

The Impact of Good Governance on the Effectiveness of Public Oversight and the Quality of Public Services - A Field Study

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between the application of good governance principles, public oversight, and the improvement of the quality of public services provided to citizens. Good governance is considered a crucial element in enhancing transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency in delivering public services. The study was conducted on a sample consisting of employees from various public administrations and citizens benefiting from different public services. The findings revealed that good governance, encompassing transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency, leads to improved public oversight effectiveness, which significantly contributes to enhancing the quality of public services.

Keywords: Governance; Public Oversight; Public Services; Accountability; Transparency; Administrative Efficiency.

JEL Classification Codes: H11; G28.

1.Introduction

The concept of governance is based on the principle of participation, whereby the government, the private sector, and civil society all participate in strengthening oversight and control in public institutions according to clear principles aimed at improving performance in an environment characterized by transparency, accountability, and responsibility toward all stakeholders. The importance of applying governance in public institutions lies in improving the efficiency of resource utilization and maximizing their value, thereby promoting social expansion and growth through meeting society's needs and improving its standard of living. The adoption of governance also facilitates access to information related to institutional performance, which strengthens public oversight, increases confidence in management, reinforces relations among the various parties, and consequently achieves the public interest. In addition, governance contributes to strengthening the

rule of law and combating corruption, thereby enhancing oversight of the management of these institutions.

1.1 Research Problem

The research problem stems from the fact that applying governance helps increase the effectiveness of public oversight and improves public services. This research paper therefore examines this impact by answering the following main question:

What is the impact of good governance on the effectiveness of public oversight and the quality of public services?

The following sub-questions arise from this main question:

- What is the nature of the relationship between applying the principles of good governance and the effectiveness of public oversight?
- Does public oversight affect the improvement of the quality of public services provided by public institutions?.
- Does good governance contribute to strengthening transparency and reducing corruption?
- Can mechanisms be established to measure citizens' satisfaction with public services?
- In light of the main question and the sub-questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:
- There is a positive relationship between the application of good governance principles and the effectiveness of public oversight.
- Public oversight affects the improvement of the quality of public services provided by public administrations.
- There are mechanisms for evaluating citizens' satisfaction with public services.

1.2 Research Objective

In light of the research problem, the study aims to examine the impact of good governance on the effectiveness of public oversight and the improvement of the quality of public services by answering the aforementioned sub-questions. The objectives of the study can be summarized as follows:

- Studying the relationship between applying governance principles and the effectiveness of public oversight.
- Studying the impact of public oversight on the quality of public services.
- Analyzing the mechanisms used to assess citizens' satisfaction with public services.

1.3 Importance of the Research

The importance of the research can be viewed from two perspectives. Theoretically, the research addresses a highly important topic because it is related to providing mechanisms that help increase the quality of public services, strengthen transparency, and combat corruption. This paper clarifies the most important governance principles that can contribute to activating public oversight and improving the quality of public services. Practically, the importance of the study lies in examining the reality of adopting governance principles and their impact on both public oversight and the quality

of public services through surveying a sample of citizens and employees in various public administrations.

1.4 Study Methodology

To cover the variables of the study and answer the research problem, the descriptive-analytical method was adopted. The descriptive method provides a clear picture of the relationship among the study variables through analyzing the data extracted from the questionnaire, while the analytical method makes it possible to interpret the causes and factors determining this relationship.

1.5 Previous Studies

Study by researcher Abdel Aziz Alwan Al-Azazi (2021): “Institutional Governance and Its Impact on the Quality of Internal Control from the Perspective of Financial Managers and Internal Control Members in the Yemeni Ministry of Endowments in Sana’a.” This study aimed to measure governance and its impact on the quality of internal control in Yemeni endowments and used the descriptive-correlational approach. The study concluded that the combined and individual application of institutional governance components-disclosure and transparency, accountability and responsibility, justice, and independence-had an overall arithmetic mean of 3.48 out of 5 regarding the quality of internal auditing.

Study by researchers Fayez Mohammed Abu Omariya and Nasser Mohammed Saud (2020): “The Impact of Applying the Principles of Good Governance on the Quality of Administrative Reports in Palestinian Municipal Councils.” The study sought to clarify the impact of applying good governance principles on the quality of administrative reports in Palestinian municipal councils. A questionnaire was used to survey a sample including mayors, managers, department heads, and employees. The findings showed that it was premature to speak of good governance in local councils while even the simplest principles, such as accountability, transparency, and employee participation in decision-making, had not been fully applied. In addition, reports submitted to senior management did not reflect the actual reality.

Study by researchers Abdel Hadi and Belkacem Boufateh (2019): “The Role of Governance in Developing Local Communities: An Analytical Study.” The study aimed to demonstrate the importance of governance in societies, particularly developing countries, in order to improve the quality of public services in various fields through combating all forms of bureaucracy and strengthening transparency. According to the study, improving service quality faces a set of problems confronting public administration in performing its functions; therefore, appropriate solutions must be found, among which is the effectiveness of good governance within local administrations.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Good Governance

2.1.1 Definition of Governance

Good governance is one of the concepts widely used in modern literature related to development and democracy. Global transformations have contributed to the adoption of this concept by many Arab governments, development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Achieving it has become

an essential condition for obtaining development assistance directed toward developing countries and for other forms of international dealings.

Although several definitions exist, the most widely used is the definition adopted by the United Nations Development Programme, which defines governance as: “The management of the affairs of the state at different levels through the use of economic, political, and administrative authority, by means of mechanisms, processes, and institutions that enable individuals and groups to achieve their interests.”

Based on this definition, governance is characterized by several features and pillars, including participation, responsiveness, transparency, the rule of law, consensus, equality, inclusion, effectiveness, and strategic vision.

Political scientists also believe that the term governance began to be used in political science since the early 1990s, in an attempt to emulate economic concepts and the orientations of international organizations that used the term to express efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development, especially in developing countries whose governments suffer from noticeable weaknesses in effectiveness and efficiency.

The term governance also appeared in Law No. 06-06 relating to the framework law on the city. The Algerian legislator addressed it in the first chapter concerning general principles, defining it as the system through which the administration is committed to paying attention to citizens' concerns and working to achieve the public interest within a framework of transparency. Article 11 also addressed it in the context of city management and emphasized the importance of strengthening good governance through:

- Developing rational management methods using modern means and techniques.
- Providing and strengthening public services using modern means and techniques.
- Improving the quality of public services.

Based on local and international viewpoints, governance can be defined as: “An integrated set of laws, regulations, and decisions that seeks to achieve quality and excellence in performance through the adoption of effective and appropriate methods for achieving the plans and objectives of the institution.”

2.1.2 Importance and Objectives of Governance

Governance has gained increasing importance worldwide, especially in light of the shift toward the capitalist economic system. The need for it became particularly evident in many advanced and emerging economies during recent decades, especially after the financial collapses and crises witnessed by the world in the 1990s. The importance of the governance system can be summarized as follows:

- ·Reducing risks related to financial and administrative corruption.
- ·Raising the level of performance and consequently advancing development.
- ·Opening new markets and creating opportunities for global competition.

- Increasing transparency, accuracy, and clarity in institutions, thereby strengthening citizens' confidence.
- Providing new employment opportunities for members of society.
- Combating internal corruption within institutions.
- Reducing errors to the lowest possible level by using control systems that prevent such errors.
- Governance rules and controls also grant the right to hold institutional management accountable, which contributes to achieving transparency and justice. Its objectives include:
- Ensuring that the institution complies with work rules and procedures in accordance with applicable regulations and laws.
- Maximizing the role of the institution and its contribution to the development process.
- Improving and strengthening the relationship between the public institution and all stakeholders, including employees, citizens, and private institutions.
- Improving institutional performance and reducing risks and errors.
- Achieving justice, transparency, and the right to hold every department accountable.
- Establishing a culture of commitment to agreed laws, principles, and standards.

2.1.3 Determinants of Governance

To ensure the effective application of governance principles and benefit from their advantages, a set of essential factors and determinants must be available. In the absence of these factors, proper application of governance becomes difficult and may not achieve the desired results. These factors can be classified into two main groups:

- Internal determinants: applicable rules and administrative structures.
- External determinants: laws and regulations, and the efficiency of authorities and agencies.

2.1.4 Principles of Governance

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and professional associations, played a central role in establishing a set of guiding principles that are considered essential references for organizations. These principles aim to strengthen governance mechanisms and evaluate their effectiveness in both developing and developed countries. Among the most important principles are:

- Interaction: Good governance is based on effective and balanced interaction between management and internal and external auditors. This interaction aims to strengthen transparency and accountability and ensure the efficient and effective achievement of institutional objectives.
- Purpose: Management must recognize that its primary objective is to protect the interests associated with the institution, whether those of shareholders, employees, or related parties, while adhering to transparency and responsibility to achieve common objectives efficiently.

- Experience: Members of management should possess extensive experience in the institution and in their functional field and should represent a diverse mix of knowledge and backgrounds. All members

should also receive comprehensive guidance and continuous training to develop their skills and maintain a high level of professional competence.

- Meetings and Information: Regular meetings should be organized at appropriate times, while ensuring that members have access to the necessary information and can interact with relevant parties that facilitate the effective and accurate performance of their duties.

- Fraud: Institutional management must avoid any fraudulent practices in order to avoid severe criminal penalties. It should also prepare periodic reports to assess fraud risks and establish effective mechanisms to reduce these risks and ensure compliance with relevant regulations and laws.

- External Review/Feedback: It is considered a noble mission focused on the public interest rather than competitive activities.

- Disclosure and Transparency: This is one of the most important principles of governance because it provides stability, transparency, and protection for all parties and stakeholders.

2.2 Public Oversight

2.2.1 Definition of Oversight

The concept of oversight is determined according to the standards and methods used, as oversight of the judiciary differs from oversight of public funds and other forms of control. Nevertheless, the basic principles of oversight can be identified and a definition encompassing the common elements among its different types can be provided. Oversight is an essential part of administrative work and aims to verify the correctness of performance, evaluate it, and correct it whenever deviations exist. This reflects the positive concept of oversight, which focuses on improvement and development, unlike the negative concept that is limited to imposing punishment when errors occur.

Public oversight can therefore be understood as observing and following up on all public services and administrative activities, regardless of their type, and verifying the extent of their compliance with the rules and standards established to regulate them. This includes ensuring that services are provided in accordance with the provisions of regulations and laws governing administrative work, in addition to determining the necessary penalties for violations or negligence in performing duties.

In light of the previous definitions, public oversight includes:

- Examination: verifying the actual provision of public services.

- Investigation: verifying whether the service has been effectively received and benefited from, through citizens' feedback and submitted complaints.

- Reporting: formulating the results of examination and investigation comprehensively and submitting them to the competent authorities.

2.2.2 Objectives of Public Oversight

Financial oversight aims to achieve the following:

- Financial objective: ensuring sound management and rational use of allocated appropriations. To achieve this, the legislator established legal and regulatory rules that ensure compliance with the approved budget and help identify areas of imbalance that may affect public funds or errors that occur

during budget implementation. When errors or violations are discovered, those responsible are referred to the competent authorities to take appropriate measures and impose the necessary sanctions.

- Administrative objective: combating bureaucracy and administrative delays and ensuring the proper use of human and material resources by government bodies. It also seeks to improve the performance of administrative departments and combat deficiencies, poor organization, and lack of discipline within public administrations and institutions.

- Economic objective: after parliamentary approval, economic and social development programs constitute a framework for investment programs aimed at promoting economic and social development. These programs include details of projects, amounts, and time periods. The conformity of financial forecasts with objectives is monitored by parliament, bodies affiliated with ministries of finance, and the relevant authorities.

- Political objective: public oversight has two main aspects—internal oversight, through which the government seeks to present a positive picture of budget implementation and avoid errors, and external oversight, carried out by non-governmental bodies such as parliament and the Court of Accounts, with the aim of evaluating government policies and promoting economic and social growth.

2.2.3 Mechanisms of Public Oversight

Public oversight mechanisms differ in terms of the time at which they are applied, the method by which oversight is exercised, and their scope. They include:

- According to timing: prior oversight before implementation; concurrent oversight during implementation; and subsequent oversight after implementation.

- According to regularity: surprise oversight; periodic oversight at known and regular intervals;and irregular periodic oversight with prior notice.

- According to method: documentary oversight, such as the Court of Accounts' subsequent review based on documents sent by authorizing officers and public accountants; and on-site oversight, which may involve observation and investigation in the field in order to establish the facts and circumstances surrounding errors.

2.3 Quality of Public Services

2.3.1 Definition of Public Service Quality

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), quality consists of all the characteristics and features associated with a product or service that make it capable of meeting required needs. The quality of public services can also be defined as the ability to meet citizens' requests in a manner consistent with their expectations and aspirations and that achieves their satisfaction with the service provided.

Services are by nature intangible, which makes their quality difficult to evaluate except through interaction with the citizen requesting the service. With the development of the concept of quality in public services and the increased importance given to citizens' satisfaction, the concept has come to

mean ensuring the achievement of the public interest through strengthening and enhancing the satisfaction of citizens seeking services.

2.3.2 Criteria for the Quality of Public Services

The criteria used to measure the quality of public services can be summarized as follows:

- Speed of service delivery: in the present era, speed has become essential in service delivery. Here, it means the ability to complete the service within a period consistent with the expectations of the beneficiary.
- Ease of benefiting from public services: this criterion measures the ease with which citizens and users obtain a service. It should be accompanied by the absence of unnecessary complications and by the absence of bias or discrimination among beneficiaries, except in cases related to social or health considerations.
- Transparency in public services: transparency means the clarity of service-delivery procedures, the simplicity of information, and the absence of monopolization of information by a particular group. Citizens' knowledge of all their rights and duties contained in laws and administrative documents can reduce manipulation to which public-service applicants may be exposed

3. Practical Section

3.1 Methodology and Tools of the Field Study

3.1.1 Population and Sample

The research population consisted of two groups: employees working in public administrations and citizens benefiting from public services. A random sample of administrative employees working in various public administrations-such as the wilaya, district, municipality, and other administrative departments-was selected, and 80 questionnaires were distributed. For the second group, representing citizens, 70 questionnaires were distributed.

After collecting the questionnaires and verifying their suitability for analysis, 60 questionnaires from administrative employees were valid for analysis, representing 75% of the 80 distributed questionnaires. Among citizens, 55 questionnaires were valid for analysis, representing 78.5% of the 70 distributed questionnaires. In total, 115 questionnaires out of 150 distributed questionnaires were valid for analysis, representing 76.6%.

3.1.2 Study Instrument

The study instrument consisted of a questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the degree of response to each item:

- 1=Strongly Disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3=Neutral
- 4=Agree
- 5=Strongly Agree

The questionnaire was divided into several dimensions. Three dimensions were directed at the first sample, representing administrators, while the fourth axis concerned the sample of citizens. The dimensions included:

- Good governance: transparency (4 items), accountability (4 items), and administrative efficiency (5 items).
- Effectiveness of public oversight: level of performance reports (5 items) and measures adopted to improve oversight (4 items).
- Quality of services: response speed (4 items), service effectiveness (4 items), and number of complaints (3 items).

3.1.3 Tests Used in the Analysis

To test the validity and reliability of the study instrument, process the different dimensions, and test the hypotheses, a set of statistical tools and tests was used with the assistance of SPSS version 28:

1. Cronbach's Alpha reliability tests.
2. Descriptive statistics.
3. Pearson's correlation coefficient.
4. Regression coefficient.
5. Chi-square test.

Reliability Test

The reliability of an instrument means that it gives the same result if it is administered more than once under the same conditions; that is, the degree of stability of the results when the questionnaire is redistributed.

The Cronbach's Alpha values reported for the dimensions were:

- Transparency: 0.751
- Accountability: 0.783
- Administrative efficiency: 0.779
- Level of performance reports: 0.832
- Measures adopted to improve oversight: 0.697
- Response speed: 0.734
- Service effectiveness: 0.774
- Number of complaints: 0.801

All the reported Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the standard value of 0.65; therefore, the instrument possesses the characteristic of reliability.

3.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Questionnaire Dimensions

3.2.1 Presentation and Analysis of the Good Governance Dimension

The responses concerning the transparency dimension ranged between mean values of 3.5714 and 3.8810, corresponding to the degree "Agree." The standard deviations were small and did not exceed 1, indicating that the data were close to the mean and not widely dispersed.

The accountability dimension followed a similar pattern, except for item 08, for which the respondents' answers were neutral. The standard deviations for this dimension were also small, indicating limited dispersion.

The mean values for the administrative efficiency dimension ranged between 3.5952 and 3.8810, corresponding to "Agree," with small standard deviations, indicating that the respondents' answers were not widely dispersed around their arithmetic mean.

The overall mean for the good governance dimension was 3.7781, with a standard deviation of 0.7051. This indicates the absence of substantial variation in respondents' attitudes toward the good governance items.

3.2.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Public Oversight Effectiveness Dimension The overall mean for the "effectiveness of public oversight" dimension was 3.76, corresponding to the degree "Agree." Most items followed the same pattern, except item 08, whose arithmetic mean corresponded to "Neutral." The recorded standard deviations were close to one another and did not exceed 1, indicating that the data were not widely dispersed around their arithmetic means and that there was no major variation in respondents' attitudes toward the items of this dimension.

3.2.3 Presentation and Analysis of the Quality of Public Services Dimension The mean responses for the "response speed" dimension ranged between 3.56 and 3.87, corresponding to "Agree." The standard deviations were small and did not exceed 1, indicating that the data were close to the mean and showed no substantial dispersion.

The "service effectiveness" dimension followed the same general pattern, and its standard deviations were also small, indicating limited dispersion around the arithmetic means.

The mean values for the three items of the "number of complaints" dimension fell within the range corresponding to "Agree," with small standard deviations, indicating that the respondents' answers were not widely dispersed.

The overall mean for the "quality of public services" dimension was 3.6391, with a standard deviation of 0.77846, indicating that there was no substantial variation in respondents' attitudes toward the items of this dimension.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

3.3.1 Testing the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis states:

"There is a positive relationship between the application of good governance principles and the effectiveness of public oversight."

HO: There is no positive relationship between the application of good governance principles and the effectiveness of public oversight.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the application of good governance principles and the effectiveness of public oversight.

To test the first hypothesis, Pearson's correlation test was used. The results showed a correlation coefficient of $R=0.629$, meaning that the relationship between the two variables was 62.9%. This

represents a moderate positive relationship between the independent variable, “good governance,” with its three dimensions—transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency—and the first dependent variable, “effectiveness of public oversight,” with its two dimensions—the level of performance reports and measures adopted to improve oversight.

Accordingly, the first hypothesis is accepted: there is a positive relationship between good governance and the effectiveness of public oversight.

3.3.2 Testing the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis states:

“Public oversight affects the improvement of the quality of public services provided by public institutions.”

HO: Public oversight does not affect the improvement of the quality of public services provided by government institutions.

H1: Public oversight affects the improvement of the quality of public services provided by government institutions.

To test the second hypothesis, a linear regression test was used. The results reported an R value of 65.8%, an R^2 value of 47.8%, and a regression coefficient of 0.649, with statistical significance values below the standard level of 0.05.

These results indicate that public oversight is related to improving the quality of public services and explains a considerable proportion of the changes in the quality-of-services variable. The Fisher and Student test significance values indicate that the model and the regression coefficient are statistically significant. Therefore, the results support the second hypothesis that public oversight affects the improvement of the quality of public services provided by public institutions.

3.3.3 Testing the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states:

“There are mechanisms for evaluating citizens’ satisfaction with public services.”

H0: There are no mechanisms for evaluating citizens’ satisfaction with public services. H1: There are mechanisms for evaluating citizens’ satisfaction with public services.

The Chi-square test was used to test the third hypothesis. The reported results were:

Arithmetic mean: 3.6391

Response direction: Agree

Standard deviation: 0.778460

Chi-square value: 248.26

Significance: 0.000

Confidence level: 95%

Margin of error: 5%

The results show an overall direction of agreement among the study sample. The statistical significance was lower than the standard value of 0.05; therefore, the third hypothesis is accepted: there are mechanisms for evaluating citizens’ satisfaction with public services.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Results

The study reached the following results:

- Transparency, accountability, and performance efficiency, as elements of good governance, have a significant effect on the effectiveness of public oversight.
- Improving governance enhances the government's ability to monitor activities and provide better services to citizens.
- There is a positive relationship between applying the principles of good governance and the effectiveness of public oversight.
- Public oversight affects the improvement of the quality of public services provided by public institutions.
- There are mechanisms for evaluating citizens' satisfaction with public services, including response speed, service effectiveness, and the number of complaints.

4.2 Recommendations

The study proposes the following recommendations:

- Strengthen the legal frameworks that support governance and oversight.
- Provide continuous training for employees on the principles of governance and oversight.
- Use technology to improve the effectiveness of oversight and increase transparency.
- Improve efficiency by applying strategies that enhance resource utilization and increase effectiveness in service delivery.
- Strengthen accountability by activating the role of citizens and civil society in monitoring the performance of government institutions.

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Appendices

Correlation results:

The Pearson correlation between good governance and the effectiveness of public oversight was 0.629, with the reported significance value of 0.002.

Regression model summary:

R=0.658

RSquare=0.478

Adjusted R Square = 0.447

Standard Error of the Estimate = 0.53722

Regression coefficients:

Constant: B=1.071; Standard Error=0.455; t=2.353; Sig.=0.014

X1: B=0.649; Standard Error=0.120; Beta=0.668; t=5.684; Sig.<0.001

Quality of Public Services statistical report:

Mean=3.6391

N=115

Standard Deviation = 0.77846

Chi-Square=248.267

df=115

Asymptotic Significance < 0.001

No cells had expected frequencies below 5%; the minimum expected cell frequency was 7.5.