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Assessing the Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight Committees in the Ethiopian Parliament

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assessing the effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees from 2016 to 2020, particularly focusing on oversight functions and examining their role in promoting transparency, accountability and good governance. The research investigates the committees' ability to hold the executive unit accountable, ensure transparency and prevent corruption. It also analyses the challenges faced by these committees, including limited resources, inadequate training and political interference. This study aims to measure the effectiveness of Ethiopian parliamentary committees using survey data from reliable sources like the House of People's Representatives (HPRs). It proposes that committee effectiveness should be measured by the extent to which committees perform their oversight functions consistent with their objectives.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis method. Data were collected from 178 respondents who were selected by using random sampling techniques. A self-constructed structured questionnaire was used to gather research data from members of parliamentary committees. The descriptive analysis was employed to analyze the data. The research findings showed that the Ethiopian parliamentary committees had ten common oversight functions and the effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees on oversight functions was medium. It also provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary oversight committees in Ethiopia, highlighting areas for improvement and recommending strategies to enhance their effectiveness. The study concludes that the committees were not performing their oversight functions effectively expected of them as legislative agencies. The study recommends that the parliament should give strong attention in strengthening the committees and oversight functions of the parliament. The study also identifies the study's practical contributions and, finally, explains the study's limitations and makes suggestions for further research, such as conducting research on other functions of committees. Ultimately, this research was aimed to contribute in the strengthening of parliamentary oversight in Ethiopia, promoting a more accountable and transparent government that serves the interest of its citizens.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Oversight functions, Parliament, Oversight, Parliamentary Committees,

Introduction of the Study with a Backdrop

Parliament is an institution of democracy responsible for law-making, conducting oversight over the executive, and facilitating public participation, among others. (Madu, 2012). Given that its tasks are intrinsically numerous and complex, the Parliament is too unwieldy a body to effectively deliberate the topics that are brought before it (Sarangan et al., 2020). Due to this fact, the parliament is assisted by various parliamentary committees in carrying out its duties successfully since it lacks the time or expertise to thoroughly examine these issues on the floor of the house (Mattson and Strøm, 1995). A "parliamentary committee" is a group of parliamentarians appointed by the parliament to undertake certain specified tasks (Yamamoto, 2007). Parliamentary committees are now a large part of the business of the Parliament of the world's parliament (Monk, 2009). They are fundamental to the performance of a legislature.

Since Woodrow Wilson's time, the committee stage has played an essential role in the operation of parliaments that are found in different parts of the world. According to Delcamp (2018), the first legislative committees were formed in the United States in 1789 for the purpose of elaborating on the rules of procedure for each chamber. However, for many decades, comparative politics generally and legislative studies were focused on the two extreme cases of the US and the British parliaments (Longley and Davidson, 1998; Rahman, 2008). The use of parliamentary committees was most prominent in the United States Congress (Shaw, 2007). Much literature shows that American congressional committees are the most powerful and effective committees in the world (Sarangan et al., 2020).

The study of existing practices showed that the comparative research that has been carried out on political institutions is "rare and difficult" (Lees and Shaw, 1979, p. 346). The first substantial attempt to analyze parliamentary committees cross-nationally came in the late 1970s and was carried out by Lee and Shaw (Rahman, 2008). In the middle of the 1990s, a turning point was reached in the study of Western European parliaments in general and that of parliamentary committees in particular through the multidimensional substantive collection of studies, Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe, edited by Doring (1995). In his review of parliamentary committees in European democracies (Strøm, 1998) adopted and extended his previous work, thereby surveying the structure, procedure, and power of parliamentary committees in 18 Western European democracies. He stressed that parliamentary committees are among the most important features of legislative organizations in contemporary democracies.

Studies show that, until recently, the parliamentary committee system found in legislatures in the developing world, including Africa, was usually not well developed (Shaw, 2007). According to Shaw, in many developing countries, few committees exist, and those that do meet infrequently. Initially, many democratic parliaments were modeled after the British parliament and reflected the Westminster system's tradition of weak parliamentary committees (Rahman, 2008). As a result, those parliaments that are based on other traditions often lack similar significant internal structures in the form of politically relevant committee systems (Longley and Davidson, 1998). However, it appears that the situation is changing, thereby keeping pace with the review of democracy in the developing world (Shaw, 2007). This history is true for African parliaments and parliamentary committees such as in South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, and Tanzania (Fisher, 1998; Burnell, 2002; Njoroge, 2010; Tafirenyika, 2012; Wong, 2013; Pelizzo and Kinyondo, 2014; Napier, 2018; NAK, 2022). These scholars conducted research exclusively focusing on parliamentary committees in Africa. Their studies revealed that the African parliamentary committees are not effective and well developed, and their effectiveness is affected by different factors, such as the lack of financial resources, inadequate legal frameworks, inadequate technical and administrative capacity, political interference, and lack of expertise

In Ethiopia, the creation, growth, and development of the parliamentary committee system are recent phenomena. The concept of parliamentary standing committees was incorporated in the 1995 FDRE Constitution. Like other nations' parliaments, the Ethiopia parliament is duty-bound to establish standing and ad hoc committees as it deems necessary to accomplish its functions. Since then, the Ethiopian parliament has established a parliamentary committee system composed of different types and numbers of committees. Currently, the house has about 10 standing committees (HPR, 1995). These committees have the duty to oversee government agencies to determine whether they have accomplished their tasks as specified in their annual budgets (HPR, 2016).

Literature has shown that the Ethiopian parliament has adopted the experiences of parliaments that are found in the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and India (Assefa, 2015; Andualem, 2018). All these followed a parliamentary system. Therefore, the Ethiopian parliamentary committee system is also believed to adopt a model of parliamentary committees from these four countries. Concerning research that focuses on the Ethiopian parliamentary committees, there is a lack of empirical studies. Therefore, we can infer that the Ethiopian parliamentary committee system is relatively less developed when it is compared with the above-mentioned African parliaments such as Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania. However, whatever the stage of development of the Ethiopian parliamentary committee system, parliamentary oversight through oversight committees is also becoming an emerging practice in the Ethiopian parliament (HPR, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

According to Wang (2005), parliamentary effectiveness is the output of parliaments in terms of achieving their main responsibilities of representation, lawmaking, and oversight of the executive. Strong committees are a necessary condition for parliamentary significance (Fisher, 1998; Rommetvedt, 1998). They are critical institutions for the effective functioning of oversight functions (Griffith, 2005; Yamamoto, 2007; Rahman, 2008). Currently, the effective administration of parliamentary functions is handled by parliamentary committees, which is why they are characterized as the "engine room" (Faris, 2012, p. 13) of the parliament.

However, studies show that in many countries, parliaments and parliamentary committees are "ineffective" (Tsekpo and Hudson, 2009, p. V). In particular, parliaments and parliamentary committees in developing countries are less effective (NDI, 2000; Hudson and Wren, 2007). The 2005 UNECA report revealed that in many African countries, these duties [lawmaking and oversight] and obligations are rarely performed with efficiency and effectiveness (Pimentel). This report also discloses the most ineffective countries' parliaments, such as Swaziland, Kenya, and Ethiopia (Hudson and Wren, 2007, p. 18)).

However, there is limited literature when it comes to examining the effectiveness of parliamentary committees (Monk, 2009). The existing practices showed that there are few studies that have been conducted on this more demanding task of making the careful and detailed assessment necessary to determine their true value (Njoroge, 2010). This may be partially explained by the challenge of defining and evaluating the effectiveness of parliamentary committees (Ojha, 2012).

So far, there have been some research outputs that concentrate on the oversight function of the FDRE parliament (Awel 2011; Damtew, 2015; Aklilu et al., 2020). Despite some efforts to assess the effectiveness of parliament on oversight effectiveness at the parliament level, this was not the case for Ethiopian parliamentary oversight committees. As far as the researcher of this research has been able to explore related studies focusing on the effectiveness of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees in terms of performing their oversight functions, he has not been able to find an independent empirical study that shows the effectiveness of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees.

It is surprising that so little or non-empirical research has actually been conducted on the topic, especially from the perspective of oversight, despite an increased interest in using effective oversight committees. Therefore, the problem is that, while parliamentary committees are central in oversight function, the effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees are still left unexamined, have been little researched, or have not been examined.

Hence, it is important to raise the following two questions: - What are the oversight functions of the Ethiopian parliamentary oversight committees? What is the effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees on oversight functions? In order to answer these questions, this paper draws on a rigorous descriptive quantitative study to describe the effectiveness level of the committees.

Review of Related Theoretical Literature

Theories of Parliamentary Committees

The existing literature has shown that there are three legislative committee theories that are all related to the principal-agent theory. These are- distributive theory; informational theory; and patrician theory (Mattson and Strøm, 1995; Groseclose and King, 2001; Martorano, 2002; Wong, 2013; Mickler, 2017; Mokgari and Pwaka, 2018; Chowdhury, 2021). These theories characterize committees as having very different functions for legislatures and, more generally, as a type of legislative organization serving very different purposes (Prince and Overby, 2005).

The Distributive Theory

The distributive theory suggests that parliament's standing committees have unique jurisdiction over policy issues, allowing individual members to choose committees and ensuring independent oversight. This approach benefits constituents, increases re-election chances, and encourages negotiation with other lawmakers (Shepsle and Weingast, 1981; Martorano, 2002; Wang, 2013). The theory suggests that a strong committee is formed when committees are given explicit legal power, with committee preferences and autonomy. This allows individual parliament members to choose their committee and ensures a strong, independent role in policy-making and oversight. The distributive theory suggests that lawmakers take committee assignments seriously, as they provide material benefits to constituents, increase their chances of re-election, and negotiate deals with other lawmakers.

The Informational Theory

The informational theory suggests that legislators lack complete information to predict policy outcomes, leading to the establishment of specialized committees to gather necessary information. This system aids Parliament in providing expertise and scrutinizing governmental proposals (Krehbiel, 1992; Wong, 2013). The theory suggests that a highly specialized committee system, capable of transmitting information and reducing uncertainty, is crucial for efficient legislation and oversight processes. This theory suggests that such a system leads to increased efficiency and effectiveness in these processes (Mattson and Strøm, 1995). The informational theory was utilized to analyze the effectiveness of committees in Ethiopia, focusing on their adherence to inquiring information access, sharing, processing, and utilization within committees.

The Partisan Theory

The partisan theory (Cox and McCubbins, 2007) argues that distributive and informational theories overlook party politics in legislatures. The theory views committees as agents of majority party leadership, controlling appointments and committee decisions (Mickler, 2017). The committee system serves the majority party's needs, with strong committees acting as instruments of party leaders (Shaw, 2007). The strength and effectiveness of parliamentary committees are dependent on the party leader's leadership in the House.

The Ethiopian context of the theory aids in examining committee effectiveness factors, providing valuable insights into their functioning.

These three theories are all grounded in the principal-agent theory. In all of the theories, agents are committee members, and principals are constituencies, the parliament, and the party. According to Sarangan et al. (2020, p. 425), parliamentary committees are "meant to breathe life into the institution; they essentially act as agents by performing specific tasks that are delegated to them by the legislature". According to these theories, strengthening the committee system will be done to increase or achieve the ultimate goal of their principles. In addition to this, although the three theories differ in certain aspects, they all have one feature in common: they deal with institutional and legislative organization matters.

Functionalist Theory of Oversight

According to the functionalist theory of oversight, an oversight activity is one in which an actor that is, an agent or an institution known as the overseer supervises another actor, that is an agent or an institution known as the overseen (Kinyondo, R. Pelizzo and A. Umar, 2015). According to the functionalist theory of oversight, one should not ask whether oversight is effective in general, as simple metrics seem to assume. Rather, one should ask whether oversight is effective in performing a specific function. This theory was critical in determining the effectiveness of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees based on a functional approach. For example, the parliamentary committees have two basic functions: lawmaking and oversight functions (HPR, 2016). This study focuses on the oversight functions of the committees. However, within the oversight functions, the committees also have at least ten specific oversight functions which are taken as indicators. Therefore, this functionalist theory helped the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ethiopian parliamentary oversight committees based on their specific functions or indicators.

Functions of Parliamentary Committees

Parliamentary committees perform functions that Houses cannot, such as fact-checking, witness examination, evidence sifting, and drawing reasoned conclusions (Delcamp, 2018). They assist the parliament by overseeing executive accountability, facilitating public participation, and offering expertise and alternative career prospects to backbench MPs. Their main functions are similar to those of the House (Hazan, 2001; Chowdhury, 2021).

Rahman (2008) argues that parliamentary committees play a crucial role in making legislation decisions and overseeing administrative actions. While oversight and legislation can be conceptually separated, they are inseparably linked. Institutional modifications that strengthen legislative decision-making capacity reflect the legislature's ability to carry out oversight, with the best oversight often occurring during committees' legislative hearings.

Oversight Functions of the Committees

The oversight function of the legislature implies the surveillance of the executive agencies, especially by the legislature, and it is founded on the fact that the legislature enacts the laws that create administrative agencies and the governance architecture needed to manage the affairs of the state (Arowolo, 2023). When a legislature performs its oversight functions, it is supervising or overseeing the business of executive branch departments, ministries, or agencies in order to ensure prudent management of funds and frugality in governance (Egobueze and Anthony, 2020). According to Egobueze and Anthony, legislative oversight is effectively achieved through committees, and the committee system is an effective tool for accountability.

Scholars argue that democratic accountability between elections is exercised by both House representatives and committees (Mulgan, 2003; Mickler, 2017). Parliamentary committees are adaptable institutions that contribute to a systemic oversight framework. They track the work of individual government departments and ministries, conducting specific investigations into policy and administration aspects, making them the most important internal tool of a legislature (Griffith, 2005; Beetham, 2006).

Theory of Organizational Effectiveness

Understanding Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a broad concept that takes into account a collection of factors both inside and outside an organization. In general, effectiveness is the extent to which stated objectives are met—the policy achieves what it intends to achieve (Australian Government Commission, 2013). However, the concept of organizational effectiveness is not simple because there are many approaches to conceptualizing this term. Such approaches can be grouped into the following three main groups: Goal approach, functional approach and system approach (Cunningham, 2001).

The goal approach defines effectiveness as the degree of goal achievement, focusing on the desired state of affairs an organization aims to achieve, often referring to goals, objectives, purposes, and goals. The functional approach assesses an organization's effectiveness based on its social consensus of its activities, rather than its structure, rather than its overall societal benefit. The system resource approach emphasizes an organization's effectiveness in utilizing its environment to acquire scarce and valuable resources, rather than focusing on goal achievement.

The term "effectiveness" can vary across disciplines, such as management, where it refers to achieving the right thing (Patel, 2021), and parliamentary effectiveness, which refers to the output of parliaments in lawmaking, oversight, and representation (Wang, 2005).

The concept of effectiveness, used in organizational studies, can be applied to parliamentary committees. However, there is no single definition for committee effectiveness. It is defined differently by individuals and institutions, with the LCHC stating it measures its influence on government actions (Njoroge, 2010). Monk (2009) defining it as influencing the government and debate. The ANAO (2004) defines effectiveness as "the extent to which outputs and/or administered items make positive contributions to the specified outcome" (p. vii).

Rosenthal (1973) has defined effectiveness as "the degree to which committee systems perform the functions expected of them as legislative agencies" (p. 252). The definition given by Rosenthal is somehow different from the above three definitions. He relates effectiveness to the performance of the functions that are expected to be performed by oversight committees. As mentioned above, one of the functions of parliamentary committees is to conduct effective oversight. As a result, the Ethiopian parliamentary committees have a duty to conduct effective oversight with the objective of "ensuring that the executive bodies are carrying out their work in accordance with the national policies and strategies, decrees, regulations, and guidelines issued by the government

For this study, the goal approach (objective) and Rosenthal's definition of committees' effectiveness were applied. Therefore, based on the above committees' objectives and Rosenthal's definition of effectiveness, the fifth term of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees' effectiveness was assessed in relation to the ten common oversight functions listed above under section of oversight functions of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Committees

Assessment of parliamentary committee's effectiveness is crucial for good governance. This has led a number of academics and professionals to develop a number of evaluation methods including passing significant bills, addressing significant issues, and blocking unimportant ones. However, while all of these methods could advance our understanding of how to evaluate committee effectiveness, they are not very useful to parliamentary committees because they lack a sense of measuring oversight functions (Kinyondo and Pelizzo, 2022).

Establishing the effectiveness criterion is a significant issue for assessing the committees' effectiveness. Notwithstanding the challenges in assessing legislative committee efficacy, researchers have attempted to do so by comparing it to a number of particular standards (Drewry, 1985; Marsh, 1986; Aldons, 2000; Monk, 2009; Njoroge, 2010).

Aldons (2000) developed a framework to measure the effectiveness of a parliamentary committee. To be rated effective, over 50% of key recommendations must be accepted and the government must provide a clear response. The methodology has limitations, such as relying solely on committee recommendations and responses, and not considering the quality of reports.

Rahman's 2008 study on parliamentary control and government accountability in South Asia, comparing Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, used a four-point Likert scale to measure members' perceptions of parliament and committees' role in holding the government accountable.

Marsh (1986) used four criteria to assess the committees' effectiveness in a study on the British Parliament. The selection, scope, and significance of inquiry topics comprise the first criterion; the fundamental premise for effectiveness is that inquiry topics have to be pertinent and important. The way that investigations are carried out is the second requirement. This includes the sufficiency of the evidence gathered by committees, the resources gathered for study, the questioning style, their ability to involve interest groups, and, lastly, the timely completion of findings. Marsh's third metric is findings, which encompasses both the results' lucidity and the bipartisan process used to arrive at them. Because they show whether or not committees are prepared to criticise the government on major policies, these factors are crucial for evaluating committee performance. The impact of

reports and enquiries is the last criterion. Marsh (1986), however, notes that any committee work and the data they provide will be forgotten if the reports are not particularly discussed in parliament.

Njoroge's 2010 study on Kenyan parliamentary committees' effectiveness used Collegiate Project Services (CPS) score indicators to evaluate factors such as result, ownership, focus, team process, communication, leadership sharing, leadership support, and structure. The CPS scores measure qualitative results and convert them into quantitative figures. For each factor, a score ranging from 1 to 4 is accorded.

Mokgari and Pwaka (2018) study evaluated the effectiveness of oversight committees in Johannesburg using three KIIs and twelve qualitative questions to assess respondents' understanding of their roles, perceptions, and challenges. (Monk, 2009) suggests measuring committee effectiveness using four groups: government, legislature, stakeholders, and voters. The framework focuses on how many groups rate a committee as effective, with more indicating higher effectiveness. However, it lacks a function rating for effectiveness, indicating a minimum level of effectiveness.

Kinyondo, Pelizzo and Umar (2015) utilized a functional approach to assess the oversight effectiveness of five African parliaments, highlighting its multi-functional functions, such as coercive, negotiation, informative, legitimacy, and linkage. IPU developed a model to assess parliament effectiveness, based on surveys among stakeholders. It measures five principles: representativeness, transparency, accessibility, accountability, and effectiveness, ranging from 1 to 5 of Likert scale.

Aklilu et al. (2020) used a model to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ethiopian parliament in using its twelve oversight tools. They used a 1 to 5 scale, with higher mean values indicating less effectiveness.

Measuring the Effectiveness of the Ethiopian Parliamentary Committees

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of Ethiopian parliamentary committees using survey data from reliable sources like the HPRs. It proposes that committee effectiveness should be measured by the extent to which committees perform their oversight functions consistent with their objectives.

The study evaluates the effectiveness of the Ethiopian Parliamentary Committee using a decision-based model. The model involves surveying committees on a 1-to-5-point Likert scale. The effectiveness of committees is measured by 10 indicators: following up on government GTP, budget implementation, good governance, service delivery, civil service reform, human rights, and freedom of expression, enacted laws, audit findings, and mainstreaming functions. The eight dimensions measure the effectiveness of committees in implementing laws, audit findings, and mainstreaming functions.

The researcher used self-developed, validated measures from the IPU to assess the effectiveness of parliamentary committees (Coelho and Monteiro, 2015) in their oversight functions. In this case, higher mean values indicate more effective committees, while lower mean values indicate less effectiveness.

Research Methods Used

Research methods are the tools by which data is collected. We are unlikely to obtain high-quality data if research procedures are not properly designed and applied, which would provide a precarious basis for any review, assessment, or future plan (Kothari, 2004; Igwenagu, 2016). This study applied quantitative research methods. Quantitative cross-sectional survey methods are research techniques that are used to gather quantitative data, data that can be sorted, classified, measured. Surveys are a popular method of collecting primary data. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. They are a flexible tool, which can produce both qualitative and quantitative information depending on how they are structured and analysed. In this section we focus on the quantitative use of surveys

Population and Sampling Techniques

The whole set of cases from which the researcher's sample was drawn is called the population (Taherdoost, 2016a). It is the object of research and consists of individuals, groups, and organizations (Bryman, 2016). Data obtained from the parliament's research unit (HPR, 2019) has shown that there were 10 standing committees with a total membership of 326. As a result, samples were taken from these 326 members of the committees based on random sampling technique. Since there was a high level of homogeneity among respondents, there was no need to target the entire population. That is, the more homogeneous a population, the more valid the conclusions drawn from a small sample (Canada Audit and Accountability Foundation, 2023).

Sample Size Determination

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations that will be included in a statistical sample (Taherdoost, 2016). Different authors used different formulas to determine the sample size of the study. In this study, the sample size of the participants was determined based on the formula developed by (Yamane, 1973). Then, by applying a proportional and lottery method (Kothari, 2004) individual committee members were picked up from each subcommittee.

The formula is

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{326}{1 + 326 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 179.61$$

n= required sample size.

N = the population size.

e= level of precision or sampling error.

According to the above formula, the actual sample size was 179.6 (180). This sampling number was distributed to each ten standing committees based on the size of each standing committee. On average, each committee had a share of 18 participants.

Instruments and Measures

Data collection tools refer to the devices or instruments that are used to collect data (Kabir, 2016). A questionnaire is a data collection instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Abawi, 2013). The questionnaires were designed based on various literature and empirical studies that deal with the topic under investigation. The items incorporated into the questionnaire generally included both closed-ended and open-ended items. The questionnaire has two major parts, such as general information about the respondents and the oversight functions of the committees. As a result, the study's questionnaires were self-developed.

These questionnaires were self-developed questionnaires and they were validated. Questionnaire validation is a process in which the developer reviews the questionnaire to determine whether it measures what it was designed to measure (de Yébenes Prous, Salvanés and Ortells, 2009). There are different types of validity for an instrument: logical or apparent validity, content validity, construct validity, and criteria validity. This study applies the logical or apparent validity method. According to de Yébenes Prous, Salvanés and Ortells (2009), logical or apparent validity refers to "the degree to which a questionnaire appears to measure that for which it was intended in the opinion of experts and the subjects" (p. 173). As a result, 20 people, i.e., scholars (5), professors (3), and members of parliamentary committees were validating the instrument. Following the validation, some questionnaires were removed and some were modified.

Particular attention was also given to the selection of scales for the questionnaires. Interval scales were used for the study. According to Pimentel (2019) most social science researchers prefer to use response categories that are on an odd scale (three, five, seven, or nine), because they are interested in the scenario in the middle response. In this study, a five-point scale was used for assessing the effectiveness level of committee effectiveness. As a result, 10 items taken from the HPRs rules and procedures (HPR, 2016), the values for each response item were presented as follows: 1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = medium; 4 = high; 5 = very high for the effectiveness of committees on oversight functions which was adopted from Coelho and Monteiro (2015).

Reliability and Validity

A crucial step in evaluating the accuracy and quality of survey data is reliability analysis, which establishes the stability and consistency of a measuring tool or survey questionnaire over time and in various contexts. Cronbach's alpha was employed in this study to ascertain the level of internal consistency dependability.

Table 1: Reliability Test

Scales	Number of variables observed	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)		
Effectiveness	10	0.912		

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 1 presents the results of testing the reliability and validity of the research questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the item was more significant than 0.7, indicating the internally consistent reliability of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2019). The validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through expert evaluation.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refers to the principles that we use to make decisions about what is acceptable practice in any research project (Rath, 2013). This study prioritized gaining participants' consent, developing trust, promoting research integrity, and guarding against misconduct. Ethical issues were addressed before, during, and after data collection, analysis, reporting, sharing, and storage. Confidentiality was maintained by disassociating names from responses during coding and recording processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Response Rate

The percentage of subjects who responded to the questionnaires or interviews is referred to as the response rate (Wambui and Gichuho, 2013). The response rates for the questionnaire were summarized as follows.

Table 2. Questionnaire Response Rate

Responses	No. questionnaires	Percentage	
Distributed questionnaires	180	100%	
Returned and usable questionnaires	178	98.9%	
Unreturned questionnaires	2	1.1%	

Source: Survey data, 2022.

The study involved 178 Ethiopian parliament members, with 180 questionnaires distributed. A response rate of 98.9% was collected from 178 respondents. The response rate is considered excellent for analysis and reporting, as it is above the recommended range of 50% for adequate analysis and reporting, 60% for good, and 70% or more for excellent results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

Description of Participants' Characteristics

In this part, the profiles of respondents, that is, committee members of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees were presented and discussed. The major points that have been used for the study are the demographic characteristics like sex, service year, academic qualification, and position on the committee.

Table 3. Profiles Of Respondents In Terms Of Sex, Education, Experience And Position

No	Characteristics of the	Respondents	Frequency	Percent
		Male	98	55.1
1	Sex of respondents	Female	80	44.9
		Total	178	100
2		Degree	37	20.8
	Educational background	Masters	141	70.2
		Total	178	100
3	Experience (service year)	5 years	92	51.7
		10 years	62	34.8
		15 years and above	24	13.5
		Total	178	100

No	Characteristics of the	Frequency	Percent	
4	Position in the committee	Chair person	15	8.4
		Member	163	91.6
		Total	178	100

Source: Survey data, 2022.

Table 3 shows respondents' sex, educational background, service year, and committee position. 98 (55.1%) are men, while 80 (44.9%) are women. The research has a 17 percent higher sex composition than the parliament, with 27.8% of MPs being female during the 5th term of the parliament. The study found that respondents had a high educational background, with 20.79% having a bachelor's degree and 79.21 percent having a master's degree. This high level of academic qualification enables them to understand questions and respond easily. The data shows that 51.7% of respondents have worked for five years, 34.8% for ten years, and 13.5% for 15 years and above. Over half of these respondents have served as committee members in parliament, providing a wider experience and knowledge base of committee functions and challenges. This indicates a significant proportion of respondents have worked in parliament for at least five years. The researcher analyzed respondents' positions within committees to determine if there was a difference in their perception of committee effectiveness. Results showed that 91.6% of respondents are committee members, with 8.4% being leadership members. This suggests that committee members may provide unbiased responses.

Description of the Oversight Functions of the Committees

Data obtained from the document review revealed that the Ethiopian parliamentary committees have two types of oversight functions: specific and common oversight functions. While specific oversight functions are functions that were given to specific committees to oversee a specific governmental agency or the Ministry, common oversight functions are oversight functions that were performed by all standing committees. These common oversight functions include following up on the Federal government's five-year plan, efficient budget utilization, good governance, public service delivery, civil service reform, human rights respect, information freedom, effective law implementation, audit findings, and mainstreaming issues. (HPR, 2016). This study focused only on common oversight functions of Ethiopian parliamentary committees aiming to assess the overall effectiveness level of the parliamentary oversight committees on such common oversight functions.

Description of the Effectiveness of the Committees

This section presents the study's results on the effectiveness of committees in performing ten common oversight functions including: oversight of the implementations of five-year GTP; effective and efficient budget utilization; external and internal good governance; expeditious and accountable service delivery; civil service reforms; reception for human rights; freedom of expression; enacted laws; audit findings; and mainstreaming issues.

Respondents were asked to describe their level of agreement on the effectiveness of their performance on the ten common oversight functions. Table 4 describes the summary results of the common oversight functions of the 5th term of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees. The study's total mean is 3.2, which is found under the category of 3 (in our case, medium) on the five-point Likert scale intervals (Pihie and Akmaliah, 2009; He, 2012; Pimentel, 2019). This indicates that the overall average of the respondents believed that the oversight committees were medium effective in performing the common oversight functions.

Two open-ended questions were asked of the respondents with the aim of understanding in performance measurement practice and in evaluating their performance in general. The first question was, "How was the committees' performance evaluated and measured?" Almost all respondents responded that the committee's performance was evaluated or measured based on "Gingema," which is finally approved by the coordinating committee. According to these respondents, committees were given a grade of "A" (high performance), "B" (medium performance), and "C" (low performance) which is a totally subjective criterion. The second question was "How do you evaluate the effectiveness level of your committee on oversight functions in general?" Some of the respondents said that their committee's effectiveness level was high. However, the majority of respondents responded that their committee's effectiveness level was medium. From this, we can understand that the data revealed that the effectiveness level of the fifth term of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees on common oversight functions was medium.

Table 4. The Effectiveness of Committees on Oversight Functions

oversight Functions Indicators		Committees' effectiveness on oversight functions					
	Total	very low n (%)	Low n (%)	Medium n (%)	High n (%)	Very high n (%)	Mean (SD)
Implementation of the 5 years gov't. GTP	178		33(8.5)	65(36.5)	80(44.9)		3.26 (. 754)
implementation of effective and economical budget utilization	178		36(20.2)	80(44.9)	62(34.8)		3.15(. 730)
implementation of external and internal good governance	178		12(6.7)	111(62.4)	55(30.9)		3.24 (. 566)
implementation of expeditious and accountable service delivery	178		43(24.2)	86(48.3)	37(20.8)	12(6.7)	3.10(. 844)
implementation of civil service reform and other change instruments	178		44(24.7)	63(35.4)	59(33.1)	12(6.1)	3.22(. 897)
implementation of Respecting of Human rights	178		33(18.5)	99(55.6)	46(25/8)		3.07(. 664)
Implementation of freedom of information	178		32(18.0)	115(64.6)	31(17.4)		2.99(. 597)
implementation of the Effective implementation of enacted laws	178		45(25.3)	55(30.9)	78(43.8)		3.19(. 813)
implementation of Audit findings	178		36(20.2)	72(40.4)	70(39,3)		3.19(.750)
implementation of Mainstreaming functions	178		44(24.7)	49(27.5)	67(37.6)	18(10.1)	3.33(. 961)
Total/ Mean							3. 17(.572)

Source: Survey Data Analysis, 2022.

Discussion of Research Results

The above table (Table 4) describes the summary of the results of the effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees on oversight functions.

The study found that Ethiopian parliamentary committees' effectiveness in the fifth term was medium, with a mean value of 3.17. Surprisingly, the committees' effectiveness was medium on all ten common oversight functions, averaging between very law and very high.

This finding, at least indirectly, is somewhat supported by the literature (Awel 2011; Damtew, 2015; Aklilu et al., 2020), which examines the effectiveness of the EFDRE parliament on oversight functions. It seems that the medium effectiveness level of the committees' effectiveness may be related to the principal's support for the committees. That is, if the principal (Parliament) did not use whatever actions were available to provide incentives for the agents (Tafirenyika) to conduct the effective oversight that the principal wanted (Gailmard, 2012). Furthermore, the findings indicated that the agents (Tafirenyika) had not performed effective oversight as the principal desired.

The functionalist theory of oversight suggests that effectiveness assesses the effectiveness of an oversight activity. The data shows that most oversight measures have similar effects on the medium effectiveness level of the Ethiopian parliamentary committee's oversight function. However, four measures have a lower contribution,

such as following up on budget utilization, service delivery, human rights respect, and freedom of information implementation.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was assessing the effectiveness of level of parliamentary committees in the Ethiopian parliament.

From the results of the discussion above, data from both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires showed that committees were moderately effective in performing oversight functions, but also revealed a negative aspect in some areas. As a result, it can be concluded that the fifth term of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees' effectiveness level in performing oversight functions was medium. The results also imply that, despite their medium effectiveness, the committees have succeeded to some extent in carrying out their oversight duties, adding to the overall efficiency of parliamentary oversight in the Ethiopian parliament. However, this suggests that there is still a need to improve the effectiveness of parliamentary committees on oversight functions.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends recommendations for the Ethiopian parliament, committee leadership, committee members, and potential researchers regarding oversight functions.

First, the Ethiopian parliament's coordinating committee lacks objective performance measurement criteria, leading to subjective evaluations. The researcher recommends developing an objective instrument and applying various incentives to enhance competition and effective oversight among committees.

Secondly, the study found medium effectiveness of committees in oversight functions, but not equal attention to all indicators. The researcher recommends enhancing committee effectiveness and ensuring equal attention.

Thirdly, in order to ensure that parliamentary committees are able to fully and effectively carry out their functions, further efforts should be made to enhance the effectiveness of parliamentary committees.

Contribution of the Study

Besides the scholarly contributions, the current research may also have important practical implications. The study has the following practical applications:

First, the study has some practical and administrative implications and suggestions for higher officials of the parliament that would follow, as these were extracted from the empirical findings of the current study

Second, the study may contribute to having a clear performance evaluation practice at the parliamentary and committee levels. These may assist the House leadership in cascading strategic objectives from the legislature to committees and then to subcommittees.

Limitations and Suggestions

The study has some limitations. The first limitation is found in the fact that this paper has focused only on the effectiveness of the parliamentary committees on common oversight functions. However, each of the Ethiopian parliamentary committees has specific oversight functions. Accordingly, the study suggests conducting further research on those specific oversight functions.

The second limitation arises from the fact that this study was limited to the effectiveness of parliamentary committees at the Federal level and could not be generalized to other settings. So, to enhance external validity, the study suggests conducting future research efforts focusing on the effectiveness of regional council standing committees on their oversight functions.

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