

## Good Governance and Organizational Performance in Public Sector Organizations: Evidence from Ethiopia's Amhara Regional State

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### Abstract

Despite the widespread promotion of good governance as a mechanism for improving public sector effectiveness, evidence regarding its contribution to organizational performance and the challenges affecting its implementation remains limited in Ethiopia's public sector. This study examined the relationship between good governance practices and organizational performance in selected public sector organizations in the Amhara Regional State, and identified the governance principles most strongly emphasized and the major challenges affecting implementation. A mixed-methods approach analyzed quantitative data from 342 survey samples using SEM AMOS and Chi-square tests, alongside qualitative data from interviews and document analysis. Good governance significantly enhances organisational performance, with the principles of the rule of law, accountability, consensus-building, and participation being identified as preferred approaches to achieving this goal. However, significant challenges hinder effective governance, including weak legal frameworks, limited public participation, economic difficulties, and insufficient political will, which are exacerbated by corruption and crises. To enhance governance in the Amhara Region, recommendations include establishing a Good Governance Implementation Agency (GGIA), developing a Regional Ethical Leadership Development strategy, and fostering Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Future research should explore preferences for governance principles and conduct longitudinal studies on intervention effects.

**Keywords:** Accountability, Equity and Inclusivity, participation, Rule of Law, Transparency

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## **Introduction**

The concept of good governance has been a prominent subject of discussion and research in the fields of public management and development studies. It is a cornerstone for sustainable development, social justice, and equitable economic distribution. It ensures accountability, efficiency, and equity in public services by minimising corruption, considering minority views, and augmenting the voices of the vulnerable in decision-making (George et al., 2021; Sari, 2023).

Governance is emerging as a critical issue due to a range of global challenges. The pursuit of sustainable development often intersects with problems such as corruption, environmental degradation, human trafficking, conflict, and globalisation. Corruption erodes governance systems, impeding equitable resource distribution and economic progress. Environmental concerns, such as rising greenhouse gas emissions and resource depletion, demand collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders. Human trafficking, a grave violation of human rights, undermines societal stability and development by exploiting vulnerable populations. Globalisation, while offering economic opportunities, also presents challenges, like labour migration, capital flows, and trade imbalances. In post-conflict regions, consolidating peace through dialogue and reconciliation is also essential for building stable governance structures (Ahmed & Anifowose, 2024; Chopra et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the concept gained global attention in the early 21st century as part of public sector reforms that began in the 1980s. It is considered the third wave of reforms after the command and market economy, focusing on the government's ability to coordinate different social actors to develop public policies (Baimyrzaeva, 2012). Good governance became a trending topic partly due to its impact on economic efficiency, particularly the effectiveness of aid to developing countries. It is seen as essential for development, creating an enabling and supportive environment for it. As a result, various international agencies such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) sought to define the characteristics of good governance, including the rule of law, consensus building, accountability, transparency, and equity (Thirkell-White, 2003; Thomas, 2012).

This conceptualization of governance, which shifts focus from hierarchical control or market-based mechanisms toward collaboration, is rooted in the theoretical framework of New Public Governance (Osborne, 2010). Emerging as the third wave of public sector reform, NPG addresses

the limitations of both traditional Public Administration and efficiency-focused New Public Management (NPM) by recognising complex societal issues, such as those related to sustainable development and poverty, transcend the capacity of any single government entity (Krogh & Triantafillou, 2024). NPG posits that effective service delivery and policy implementation rely on the state's ability to act as a coordinator and broker, utilizing networking as the primary mechanism for building resilient relationships among public sector bodies, the private sector, and civil society. This approach structurally enables participation and co-production, ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive, consensus-oriented, and ultimately, more legitimate and effective in addressing fragmented governance challenges (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Popęda & Hadasik, 2024).

Building on the New Public Governance (NPG) framework, good governance emphasizes the practical networking roles of the public sector, private sector, and civil society. Accordingly, “networking” involves creating connections and building relationships among the public, private, and voluntary sectors. This collaborative approach to public service delivery, founded on the principles of the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and participation, addresses complex societal issues that exceed the capacity of any single entity to handle. It represents a definitive departure from traditional hierarchical structures and market-based mechanisms towards networks and partnerships, where the government uses negotiation, trust, and persuasion instead of direct control (Denis et al., 2015). The goal of this coordination and partnership is to involve others who are more efficient and effective in delivering services to citizens.

The concept is complex and open to various interpretations. The Commission on Global Governance (1995) defines "good governance" as the collaborative effort of individuals and institutions, public and private, to manage shared affairs, involving both formal and informal arrangements. Similarly, the United Nations (2000) views "governance" as encompassing both the decision-making process and the subsequent implementation (or non-implementation) of those decisions. Furthermore, in his paper "What Is Governance?" Fukuyama (2013, P. 3) defines good governance as a government's "ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not."

In the African context, the purpose of good governance is to assist countries in achieving sustainable development. African countries face nation-building challenges such as conflict, poverty, crime, poor governance, corruption, and lack of infrastructure (Folorunsho & Samuel,

2025; Iwuagwu, 2021; Nwizu & Alozie, 2018). Despite being rich in natural resources, Africa struggles to utilize them effectively. Governance deficiencies have been identified as a major contributing factor, including the absence of the rule of law, weak institutions, and widespread corruption (Mo Ibrahim Foundation [MIF], 2024). Consequently, poor governance acts as a barrier to economic, social, and political development and contributes to the collapse of national governments.

Since the early 2000s, good governance has been a central pillar of Ethiopia's national development agenda (Begashaw, 2019; Ministry of Capacity Building [MOCB], 2006). The Ethiopian government has actively strived to promote and implement good governance principles. In 2006, the country adopted the eight principles of good governance established by the United Nations (Qudrat, 2009). These principles, applied across various levels of government and public sector organizations, include participation, consensus-orientation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusivity, and the rule of law (MOCB, 2006).

Good governance is implemented through governmental institutions and public organizations, and regional governments play a critical role in translating national governance policies into practice. Therefore, assessing governance within public sector organizations at the regional level provides vital evidence regarding the effectiveness of governance reforms. However, the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) faces a complex crisis affecting its social, economic, and security sectors. These challenges, worsened by governance issues, pose a serious threat to the region's stability and development. While good governance is crucial in addressing and reducing the impact of such crises, and despite various reforms aimed at improving institutional capacity, such as justice system reforms, civil service reforms, and district-level decentralization initiatives, the Amhara region continues to experience significant governance problems. These ongoing deficiencies are marked by social discord, economic decline, inadequate educational and health services, and persistent security threats (Plan and Development Bureau, 2023).

These governance gaps have exacerbated the crises by leading to mismanagement, corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability (Kaufmann et al., 2009). Studies specific to the Amhara region indicate that governance shortcomings have significantly contributed to its vulnerability (Abakose & Abagojam, 2021; Belachew & Shyamasundar, 2013; Plan and Development Bureau,

2023). Plan and Development Bureau, 2023). Issues, such as weak public service delivery, inadequate accountability, and insufficient community participation have undermined the region's ability to respond to and recover from crises effectively. Furthermore, the relationship between regional and lower-level governance structures, often exacerbated by power vacuums at various levels, frequently results in fragmented and uncoordinated responses, adding to the existing governance problems.

Hence, the study aims to investigate the achievements, the challenges, and the relationships between governance principles (such as the rule of law, equity and inclusiveness, consensus-building, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and participation) and organisational performance at the state and local level of the Amhara regional government. The governance principles were the independent variable, while organisational performance was the dependent variable, which included dimensions like customer satisfaction, operational efficiency (finance), operational effectiveness, and capacity building. The analysis identified which governance principles contribute most significantly to achieving organisational goals in the public sector bodies under examination.

Despite the critical importance of good governance for sustainable development, its practices remain unsatisfactory, highlighting an urgent need to address these deficiencies (Bhargava, 2015). Furthermore, a notable lack of empirical research exists at the regional level, with a dearth of studies in specific institutions (Bayeh, 2019; Dessie, 2019). Specifically, this study addresses a significant gap in the governance literature by focusing on sub-national, regional evidence (Bayeh, 2019; Dessie, 2018; Ponduri et al., 2020) within Ethiopia. This research provides Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)-based mixed-methods evidence, from the Amhara region, a context characterized by active conflict. By doing so, the study also addresses a second research gap: the empirical testing of the "good governance → performance" hypothesis within fragile settings. Existing tests of this nexus are confined to relatively stable African nations, like Ghana, Botswana, Rwanda, and Kenya (Brookings Institution, 2020). This research thus offers a quantitative test using data collected between 2022 and 2025 in a fragile environment affected by the conflict, yielding much-needed evidence.

This study thus addresses these significant practical and empirical gaps by evaluating the current state of good governance and its impact on the performance of public sector organizations.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the NPG discourse by providing one of the few empirical tests of core governance principles (such as participation and accountability) and their structural validity in a specific non-Western, decentralized, and conflict-affected Ethiopian context.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this research is to investigate the applications of good governance within selected public sector organizations in the Amhara Region. The specific objectives of the research study include:

- a) To determine the extent to which good governance practices contribute to the performances of the selected public sector organizations.
- b) To determine the most preferred principles of good governance in selected public sector organizations.
- c) To explore the extent of good governance challenges in the Amhara Region.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent do good governance practices affect performance in the selected public sector organizations?
2. What are the most preferred principles of good governance as perceived by employees in the selected public sector organizations?
3. How does the Amhara Region face challenges in policy-making and implementing a good governance package?

### **Literature Review**

Good Governance (GG) is a multifaceted concept defined differently across various international bodies, though all definitions converge on the core ideas of effective and accountable management. For instance, early views by the Commission on Global Governance (1995) saw GG broadly as the collective effort of public and private institutions to manage shared affairs and balance diverse interests. In contrast, the World Bank (1994) focused more narrowly on the exercise of power in managing economic and social resources, emphasizing the government's capacity to formulate and implement policy. Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 1995) highlights the use of political authority and control for social and economic

development, while the UN (2000) emphasizes that "governance" encompasses both the decision-making process and the subsequent implementation (or non-implementation) of those decisions.

More contemporary definitions often focus on specific outcomes or legal processes. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF, 2024) adopts a rights-based approach, defining governance as the state's responsibility to provide essential political, social, economic, and environmental goods and services to its citizens. Additionally, Djoh(2025) views Good Governance in the preparation of local regulations as a specific procedural approach designed to produce regulations that are democratic, relevant, and of high quality, which ultimately strengthens local governance in serving the public interest. Despite differing in scope—some being broad (Commission on Global Governance, OECD) and others more focused on resource provision or legal process (World Bank, MIF, Djoh)—all definitions underscore the necessity of collective action, accountability, and effectiveness in the steering and monitoring of public organizations.

The literature identifies several contentious issues regarding GG. The historical controversy over Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) implemented by the IMF and World Bank on African nations in the 1980s, in exchange for financial aid. This arrangement led to concerns regarding national sovereignty, a challenge that continues to be discussed in the literature (Magocha&Mutekwe, 2021). The very origin of the GG concept is debated: some trace the term "governance" to Harlan Cleveland (1972), who expanded it beyond government to include market and civil society actors (Frederickson, 2007), while the term "good governance" is formally linked to the World Bank's 1989 introduction or its 1992 report, "Governance and Development" (Abrahamsen, 2012; Woods, 2000). Philosophically, the underlying principles are considered timeless, rooted in Aristotle's concept of *telos* (final causality), suggesting governance inherently aims for a higher purpose, such as the common good (Loux, 2003).

Besides, governance is deemed a double-edged sword: while sound practices foster stability and development, poor governance can lead directly to corruption and instability (Nae et al., 2024; Onafowora & Owoye, 2024). This inherent risk is magnified by the networking component of Good Governance (GG). While essential for multi-stakeholder collaboration, the relational nature of networking makes it vulnerable to abuse, facilitating cronyism in promotions, bid-rigging in procurement, and the manipulation of accountability in public sector organizations. Such abuses ultimately undermine the rule of law and transparency (Denekew, 2020). Therefore, the quality of

governance depends heavily on the presence of an independent judiciary, robust accountability mechanisms, active citizen engagement, and committed leadership.

From a theoretical perspective, the New Public Governance (NPG) framework and Social Exchange Theory (SET) views the operational dynamics among the three key actors—Government, Civil Society, and the Private Sector—as a reciprocal, cost-benefit interaction aimed at maximizing rewards (Cook et al., 2013). This translates into an implicit social contract. However, a critical weakness in applying SET to governance is the inherent power asymmetry. Because the state holds the monopoly on legitimate force and sovereignty, the "exchange" is often not equitable. The Government's power advantage can enforce compliance and payment (high cost) even when service delivery (low reward) is poor, potentially leading to involuntary compliance rather than genuine reciprocal exchange (Molm, 2015).

Since GG is concerned with the role of institutions, the assertion that GG is rooted in network and institutional theory is vital. Institutional Theory posits that organizational structures and practices are shaped less by efficiency requirements and more by the need to conform to social norms, rules, and expectations (institutions) embedded in the wider environment (Woodhouse, 2024). This explains why institutions adopt principles, like accountability and transparency: they are not just efficient management tools, but mechanisms required for legitimacy and public trust. This focus on legitimacy, norms, and collective expectations directly contrasts with NPM's singular focus on economic rationality and market logic.

The NPM movement, pioneered in countries like the UK and New Zealand (Gruening, 2001), focused on improving public sector efficiency by adopting market-based principles and management techniques, such as Steering Rather than Rowing and Funding Outcomes and Not Inputs (Gaebler & Osborne, 1993). While NPM pursues accountability through performance measurement (Latham & Locke, 2018), GG achieves accountability through a broader, more democratic framework. This comparison reveals a significant implementation weakness: the conflict between theoretical logics. NPM is rooted in Public Choice/market theory, demanding efficiency and competition, while GG (based on Institutional and Network theories) demands legitimacy, reciprocity, and conformity to norms (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). A public organization attempting to merge these models faces inherent internal conflict, struggling to prioritize cost-

efficiency (NPM's goal) while simultaneously fulfilling complex, norm-driven, and often high-cost demands for legitimacy and network reciprocity.

This theoretical conflict is linked to the historical issue of sovereignty. The World Bank's governance definition, which focuses on the exercise of power over resources (World Bank, 1994), has been interpreted by critics as favoring external conditionality and market-driven reforms, linking its approach to the historical precedent set by SAPs. This suggests that the governance frameworks promoted by global financial institutions may carry an implicit market-theory bias that risks undermining the political and social integrity required by Institutional Theory (Kentikelenis et al., 2016; Nankani, 2024).

### **Methodology**

This study employed a pragmatic research approach, which is particularly suitable for examining the effect of good governance components on organisational performance in public sector bodies within the Amhara Region. This paradigm emphasises practical application of research findings and integrates diverse methods to address real-world problems. The primary objective was to explore the achievements and challenges of good governance and its effect on performance, ensuring that the insights generated are directly applicable to improving public sector operations in the region (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The pragmatic approach allowed for a focus on practical deliverables that are both theoretically informed and relevant to real-world issues.

A mixed-methods research approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This approach allowed for a comprehensive investigation, leveraging the strengths of both data types. Quantitative data provided statistical insights into good governance components and performance variables, enabling the identification of trends, correlations, and regressions. Conversely, qualitative data, gathered through interviews and document reviews, captured experiences and perceptions related to governance achievements and challenges.

A convergent research design was specifically utilized, allowing for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both data types. This integration aimed to produce findings that are not only statistically significant but also practically actionable.

The study population comprised public sector organizations at both state and lower administrative levels in the Amhara Region. A cluster sampling technique was employed to select these organisations, ensuring representation from both policy development and implementation tiers. Regional organisations were initially grouped into three clusters: economic, social, and administrative. From these, ten bureaus (20% of the total 52 organisations) were selected using a combination of cluster and systematic random sampling to ensure a representative sample across various bureau types and sizes. The research scope extended to include the Bahir Dar City Administration and Minilik II Sub-city, bringing the total study population to 2,358 employees. Organisations at these lower levels were chosen to mirror those at the regional level, while acknowledging structural differences in certain agencies (e.g., Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission at state level versus health and women's affairs bureaus at city/sub-city levels).

The sample size for the quantitative component was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula (as cited in Louangrath, 2017), with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This calculation yielded a sample size of 342 participants from the total population of 2,358 employees (including political appointees). This sample size was considered adequate to accurately represent the target population and facilitate meaningful statistical analysis, maximising the generalisability of the findings while minimising potential biases.

Data collection utilised both probability and non-probability sampling methods. For quantitative data, cluster sampling was employed to divide the population into economic, social, and administrative groups, followed by systematic random sampling within each cluster. For qualitative data, a non-probability, purposive sampling approach was used to select key informants for interviews. These individuals were chosen based on their specific expertise and knowledge relevant to the research topic, providing rich insights. The principle of theoretical saturation guided the cessation of interviews and document reviews, ensuring that data collection continued until no new themes emerged, thereby guaranteeing the depth and comprehensiveness of the qualitative data.

Accordingly, the survey achieved a high response rate of 96.5% from 342 initial respondents across three clusters: Social, Economic, and Administrative. Individually, the Social Cluster yielded a 98.5% response rate (130 out of 132), the Economic Cluster achieved 98.4% (120 out of 122), and the Administrative Cluster, while slightly lower, still conveyed a 90.9% (80 out of 88).

This high participation ensured a robust dataset for analysis, with only 10 questionnaires not returned and 2 removed for quality control, demonstrating a highly effective data collection process. Additionally, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with six government officials and experts, a sample size determined by theoretical saturation, further enriching the study's findings with their valuable perspectives.

To rigorously investigate the complex, hypothesized relationships between the latent governance principles and the dimensions of organisational performance, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) was employed. This advanced technique allows the simultaneous testing of the structural model, providing a definitive assessment of the causal pathways through which governance principles (measured on a 5-point Likert scale) affect organisational outcomes. To complement this, the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test was employed to assess the preferred types of governance principles. Finally, to explore the achievements and challenges of good governance, thematic analysis and content analysis were utilised. Thematic analysis systematically identified, analyzed, and interpreted patterns of meaning within qualitative data (e.g., interview transcripts), while content analysis was specifically applied to analyze relevant documents. This integrated approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by synthesizing insights from both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Analysis and Results**

The internal consistency of the data was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the items measuring that specific construct. The coefficient values range from .805 to .968. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha of .70 or higher is considered acceptable, indicating good internal consistency. Values above .80 are often considered very good, and above .90 are sometimes considered excellent (Taber, 2018; Vaske et al., 2017).

<b>Table1: Reliability Test</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
Accountability	.887	3
Transparency	.869	4
Rule of law	.900	4
Consensus Building	.809	3
Participation	.818	4
Equitable and Inclusive	.858	4
Responsiveness	.858	3
Effective and Efficient	.750	3

Organizational Performance	.813	4
Good Governance	.968	32

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

Convergent validity, an imperative aspect of construct validity, assesses the extent to which multiple indicators of the same construct are in agreement. It essentially checks if the measures designed to assess a particular concept are truly related to each other. One common way to evaluate convergent validity is by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE represents the average proportion of variance in the indicators that is explained by the latent construct. A widely accepted rule of thumb is that an AVE value of 0.5 or greater indicates adequate convergent validity (Haji-Othman, & Yusuff, 2022, Yusoff et al., 2020). This provides evidence that the indicators utilized to measure each construct are indeed measuring the same underlying concept. See also Table 2.

**Table 2: Convergent Validity**

Latent Variables	Sum of the Squared Standardized Loadings	Number of Indicators	AVE	DV
Accountability (Ac)	2.339	3	0.78	0.88
Rule of law(RL)	2.7662	4	0.69	0.83
Participation(Pt)	2.2103	4	0.56	0.75
Equitable and Inclusive(In)	2.4011	4	0.60	0.77
Effective and Efficient(Ef)	1.6339	3	0.54	0.73
Responsiveness(Rs)	2.0141	3	0.67	0.82
Transparency(Tr)	2.5036	4	0.63	0.79
Consensus Building(Cn)	1.7937	3	0.60	0.77
Organizational Performance(Pf)	1.9885	4	0.50	0.71

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

Besides, discriminant validity is another critical aspect of construct validity. It evaluates the extent to which a particular construct is distinct from other constructs. It checks if the measures of different concepts are truly unrelated to each other. Table 3 dicates that the model demonstrates good discriminant validity. Each latent variable is more strongly related to its own measures than it is to the measures of other distinct latent variables. This provides further support for the construct validity of the measurement model.

**Table 3: Discriminant validity**

Latent Variables	Ac	Tr	RL	Cn.	Pt	In	Rs	Ef	Pf
Ac	<b>0.88</b>								
Tr	0.698	<b>0.79</b>							
RL	.338	.368	<b>0.83</b>						
Cn	.564	.649	.418	<b>0.77</b>					
Pt	.219	.288	.488	.266	<b>0.75</b>				
In	.175	.318	.594	.327	.603	<b>0.77</b>			
Rs	.527	.582	.322	.518	.366	.527	<b>0.82</b>		
Ef	.361	.362	.637	.324	.504	.487	.361	<b>0.73</b>	
Pf.	.313	.355	.657	.321	.478	.591	.429	.313	<b>0.71</b>

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

Multicollinearity occurs when two or more predictor variables in a model are highly correlated, which can make it difficult to determine the individual effect of each predictor on the outcome variable. The table provides two key statistics for each predictor variable listed in the first column: Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Based on the Tolerance and VIF values presented in Table 4, there does not appear to be a significant multicollinearity problem among the predictor variables (Accountability, Transparency, Rule of Law, Consensus Building, Participation, Equitable and Inclusive, Responsiveness, Effective and Efficient, and Organisational Performance). All tolerance values are well above the common threshold of 0.10 or 0.20, and all VIF values are well below the common threshold of 5 or 10. This suggests that the predictor variables are not so highly correlated that they would severely distort the results of a regression analysis (Kalnins & Praitis Hill, 2025).

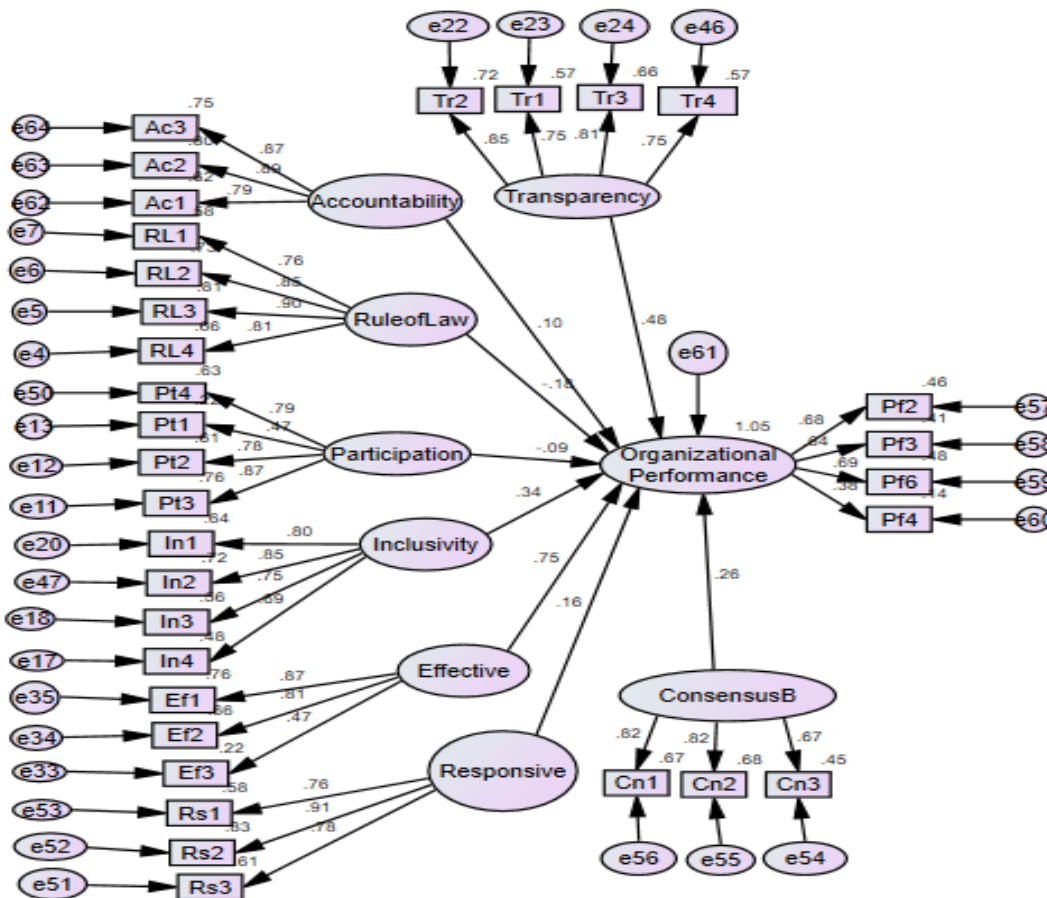
**Table 4: Multicollinearity statistics**

	Tolerance	VIF
Accountability	.693	1.442
Transparency	.630	1.588
Rule of law	.892	1.121
Consensus Building	.803	1.245
Participation	.861	1.162
Equitable and Inclusive	.903	1.107
Responsiveness	.703	1.423
Effective and Efficient	.650	1.539
Organizational Performance	.648	1.544

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

The first guiding question tried to investigate the extent to which good governance practices affect performance within selected public sector organizations. To statistically analyze this relationship and determine the strength and direction of these effects, the study specifically utilized AMOS path coefficients and baseline comparisons.

**Figure 1: AMOS Path coefficients**



Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

Figure 1 presents the AMOS path coefficients that illustrate the direct and indirect relationships between latent variables and "Organisational Performance." The path coefficients indicate the strength and direction of these hypothesized relationships. They indicate a positive and slight negative direct effect on "Organisational Performance." The diagram also includes factor loadings for the observed variables on their respective latent constructs as well as error terms associated with both observed and latent endogenous variables, all contributing to a comprehensive representation of the hypothesized pathways within the model. See Table 5.

**Table 5: Baseline Comparisons**

Model	GFI	AGFI	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.910	.905	.921	.945	.937	.975	.943
Saturated model	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

The model fit indices indicate a strong fit of the hypothesized model to the data. Key indicators such as the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI = 0.910), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI = 0.905), Normed Fit Index (NFI = 0.921), Relative Fit Index (RFI = 0.945), Incremental Fit Index (IFI = 0.937), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.943) all exceeded the generally accepted threshold of 0.90. These values collectively signify a good to excellent fit, demonstrating that the proposed model effectively explains the variances in the data and represents a substantial improvement over a null model.

Furthermore, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.975, which ideally should be above 0.95 (Long et al., 2023), reinforces the excellent fit of the model. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), at 0.06, falls within the acceptable range of 0.05 to 0.08, indicating a reasonable error of approximation in how well the model fits the population covariance matrix. These comprehensive fit statistics collectively support the validity of the hypothesized structural model in representing the relationships between the latent variables and Organisational Performance.

The second research question sought to identify the most preferred principles of good governance as perceived by employees within the selected public sector organizations. The study employed a Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test (See Table 6) to statistically analyze the collected data, determining whether the distribution of employee preferences significantly deviated from an expected distribution.

**Table 6: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test**

Preferred GG Principles	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Rule of law	84	30.0	54.0
Consensus-Building	68	30.0	38.0
Accountability	50	30.0	20.0
Participation	30	30.0	0
Equitable and Inclusive	28	30.0	-2.0
Transparency	26	30.0	-4.0
Responsiveness	20	30.0	-10.0
Control of Corruption	8	30.0	-22.0
Effective and Efficient	6	30.0	-24.0
Predictability	6	30.0	-24.0
Networking	4	30.0	-26.0
Total	330		

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

This test determined if the observed preferences for Good Governance principles significantly differed from an anticipated distribution, such as an equal preference across all principles (e.g., 30 for each principle if 330 total preferences were distributed among 11 principles). For instance, "Rule of law" (54.0), "Consensus-oriented" (38.0), and "Accountability" (20.0) showed large positive residuals, indicating they were preferred far more often than expected. Conversely, "Responsiveness" (-10.0), "Control of corruption" (-22.0), "Effective and efficient" (-24.0), "Predictability" (-24.0), and "Networking" (-26.0) had large negative residuals, meaning they were chosen substantially less often than expected. "Participation" (0.0) perfectly matched its expected frequency, while "Equitable and inclusive" (-2.0) and "Transparency" (-4.0) were slightly less preferred.

**Table 7: Chi-Square Test Statistics<sup>b</sup>**

Preferred GG Principles	
Chi-Square	239.733 <sup>a</sup>
df	10
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 30.0.

b. Some or all exact significances cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025:

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test revealed a Chi-square statistic of 239.733, indicating a substantial overall difference between the observed and expected frequencies of Good Governance (GG) principles. A larger chi-square value signifies a greater deviation from the expectation that all GG principles are equally preferred. With a p-value of .000, which is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05, we rejected the null hypothesis. This statistically significant result confirms a notable difference between how frequently GG principles were preferred and what would be expected if all principles were equally desirable.

Table 8 cross-tabulates "Preferred Good Governance Principles" against "Cluster membership" (Social, Economic, and Administrative), revealing the number of respondents from each cluster who preferred specific principles. The Rule of Law appears to be a strongly preferred principle across all clusters, with the highest counts in the Economic (34, 28%) and Administrative (28, 35%) clusters. It also has a notable preference in the Social Cluster (22, 16%). Consensus-oriented also shows a relatively high preference across clusters, particularly in the Social (28, 22%) and Economic (26, 22%) clusters. Accountability has a lower preference compared to Rule of Law and Consensus-Oriented across all clusters.

**Table 8: Comparison of Cluster vs Preferred GG Principles**

Preferred GG Principles	Cluster membership			Total	Residual
	Social Cluster	Economic Cluster	Administrative Cluster		
Rule of law	22	34	28	84	54.0
Consensus-oriented	28	26	14	68	38.0
Accountability	16	26	8	50	20.0
Participation	14	8	8	30	0
Chi-Square Test	Value	Df		Asymptotic Significance	
Spearman Chi-Square	38.361 <sup>a</sup>	20		.008	
Likelihood Ratio	45.614	20		.001	
N of Valid Cases	330				

a. 13 cells (39.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .97.

Source: Author’s Calculation Based on Field Survey, 2025

Tests were conducted on 330 respondents to assess the statistical association between "Preferred Good Governance Principles" and "Cluster Membership." Both the Spearman Chi-Square test ( $\chi^2 = 38.361$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .008$ ) and the Likelihood Ratio test ( $\chi^2 = 45.614$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $p\text{-value} = .001$ ) yielded p-values below the .05 significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). These consistent results indicate a statistically significant relationship, implying that the preference for specific Good Governance principles is not independent of a respondent's cluster. This confirms that individuals

within the distinct Administrative, Social, and Economic clusters exhibit unique patterns of principle prioritization, suggesting that the institutional mandate contextualizes the principles deemed most important.

This significant finding is rooted in the distinct priorities of each cluster. The Administrative Cluster (e.g., Supreme Court, Ethics Commission) highly prioritizes "Rule of Law," consistent with its core function of upholding justice and fighting corruption. The Social Cluster (e.g., Health Bureau, Women's Affairs), reflecting its mandate for deep community engagement and inclusive social welfare, emphasizes "Consensus-oriented" and "Participation." Lastly, the Economic Cluster (e.g., Bureau of Revenue, Transport Authority) focuses strongly on "Accountability," underscoring its role in ensuring financial probity and efficient resource management. This confirms that principle prioritization is a function of the institutional role.

The third guiding research question aimed to identify the key challenges faced by the Amhara Region in both policy-making and the implementation of a good governance package within the selected public sector organizations. Based on triangulated evidence from key informants, document reviews, and the majority of open-ended questionnaire responses, the study found that challenges to good governance in the Amhara Region are multifaceted, stemming from deep-seated governance, political, and leadership deficits. At the core are fundamental governance issues characterized by a lack of the rule of law, irresponsiveness from authorities, a lack of accountability, and limited public participation. These issues are compounded by an unstable political environment characterized by political instability, a power vacuum, and ethnic politics, which are further exacerbated by a distinct reluctance of political will to implement necessary reforms. This climate fosters corruption and malpractice, which in turn undermines the very foundation of good governance.

Simultaneously, the region is struggling with significant economic and human capital deficiencies. These challenges are marked by poverty, high unemployment rates, and a high cost of living, which creates social unrest and dependency. These struggles are made worse by leadership challenges, where the public sector is hindered by leaders who exhibit poor integrity, personal interest, incompetence, and a lack of capacity. The problem is magnified by a high rate of frequent turnover in leadership positions, which prevents continuity and sustained focus on reform. Similar issues

plague the civil service, which is often characterized by poor integrity and incompetence, severely limiting the effective and efficient delivery of public services to citizens.

Finally, these internal weaknesses manifest in severe humanitarian and policy-related challenges that directly impact citizens' well-being. The region is experiencing a surge in humanitarian and social crises, including increased instances of kidnapping, civilian killings, displacement, denial of essential services, and increased assaults against women and people with disabilities. Compounding these difficulties are significant policy challenges: the existing policy frameworks and proclamations intended to support good governance reform are often criticized for being unclear, having limited accountability mechanisms, and lacking strong enforcement power, thereby failing to provide the necessary legal and structural foundation to overcome these pervasive challenges.

### **Interpretation and Discussion**

The analysis first confirms the strong psychometric properties of the measurement model. The high Cronbach's Alpha values (0.750 to 0.968) and strong Convergent Validity affirm that the indicators reliably and accurately measure the intended latent constructs of good governance and organisational performance. The overall model fit indices confirm an excellent fit.

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) demonstrates that most good governance dimensions positively and significantly influence Organisational Performance. Effective and Efficient practices emerged as the single most dominant positive predictor, exhibiting the strongest path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.75$ ). This suggests that, from a technical perspective, streamlined operations and competence are the primary statistical indicators of improved public sector performance. The most crucial structural finding is the emergent Governance Paradox, a fundamental disconnect between empirical indicators and political preference. Although the SEM identified Effective and Efficient practices as the single strongest predictive force for Organisational Performance ( $\beta = 0.75$ ), employee preferences, measured via the Chi-Square test, ranked this principle as the least important, yielding only 6 total votes.

This marginalization of efficiency, contrasted against the overwhelming prioritization of Rule of Law and Consensus Building, suggests systemic reordering of public sector values. In a context defined by regional instability, conflict, and political fragility, the workforce shifts its focus from managerial effectiveness to the urgent need for political security and legitimate order. The data

reveal that for public bodies in the Amhara Region, the restoration of basic justice and predictable governance is perceived as the essential precondition for any effective work, rendering these foundational, stability-focused principles politically and emotionally more salient than mere operational output.

The SEM also revealed slight but notable negative latent path coefficients for Rule of Law beta value ( $\beta = -0.15$ ) and Participation ( $\beta = -0.09$ ) on Organisational Performance. This counter-intuitive finding is not interpreted as a rejection of these principles but as empirical evidence of their perverse outcomes under poor implementation.

The negative coefficients align with the qualitative evidence from key informants, which cite a significant lack of the rule of law and limited citizen participation. Where participation mechanisms are tokenistic (e.g., bureaucratic hurdles) or the rule of law is applied arbitrarily due to political instability and corruption, these efforts actively generate frustration and bureaucratic friction, detracting from performance rather than improving it. Thus, the negative beta values demonstrate the practical cost of governance failures.

The Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test revealed a clear hierarchy of preference, primarily correlated with the need for order (Rule of Law: 84 votes) and inclusive decision-making (Consensus-oriented: 68 votes). Critically, the statistically significant relationship between preferred principles and cluster membership indicates that preferences are a diagnostic tool reflecting where governance failures hit hardest. The Administrative Cluster's strong prioritization of the Rule of Law is not merely functional, but reflective of the acute difficulties in their mandate (justice and anti-corruption) when basic legal frameworks are eroding. This pattern shows respondents prioritizing principles essential for institutional survival and legitimacy.

The consensus from the triangulated qualitative evidence, key informants, document reviews, and open-ended responses, explains the systemic failure observed in the quantitative data. The impediments are multifaceted, including leadership gaps (poor integrity, self-interest, and high turnover), prevailing economic hardship, and a restrictive, vague legal framework (ANRS Proclamation No. 280/2021) that lacks enforcement power.

The research findings align closely with New Public Governance (NPG), which emphasizes synergy and interconnectedness. However, the data suggests that systemic failures in foundational principles (Rule of Law, Accountability) prevent the necessary synergy required by NPG. This

demonstrates how real-world political challenges can alter expected theoretical relationships, providing a critical empirical contribution by testing NPG's applicability in a decentralized, conflict-affected, non-Western context.

### **Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation**

#### **Summary**

This research sought to understand the impact of good governance components on organisational performance, identify the most preferred governance principles, and delineate the challenges to good governance in selected public sector organisations within the Amhara Region. Utilising a multi-faceted approach involving structural equation modelling, Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit tests, and qualitative data analysis, the study provides a comprehensive overview of these critical areas.

The analysis of the structural model revealed a largely positive relationship between various good governance dimensions and organisational performance. Most dimensions, including equity and inclusivity, responsiveness, transparency, and effectiveness, demonstrated high factor loadings, indicating their strong and reliable contribution to organisational performance. These principles foster trust, mitigate corruption, provide a stable operational environment, and enhance collaboration and innovation. While some indicators for participation and effectiveness and efficiency showed slightly weaker loadings, the overall pattern suggested their general importance.

The model also indicated small negative latent path coefficients for participation and rule of law, suggesting that in a context with conflict and instability, the absence of these governance elements contributes to a power vacuum and further fuels the prevailing unrest. Without rule of law, order erodes, and when genuine participation is lacking, grievances aggravate, ultimately exacerbating the cycle of conflict. However, the practical impact of these negative relationships appeared less pronounced compared to the substantial positive contributions of factors like equity and inclusivity and transparency. The overall fit indices for the model confirmed its strong representation of the relationships within the data.

Regarding the most preferred principles of good governance, a Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test on 330 respondents revealed a significant disparity in preferences. "Rule of law" emerged as the most preferred principle. In contrast, other principles were significantly less preferred. Critically, this established a significant Governance Paradox: while Effective and Efficient practices

demonstrated the strongest statistical influence on organisational performance (beta = 0.75), they were simultaneously ranked as the least important principle by employees.

The study also found a statistically significant relationship between preferred principles and cluster membership, indicating that individuals within different clusters prioritized governance principles differently based on their organisational functions and mandates. For instance, the Administrative Cluster, encompassing judicial and anti-corruption bodies, naturally emphasized the "Rule of Law," while the Social Cluster's focus on community engagement led to a preference for "Consensus-Oriented" and "Participation."

Finally, the research identified numerous interconnected challenges impeding good governance in the Amhara Region, as highlighted by key informants and respondents. These impediments include fundamental governance issues such as a lack of rule of law, irresponsiveness, insufficient accountability, and limited citizen participation, which collectively erode institutional legitimacy. Economic hardships, including poverty, unemployment, and high cost of living, undermine stability and civic engagement. Political factors, such as instability, a power vacuum, ethnic politics, and a lack of political will, create a volatile environment. Leadership deficiencies, characterised by poor integrity, incompetence, lack of capacity, and frequent turnover, along with similar issues in the civil service, hinder effective policy implementation.

Furthermore, the devastating humanitarian crisis, encompassing violence, displacement, and denial of essential services, represent severe manifestations of governance failure. Policy challenges stemming from unclear legal frameworks (ANRS, 2021), particularly the lack of specific criteria for reform alignment and the absence of enforcement power for the Commission of Civil Service and Human Resource Development, further compound these issues. This paints a grim picture of a system struggling on multiple fronts, where weaknesses in one area exacerbate problems in others, underscoring the necessity for a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to address these systemic challenges.

## **Conclusion**

This research establishes that good governance principles (except rule of law and participation) are fundamental to fostering an environment conducive to enhanced organisational performance. The evidence from the structural model underscores the critical role of dimensions such as effectiveness and efficiency, equity, responsiveness, and transparency in driving effective and

sustainable organisational outcomes. As Pomeranz & Stedman (2020) and Schulz (2019) suggest, governance principles are indeed critical for fostering an environment that supports and enhances organizational performance, indicating a positive and significant relationship between good governance and the ability of organizations to achieve their objectives effectively and sustainably. Furthermore, the study reveals a clear hierarchy of good governance principles prioritized by public sector employees. There's a strong emphasis on the rule of law, consensus-building, and accountability. This highlights a deep-seated desire for governance rooted in legal frameworks and inclusive decision-making, aligning with observations from Monteiro et al. (2022) and Mehmood (2023). However, the data simultaneously reveal a critical Governance Paradox: the principle empirically shown to be the strongest predictor of performance (Effectiveness and Efficiency) was the least prioritized by employees. This divergence underscores how regional conflict and instability necessitate a shift in public sector values, prioritizing foundational principles like the Rule of Law for institutional survival over managerial output. While the prioritization of good governance components is linked to the specific context, the power of good governance is realized through the synergistic integration of these elements (Karunia et al., 2023; Nofianti & Suseno, 2014).

Finally, the identification of impediments to effective governance creates a concerning picture of systemic weaknesses across legal and participatory structures, economic realities, political will, leadership integrity, and the civil service. These interconnected challenges, exacerbated by humanitarian crises and pervasive corruption, collectively undermine the establishment of a just and stable society. The ineffectiveness of enforcement power in the current legal framework (ANRS, 2021) further compounds these issues. Addressing this multifaceted crisis requires a holistic and concerted effort focused on strengthening the rule of law, enhancing accountability and citizen engagement, mitigating economic hardships, fostering ethical and competent leadership, and resolutely combating corruption to rebuild public trust and pave the way for sustainable good governance in the region.

### **Recommendations**

To bridge the current institutional fragmentation where no single entity is legally responsible for the holistic governance framework, a Good Governance Implementation Agency (GGIA) is recommended as the centralized oversight body. The GGIA would establish clear, region-wide

standards for aligning bureau programmes with regional objectives and develop enforceable, standardised procedures for reform implementation across all government offices. This centralized approach would ensure consistent application and compliance, effectively moving the region's governance strategy beyond mere consultation.

Furthermore, GGIA would conduct independent monitoring and evaluation of reform programmes, ensuring objective assessment (Governance-integrated approach) and the authority to mandate corrective actions for violations, thereby enhancing rule of law, consensus-building, and accountability. A governance-integrated approach recognizes that empowered citizens are the bedrock upon which transparency, accountability, and other tenets of good governance are built. Without an informed, engaged, and empowered citizenry, mechanisms for transparency and accountability become ineffective. Thus, the agency would manage dedicated resources for virtualization, capacity building, effective oversight, and facilitate collaboration among bureau to maximize the regional impact of reform efforts. Establishing GGIA promises a more coherent, accountable and effective system for advancing good governance and ensuring successful reform implementation throughout the region.

To address the weaknesses in the current framework, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a vital recommendation for the region, fostering efficiency, leveraging specialized expertise, and enhancing public service delivery through the strategic engagement of both private and voluntary organizations. PPP facilitates risk sharing, attracts vital investment, and drives innovation in infrastructure and public services, all while ensuring financial responsibility. Furthermore, well-structured PPP enhances transparency and accountability through clear performance indicators and monitoring, encouraging collaboration and participation among various stakeholders. While successful implementation hinges on a strong legal framework, institutional capacity, and transparent processes, strategically embracing PPP can improve sustainable development and enhanced regional governance.

A comprehensive Regional Ethics and Leadership Development strategy is recommended to tackle challenges, like poor integrity, incompetence, lack of capacity, and irresponsiveness in the public sector. A robust Regional Ethics and Collective Leadership Development strategy is crucial. This strategy would provide a dedicated framework for cultivating ethical, merit-based, competent, and responsive leaders through comprehensive programmes emphasizing ethical principles, collective

leadership approaches, selfless service, capacity building, and meaningful citizen voice and engagement. This would include establishing a strong code of ethics, actively promoting ethical awareness, and implementing accessible mechanisms for reporting misconduct. By proactively investing in leadership development that prioritizes both ethical conduct and collaborative leadership, this strategy can significantly mitigate existing leadership deficits and foster a culture of trust and strong good governance across the region.

### **Future Study**

Future research should investigate the reasons behind the significant disparity in the preference for different good governance principles. Specifically, qualitative studies could explore why governance principles, like participation, effectiveness, efficiency, predictability, and responsiveness, were significantly less preferred by respondents compared to the rule of law and consensus-building. Understanding the contextual factors and lived experiences that shape these preferences would provide valuable insights for tailoring governance interventions and communication strategies.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be conducted to track the impact of implemented good governance initiatives on organizational performance and citizen perceptions over time. This would allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of different interventions and identify potential areas for further refinement. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions or sectors within the country could provide valuable insights into the context-specific challenges and successes in promoting good governance.

### **Declarations**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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