that internal controls improve financial reporting quality. Although these studies reinforce the importance of control systems, their organisational contexts differ substantially from local government realities.

Jointly, the literature consistently demonstrates the importance of control environment in enhancing organisational performance; however, most evidence is concentrated in corporate and financial sectors. There remains limited empirical focus on how control environment influences

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developmental objective attainment in local government systems, particularly within Nigeria. This gap justifies the present study.

### 2.3.2 Risk Assessment and Developmental Objective Attainment

Widyastuti et al. (2025), through a systematic review grounded in agency and risk management theories, synthesised evidence from 20 Scopus-indexed studies across sectors and established that internal control systems enhance organisational capacity for identifying, assessing, and mitigating financial, legal, and operational risks. Despite its theoretical strength and broad coverage, the study remains limited by its exclusive focus on risk mitigation outcomes, without extending the analysis to developmental objective attainment within public-sector governance structures.

In the SME context, Shehu (2025) employed survey data and multiple regression analysis to demonstrate that risk assessment significantly improves fraud mitigation. While empirically robust, the study is constrained by its private-sector orientation, where performance is profit-driven, thereby limiting its explanatory relevance for local governments whose mandate prioritizes developmental outcomes such as service delivery and public welfare. Similarly, Muyiwa and Iyabode (2024) reported that internal control systems significantly enhance fraud prevention and financial performance in retail organisations, reinforcing the effectiveness of control mechanisms but within commercially oriented institutional logics that differ fundamentally from public-sector governance.

Similarly, a study involving Dan'azumi, Kutus, Yonla, & Orsea, (2021) established, also that fraud risk management has positive and significant effect on the financial management in organizations. This, further demonstrate the fact that organizations need to pay attention to fraud risk related issues in the financial performance of enterprises in the context of this study.

Extending to the financial sector, Oni et al. (2021) found that internal control components significantly influence fraud prevention in deposit money banks, while Yahya and Venusita (2022), using structural equation modelling, confirmed positive effects of control environment, risk assessment, and monitoring on fraud prevention. However, both studies remain conceptually restricted to financial integrity outcomes, offering limited insight into how risk assessment contributes to broader developmental performance in complex public administrative systems.

Within the public sector, Vutumu et al. (2024) provide stronger contextual relevance, demonstrating via PLS-SEM that risk assessment and other control components significantly improve fraud prevention in Nigeria's public institutions. Nonetheless, the national-level aggregation of their analysis complicates subnational governance variations, particularly within local governments characterised by constrained fiscal autonomy, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political interference. In contrast, Awotomilusi et al. (2023) report that risk assessment does not significantly influence fraud prevention in selected public institutions, suggesting implementation deficiencies in translating risk identification into effective control action. Likewise, Oduwole and

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Akintoye (2023) document positive effects of internal control systems in agricultural firms, although their private-sector context limits institutional comparability with public governance structures.

Notably, Mahlangu et al. (2025), employing a mixed-methods design grounded in systems and contingency theories, demonstrate that effective internal control systems significantly enhance service delivery and overall local government performance. This study is particularly instructive as it shifts analytical focus from narrowly defined fraud outcomes to broader developmental performance indicators, thereby aligning more closely with the conceptual orientation of this study.

Collectively, the literature is dominated by fraud prevention and financial performance outcomes, with limited empirical interrogation of risk assessment as a driver of developmental objective attainment, particularly in local government contexts. This conceptual and contextual gap provides the justification for the present study.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative survey research design to examine the effect of control environment and risk assessment on developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area (LGA), Plateau State, Nigeria. This design is suitable for collecting measurable data and analysing relationships among variables in a real-life organisational setting without manipulation. According to information from the Open Registry (2026), the study population comprised 268 staff of Riyom Local Government Area drawn from the Finance and Supplies, Personnel, Revenue, and Budgeting and Planning departments, who are directly involved in internal control and developmental functions. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula at a 10% level of precision, a sample of 73 respondents was obtained. To ensure proportional representation, the sample was allocated across departments using Bowley's proportional allocation technique. A stratified simple random sampling technique was adopted. The population was first stratified by department, after which respondents were randomly selected from each stratum. This approach minimised sampling bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample.

**Table 3.1: Population and sample stratification**

| Department | Population ($N_h$) | Proportionate Sample ($n_h$) |
|---|---|---|
| Finance and Supplies | 100 | (100/268) × 73 = **27** |
| Personnel | 129 | (129/268) × 73 = **35** |
| Revenue | 14 | (14/268) × 73 = **4** |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Budgeting and Planning | | 25 | (25/268) × 73 = **7** |
| **Total** | | **268** | **73** |

**Source:** Authors computation (2026)

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale, capturing information on control environment, risk assessment, and developmental objective attainment. The questionnaires were administered physically to respondents at their duty posts to enhance response rate and ensure accurate completion. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarise respondents' views, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the study's hypotheses at the 5% level of significance.

The regression model was specified as:

$DOA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CE + \beta_2 RA + \mu$

Where:

DOA = Developmental Objective Attainment

CE = Control Environment

RA = Risk Assessment

$B_0$ = Constant

$B_1 - \beta_2$ = Regression coefficients

$\mu$ = Error term

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

**Table 4.1: Reliability Statistics for Study Variable**

| Variable | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Reliability Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA) | 7 | 0.788 | Good |
| Control Environment (CE) | 5 | 0.724 | Acceptable |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Risk Assessment (RA) | 5 | 0.759 | Acceptable |

*Source:* Author's using SPSS (version 27)

The reliability results show that all study variables demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, indicating that the measurement items were consistent in capturing their respective constructs. This confirms that the research instrument is reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

**Table 4.2: descriptive statistics of study variables**

| | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Stat. | Std. Error | Stat. | Std. Error |
| **DOA** | 69 | 1.71 | 4.86 | 3.5714 | 0.7889 | -0.600 | 0.289 | 0.012 | 0.570 |
| **CE** | 69 | 2.60 | 5.00 | 3.7478 | 0.58576 | -0.169 | 0.289 | -0.903 | 0.570 |
| **RA** | 69 | 2.20 | 4.80 | 3.7536 | 0.57204 | -0.489 | 0.289 | 0.271 | 0.570 |

*Source.* SPSS (Version 27).

The results indicate a moderately high level of Developmental Objective Attainment and relatively strong Control Environment and Risk Assessment, suggesting generally positive internal control practices. The responses show limited variation and an acceptable distribution, confirming suitability for further analysis.

**Table 4.3: Correlations**

| | DOA | CE | RA |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DOA** | 1 | | |
| **CE** | .689** | 1 | |
| **RA** | .581** | .537** | 1 |

*Source.* SPSS (Version 27). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results indicate a positive relationship between Developmental Objective Attainment and both Control Environment and Risk Assessment, suggesting that improvements in internal control practices are associated with better developmental outcomes. In addition, Control Environment and Risk Assessment are positively related, indicating that the internal control components are related and tend to strengthen one another.

**Table 4.4: Model summary**

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | $R^2$ | $F^2$ | df1 | df2 | Sig. | |

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| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .734[a] | 0.538 | 0.524 | 0.49597 | 0.538 | 38.434 | 2 | 66 | 0 | 2.002 |

*Source.* SPSS (Version 27). a. Predictors: (Constant), RA, CE
b. Dependent Variable: DOA

The model summary shows a strong combined relationship between the independent variables and Developmental Objective Attainment. It shows that Control Environment and Risk Assessment jointly explain a 53.8% proportion of variations in developmental outcomes, while the adjusted value confirms the model's robustness. The diagnostic statistic further indicates the absence of autocorrelation, suggesting that the regression model is reliable and suitable for inference.

**Table 4.5: ANOVA**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 18.908 | 2 | 9.454 | 38.434 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 16.235 | 66 | .246 | | |
| | Total | 35.143 | 68 | | | |

*Source.* SPSS (Version 27). a. Dependent Variable: DOA
b. Predictors: (Constant), RA, CE

The ANOVA results indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant, showing that Control Environment and Risk Assessment jointly have a meaningful effect on Developmental Objective Attainment. This confirms that the model is valid and appropriate for explaining variations in developmental objective attainment.

**Table 4.6: Regression Coefficients**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| **1** | **(Constant)** | -0.267 | 0.449 | | -0.595 | 0.554 |
| | **CE** | 0.651 | 0.122 | 0.530 | 5.346 | 0.000 |
| | **RA** | 0.373 | 0.125 | 0.297 | 2.992 | 0.004 |

*Source.* SPSS (Version 27).

## 4.2 Hypotheses Testing

**Control Environment (CE) and Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA)**

The results show that Control Environment has a positive and significant effect on Developmental Objective Attainment, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that stronger ethical leadership, organizational structure, accountability, and compliance mechanisms enhance the achievement of developmental objectives.

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**Risk Assessment (RA) and Developmental Objective Attainment (DOA)**

The findings further reveal that Risk Assessment positively and significantly influences Developmental Objective Attainment, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that effective risk identification, evaluation, and mitigation improve planning, resource utilization, and programme implementation.

## 4.3 DISCUSSION

### 4.3.1 Control Environment and Developmental Objective Attainment

The finding that Control Environment significantly enhances Developmental Objective Attainment in Riyom Local Government Area highlights the critical role of governance culture in public sector performance. In local government settings, where bureaucratic structures, hierarchical authority, and resource constraints shape operations, the control environment provides the foundation for translating policies into effective developmental outcomes. Ethical leadership, organisational clarity, and compliance enforcement improve coordination, reduce discretional abuse, and strengthen accountability in project execution. This result aligns with studies by Barros and Ferreira (2022), Li et al. (2022), Uwalomwa and Olamide (2020), Geke et al. (2025), and Ronald et al. (2025). However, it contrasts with Oduwole and Akintoye (2023) and Ejovi (2025), who reported otherwise. The divergence reflects differences in implementation capacity and governance conditions across contexts.

Theoretically, Systems Theory explains this outcome by positioning the control environment as a foundational subsystem that shapes overall organizational effectiveness. Contingency Theory further clarifies that its impact depends on contextual factors such as leadership quality, institutional capacity, and political stability. In Riyom LGA, the positive effect suggests relatively functional governance structures that enable the control environment to effectively drive developmental performance.

### 4.3.2 Risk Assessment and Developmental Objective Attainment

The study further reveals that Risk Assessment significantly influences Developmental Objective Attainment in Riyom Local Government Area. This reflects the operational realities of local government systems, where development projects are exposed to multiple uncertainties, including funding delays, procurement inefficiencies, political interference, and weak monitoring systems. In such environments, risk assessment serves as an adaptive mechanism that enhances planning accuracy, resource allocation, and implementation continuity, thereby improving developmental outcomes. The finding supported the work of Widyastuti et al. (2025), Shehu (2025), Mahlangu et al. (2025), and Muyiwa and Iyabode (2024). However Awotomilusi et al. (2023), Agwor and Akani (2023), Yahya and Venusita (2022), and Oduwole and Akintoye (2023) reports a contrary view. The difference may be attributed to differences in dependent variables, as these studies focused on fraud detection, whereas the present study examines developmental objective attainment.

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From a theoretical standpoint, Systems Theory conceptualizes risk assessment as a feedback mechanism that enables organizational adaptation and continuous improvement in achieving developmental goals. Contingency Theory further explains that the effectiveness of risk assessment depends on contextual factors such as institutional capacity, resource availability, and political stability. In the context of Riyom LGA, where uncertainty and resource constraints are prominent, risk assessment plays a critical role in ensuring continuity and successful implementation of development projects.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that control environment and risk assessment significantly enhance developmental objective attainment in Riyom Local Government Area. This indicates that stronger governance structures and effective risk management improve planning, accountability, and service delivery. The findings support Systems Theory, which links organizational coherence to performance, and Contingency Theory, which emphasises contextual influences. Policy-wise, strengthening internal control systems is essential for improving transparency, efficiency, and developmental outcomes in local government administration in Nigeria.

### 5.2 Recommendations

To enhance control environment and risk assessment in line with the study's hypotheses, local governments should institutionalize ethical governance through enforceable codes of conduct, clear segregation of duties, and strengthened internal audit oversight. Risk assessment should be embedded into annual planning and budgeting via mandatory departmental risk registers and periodic risk review mechanisms to ensure early identification and mitigation of operational and financial risks. In addition, continuous staff training on internal control practices and improved monitoring systems should be implemented to strengthen compliance, accountability, and developmental performance outcomes.

### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study is subject to certain limitations. It was conducted within Riyom Local Government Area and relied on a relatively small sample of 69 valid respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other local governments or broader contexts. In addition, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may also introduce response bias or inaccuracies, while a low response rate was observed as some staff were reluctant to participate due to concerns about confidentiality and fear of possible victimization. Furthermore, contextual factors such as political dynamics, resource constraints, and bureaucratic structures specific to Riyom LGA may affect the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings.

### 5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies should expand the scope of investigation by examining other components of internal control systems such as control activities, information and communication, and monitoring to provide a more comprehensive assessment. Research should also extend to other local governments or states to improve the generalizability and comparative understanding of internal control effectiveness across different contexts. In addition, the use of qualitative or mixed-method approaches is recommended to generate deeper insights into internal control practices and their influence on public sector performance.

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