Araştırma Makalesi ● *Research Article*

Corruption in Ethiopia: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission in Combating Corruption

Etiyopya'da Yolsuzluk: Etik ve Yolsuzlukla Mücadele Komisyonunun Yolsuzlukla Mücadelede Etkinliğinin Değerlendirilmesi

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ÖZ

Çok sayıda çalışma, çeşitli ülkelerde yolsuzlukla mücadele çabalarının yapıldığını göstermiştir. Yine de yolsuzluk, hükümetin meşruiyetini ve istikrarını zayıflattığı için, özellikle gelişmekte olan ülkelerde önemli bir engel olmaya devam ediyor. Bu çalışma, Amhara Ulusal Bölgesel Devlet Etik ve Yolsuzlukla Mücadele Komisyonu'nun yolsuzlukla mücadeledeki etkinliğini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Etkinlik, kurumsal özerklik, kaynak, açıkça formüle edilmiş yetki, şeffaflık, soruşturma gücü ve diğer paydaşlarla bir parametre olarak işbirliği kullanılarak değerlendirildi. Bu amaçla, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve odak grup tartışmaları kullanılarak nitel bir vaka çalışması araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Ayrıca, daha geniş bir gerçeklik anlayışı elde etmek için diğer ikincil veri kaynakları da kullanılmıştır. Veri analizi, Komisyon'un yolsuzlukla mücadelede hayati bir rol oynadığını, ancak henüz etkili olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, ülkenin kalkınmasına engel olan bu yanlış uygulamayı gerektiği gibi önlemek ve kontrol etmek için toplumun tüm kesimlerinin hükümetle el ele çalışması gerektiğini savunduk.

ABSTRACT

Numerous studies showed that anti-corruption efforts had been made in various countries. Nevertheless, corruption remains a significant obstacle, especially in developing countries, as it undermines the government's legitimacy and stability. This study aims to assess the Amhara National Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission's effectiveness in combating corruption. Effectiveness was assessed using institutional autonomy, resource, clearly formulated mandate, transparency, power of investigations, and cooperation with other stakeholders as a parameter. To this end, a qualitative case study research approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Besides, other secondary data sources have also been used to obtain a broader understanding of reality. The data analysis shows that the Commission plays a vital role in the fight against corruption, but it has not yet been effective. Therefore, we argued that all sections of society should work hand in hand with the government to properly prevent and control this malpractice that is hindering the country's development.

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Introduction

It is widely agreed that corruption is a pervasive phenomenon that penetrates most societies (Schumacher, 2013; UNCAC, 2004; Ronald & Chikulo, 2000). Corruption exists in developed and developing countries, although its nature, extent, and overall dynamics vary greatly (Graycar, 2015; Radin, 2013). Corruption is seen as a significant obstruction in enhancing capacity building and development anomaly. Numerous studies have shown that corruption is one of the principal impediments to economic development, social security, service delivery, and good governance in Africa (Asongu, 2013; Graycar & Villa, 2011; Lessmann & Markwardt, 2010). Some countries in Africa, Asia and South America show alarming corruption manifestations (Graycar & Villa, 2011). As a result, the government and international organizations are stepping up their efforts to reduce corruption (Goel & Nelson, 2010).

With this in mind, Ethiopia, after adopting the federal state structure, moved on to the overall socio-economic and political reforms. One such reform was the Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP). The Ethiopia government initiated such reforms to inspect the overall management system and operation of the civil service at all government levels (Arsema, 2010). One of the initial reasons for the launching of CSRP was to pull the civil service out of widespread untrustworthy practices and guarantee transparency and accountability (Biruk, 2016). The ethics sub-program was part of the National Civil Service Reform Program (NCSRP), designed primarily to combat corruption and improve service delivery (Berihun, 2013). This legal framework gave rise to establishing the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) in May 2001. The FEACC is an independent agency of the federal government established in cooperation with relevant bodies to:

- Strive to create an aware society where corruption will not be condoned or tolerated by promoting ethics and anti-corruption education,

- Prevent corruption offences and other improprieties, and

- Expose, investigate, and prosecute corruption, offences, and impropriety.

The FEACC is mandated to run at the federal level, including the chartered cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The regional states have the privilege to form their anti-corruption bodies under the federal arrangement (Biruk, 2016). In light of this, the regional government begins to set up Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission (EACC) to fight and prevent corruption in the regions. Each regional office has autonomy in dealing with tasks and budget (Arsema, 2010). Accordingly, on 15th December 2003, the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) has established the Amhara National Regional State Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (from now on Commission) under proclamation No.93/2003.

The Commission is the body responsible for coordinating the anti-corruption movement in the region and is situated in the capital city of the ANRS. The ANRS is one of the nine regional states of Ethiopia. It is located in the Northern and Northwest part of Ethiopia with about 20 million population, 11 zonal administrations, 140 woredas and about 3,429 kebeles (Denny & Demelash, 2013). Geographically, the region's estimated total area is 170,150 square kilometres and is adjacent to four regional states. To the north is the Tigray region, to the south is the Oromia region, to the east is Afar region, and to the west, Benishangul Gumuz.

In terms of organizational structure, the Commission is headed by a Commissioner. A Deputy Commissioner supports the Commissioner. According to the proclamation, other subordinate core work processes, professionals, and departments are required for the works. In

particular, the Commission consists of six directorates, three supporting work processes, and professionals. That includes corruption prevention, human resource management, investigation and prosecution, asset registration and disclosure, finance and resource management, and public relations directorate. They also supported by three facilitative and supportive work processes, including planning, coordination and evaluation; information communication technology; and internal audit supportive work processes.

However, as Heilbrunn (2004) argues, many Anti-corruption Commissions (ACCs), predominantly those established in Africa, have been criticized for not effectively reducing corruption. Similarly, Speville (2008) noted that countless ACCs do not play a significant role in combating corruption. Although ACCs are built up with incredible desire and promise, many have often been criticized for their ineffectiveness in their anti-corruption efforts (Biruk, 2016). Therefore, this study intended to assess the Commission's effectiveness in the fight against corruption. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the related literature. Section 3 discusses the methodology. Section 4 illustrates the primary empirical analysis and discussion, and Section 5 concludes the paper.

Literature Review

Understanding Corruption

Almost everyone has an opinion on activities and behaviours that are considered corrupt, but given its complex nature, there is no agreement on the meaning of corruption (Graycar & Villa, 2011). Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon that has been contested socially, legally, economically, and politically (Johnston, 1996). In most cases, corruption usually refers to public office abuse for private gain (Aduda, 2007; Girling, 1999; Bardhan, 1997). The office is a position of trust where one receives authority to act on behalf of an institution (De Lancer & Villoria, 2014, p. 25). Aduda (2007) states that one can abuse power when public officials accept, demand or compel bribes and when private agents offer bribes to sidestep public policies for their competitive advantage and benefit.

Another widely used definition comes from Khan (1996); corruption is a practice that deviates from the norms of public morality for personal motives such as wealth, power, or status. As Capassoa & Santoro have argued:

> Corruption is an agreement through which a public official receives a payment in exchange for a favourable decision on a specific matter and, as with every agreement, the splitting of its gains depends on the allocation of bargaining power of the parties involved, with bribes being high when public officials have great power and private agents fall behind (2018, p. 104).

Activities including bribery and graft, extortion, kickbacks, misappropriation theft and fraud by one's position, self-dealing, patronage, abuse of discretion, creating or exploiting conflict of interest, nepotism, clientelism, and favouritism, as well as political manipulation are all generally agreed to constitute corrupt behaviour (Graycar & Villa, 2011:420). These various corrupt behaviours occur in different activities and different sectors of all societies (Graycar & Villa, 2011, p. 420).

However, the above-mentioned scholarly interpretations are only related to public sector corruption as they ignore private sector corruption. As a solution to this limitation, Muthomi (2006) defines corruption as the abuse of public office and private or commercial office for private gain. Corruption invariably involves giving something to someone in a position of power, either in government or in a corporation. Corruption can also be defined as the abuse or complicity of private or public power, office or resources for personal gain (Chinhamo & Shumba, 2007).

The national proclamation of Ethiopian FEACC (2010, p. 12) defines corruption as follows:

> Corruption is the offering, giving, soliciting or accepting of an inducement, promise, or reward; the making of threats or the use of intimidation, in words or behaviour, exerting influence by the abuse of authority or its inconsistent application; which may improperly influence the actions subsequently taken, or not taken, by a body, its members, or its officers; for the benefit or competitive advantage of self or another.

It can be seen from the above discussion that there are different definitions of corruption. However, for further discussion on corruption, this study uses the well-known and widely used definition of corruption, "the abuse of public office for private gain," because this definition is simple and broad enough to cover most forms of corruption.

Actors in Combating Corruption

Corruption is a very complex issue that affects institutions, citizens and various processes around the world. Therefore, the fight against corruption should be coordinated by integrating the government's capacity and various actors. According to Rose-Ackerman (2013), four international actors play a crucial role in the fight against corruption. The first and most apparent are International Financial Institutions (IFI) such as the World Bank (WB) and bilateral donors (Rose-Ackerman, 2013). These international institutions began promoting an anti-corruption agenda intensively in the mid-1990s. International actors cannot legitimately force domestic governments to become honest and free from corruption (Irrera, 2016). Instead, they are determined to support governance and anti-corruption projects in member states and reduce corruption in their loan and grant programs (De Sousa, 2010). These institutions support programs designed to transform government services and create accountable institutions.

The second set is directly related to cross-border civil and criminal law enforcement measures to catch and punish miscreants under criminal and civil law (Rose-Ackerman 2013). The offenders are firms engaged in international business, the firms' managers, organized crime groups, and country leaders, who enrich themselves through kickbacks and extortion (De Sousa, 2010). These institutions provide information on national legal systems covering money laundering, asset recovery, and extradition and help train prosecutors and police to prevent corruption within the country.

The third group of actors is a diverse group of international nonprofit institutions with an anti-corruption and good governance agenda, including organizations that support investigative journalism and freedom of the press (Omotoye, 2016). These actors are involved as one of the pressure groups, information providers, and groups to raise public awareness of corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 2013). They also support research on the causes and consequences of corruption and the impact of reforms. In this way, people will push for change.

The fourth includes international business firms' work through some nonprofit groups such as Transparency International (TI) (Rose-Ackerman, 2013). These firms operate with extensive corporate support and board membership and are interested in controlling corruption in business around the world (Omotoye, 2016). Other firms work closely with business and trade associations, participate in promoting codes of conduct and promote anti-corruption policies.

By and large, corruption is a global problem that needs all countries' attention, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO), and all citizens. Thus, different actors, including government, business, and non-governmental organizations, need to increase their pressure on reducing it and bringing those responsible to justice (Kinkino, 2014). In this

regard, many countries have joined the fight against corruption by recognizing anti-corruption activities at various levels and creating a conducive environment for them to work.

Measuring the Effectiveness of ACCs

The establishment of the ACCs plays a wide range of roles in the fight against corruption. However, its effectiveness should depend on the institution's practice (Mezmur & Koen, 2011). Hence, it is essential to look at many factors that need to be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of ACCs. The effectiveness of the ACCs depends on the extent to which the Commission achieves its goals and objectives. Therefore, although different ACCs have different characteristics, certain factors need to be in place for ACCs to function effectively (Biruk, 2016; Arsema, 2010; De Sousa, 2010; Tewdros, 2009; TI, 2004; Pope, 2000). These factors include independence, adequate resources, comprehensive mandate, transparency, adequate power of investigations, and cooperation. As to the USAID (2004), without these criteria, any ACCs are vulnerable to failures. Therefore, we will discuss these issues in detail and use them as parameters to assess the Commission's effectiveness in combating corruption, which is the main objective of this study.
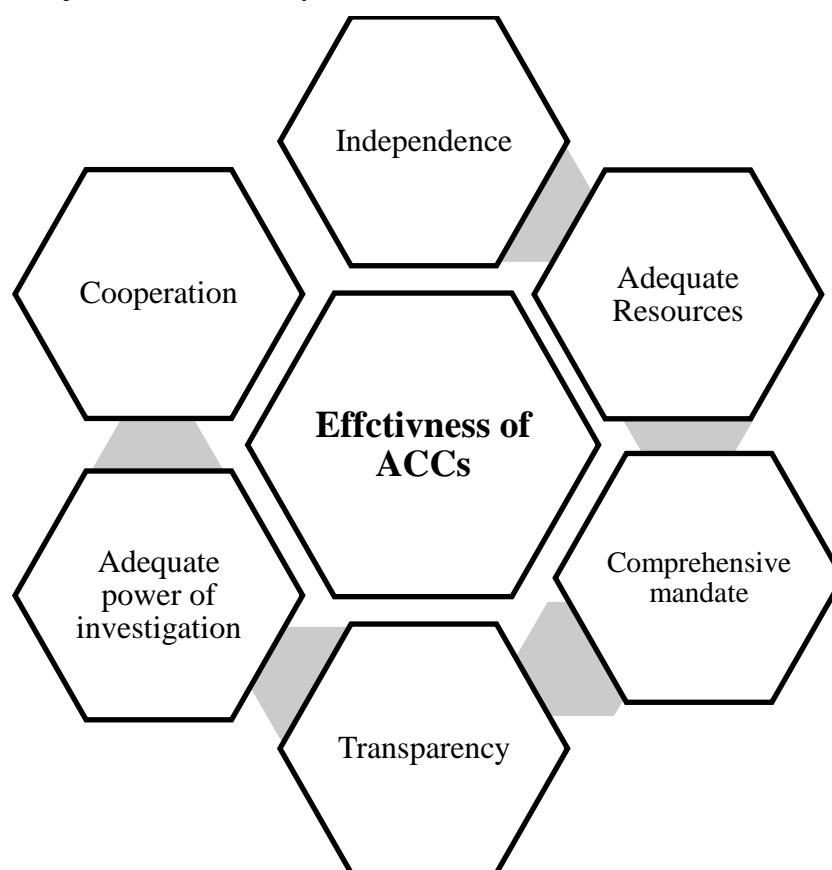

Figure 1: The criterias used to assess effectivness of ACCs Independence

Institutional independence refers to a provision that allows an organization to operate without another organization or individual intervention. The independence of the ACC's is regarded as an important criterion for its efficacy since it enables the agency to investigate alleged wrongdoing without the interference of powerful individuals. The international standard like the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), Article 6 and 36 require ACCs to perform their functions efficiently and to ensure the necessary independence. The independence of the ACCs can be guaranteed by the institution's status, appointment and dismissal procedure of appointees, and budget autonomy (UNDP, 2005; Pope, 2000).

A permanent agency, unit, or Commission that exists separately and outside government agencies is more independent than being established as a unit or department within an institutional structure (Arsema, 2010). If positioned in such an office, unit or department, an ACC's ability to curb corruption may be compromised (Tewdros, 2009). The process of electing an ACC head should also be transparent and based on consensus among different high-level decision-makers (Arsema, 2010). Tewdros (2009) claims that any appointment made by the parliamentary selection committee can minimize any bias. However, it is not considered best practice if appointed by a politician such as a Minister or President (OECD, 2008). The removal of ACC appointees should also be protected by law against unfounded dismissal. Moreover, there is no better measure of institutional independence than allowing for budget autonomy (Mezmur & Koen, 2011). Therefore, to achieve its objective effectively, the ACCs require to exist separately as an independent institution and have an independent budget allocation.

Adequate Resources

Adequate material resources and specialized staff should be provided to ACCs to carry out their functions effectively (UNCAC, 2004). The adequacy of the resources can be assessed by some more qualitative indicators, such as the regular increase in financial resources, the stability of human resources, academic background, staff members' reliability, and professional training. Tewodros (2009) also argued that institutions created to fight corruption should have the necessary financial resources and adequately trained personnel. According to the OECD (2007), the fight against corruption requires well-trained investigators, prosecutors, forensic specialists, financial experts, auditors, and information technology specialists… Therefore, the adequacy of financial, human and technical resources is a crucial criterion for the effectiveness of ACCs.

Comprehensive Mandate

Fighting corruption is the broader mission of any ACCs. Anti-corruption activities include prevention, investigation, and awareness-raising (OECD, 2008). To be able to fight corruption successfully, countries need to follow a holistic approach (UNDP, 2005). In particular, the ACCs should have a well-defined strategy that considers the country's unique cultural context and realities. ACCs should also have national objectives. However, most ACCs are created by imitating successful models, regardless of the specific political environment, socio-economic conditions, and resources available to a particular country (De Sousa, 2010). This practice does not always lead to success and effectiveness but can create a gap between expected outcomes and achievements (Arsema, 2010). Therefore, for effective ACCs to exist, there should be a comprehensive and coherent strategy, a formulated mandate, and a country-specific model with realistic and achievable goals.

Transparency

Transparency of ACCs is essential for ensuring their credibility and building the public's trust (UNCAC, 2004). In practice, transparency is a necessary route to credibility for ACCs (Mezmur & Koen, 2011). The ACC's practice shows that the main elements of transparency include regular reports presented to the parliament, president's office and government and available to the public and public forums such as consultative councils (Tewdros, 2009). Thus, like other factors, transparency is the factor that determines the effectiveness and long-term success of ACCs.

Powers of Investigation

Powers of investigation include the ability to access records and the power to question witnesses, as well as the ability to take action when necessary (Tewdros, 2009). Power of

investigation also includes adequate internal coordination through integrating various anti-corruption functions. Such integration of functions must be well coordinated in order for ACCs to operate effectively (Arsema, 2010). Prosecutor and investigative officers should also be organized in a way that respects their professional independence. Above all, prevention, investigation, and awareness-creation activities need to work together to combat corruption effectively.

Cooperation

It is necessary to earn the cooperation and trust of the public in the fight against corruption. Laws and institutionalization alone are not sufficient to enforce the objective of ACCs and assure their effectiveness (Tewdros, 2009). Anti-corruption efforts can fail without civil society's active involvement and the private sector (OECD, 2008). Hence, an essential factor that influences the effectiveness of the ACCs is building cross-sectional and sectoral support and interaction (Johnston & Kpundeh, 2002). Free media and non-governmental organizations play an indispensable role in raising public awareness and monitoring the activities of the ACCs (Arsema, 2010; UNCAC, 2004). Therefore, building interactions and cooperation with different stakeholders is one factor for the effective functioning of ACCs.

Data and Methodology

In this study, the researchers employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research by its nature is multidimensional which involves interpretation of a subject matter to the given context. The qualitative approach paves the way for researchers to study the phenomenon in its natural settings and lets them interpret things in accordance with the meaning of the society (Cresswell, 1998). Furthermore, it also examines the decision, attitude, and behavior of people or other phenomena in-depth (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). To this end, this method enabled the researchers to assess the Commission's effectiveness in the fight against corruption. The study also used a case study research design. The case study design is essential to get bigger insight and generalize theories via combining the existing theoretical knowledge with new empirical insights (Yin, 1994). It also involves an in-depth examination of an individual, a group, or institution with the intent to get a true and complete description of the case that the researcher has selected to study (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005).

Regarding the data, both primary and secondary sources of data have been explored in the study. The primary sources consist of interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). This study has also used different secondary sources such as published and unpublished performance reports of the ANRSEACC, its publications and case reports, proclamations, regulations, guidelines, magazines and journals, different document analyses, and review of the literature.

To achieve the study objective, participants of this study were selected from two categories; staff and customers of the Commission. Accordingly, the participants of this study were the ANRSEACC commissioners, directors, professionals, and customers. To select the participants, the researchers employed a non-probability sampling technique. From the non-probability sampling, the researchers used purposive, snowball, and availability sampling techniques. The rationale behind the choice of purposive sampling is because it is essential for situations where one needs to reach a targeted sample in a short period (Kultar, 2007). The other reason is to gather in-depth information from the participants. So the researchers assumed that purposively selected participants might have a good source of data since they have firsthand information on the subject of the study. Moreover, snowball sampling was used to access potential and inaccessible informants especially whistleblowers, witnesses, and other customers

because of the sensitive nature of the issue of corruption. Besides, the researcher also uses available sampling to interview the customers who are available in the Commission.

Regarding the sample size of the study, an interview was conducted until the participants of the study provided the same response to the interview questions. Accordingly, a total of eight key informant interviewees were conducted, from these six with commissioner and directors of the Commission and the remaining two with customers of the Commission. Besides, a total of 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted, from these six with staff members of the Commission and the remaining five with customers. All the interviews were held at the ANRSEACC except interviews of two customers which were held outside the Commission. Furthermore, to triangulate the data collected by the above data collection instruments, FGD was employed. FGD allows the researchers to gather crucial qualitative data of the study in-depth. Since the researcher wants to know the shared experience and awareness of the staff of the ANRSEACC concerning the effectiveness of the Commission in combating corruption, FGD was conducted. Accordingly, one FGD has been employed among the staff members of the Commission. Regarding the number of participants in a group, Dawson (2007), suggested that six to eight participants should be involved. With this recommendation, the researchers include six participants in the group and the participants were selected based on their willingness and experience. The discussion was held at the ANRSEACC and during the discussion; the researchers were taken the relevant notes.

About the data collection procedures first, the researchers meet the Human Resource Directorate Director of the ANRSEACC to get information about how to get permission to collect data from the staff and customers of the Commission. Then the researcher contacted the deputy commissioner of the ANRSEACC by showing a letter of cooperation written by Bahir Dar University, Department of Political Sciences and International Studies to obtain the Commission's informed consent. Then the researcher requested participants' willingness by showing the letter of cooperation and by reading the consent form to each respondent. In advance, the date of the interview was arranged for each respondent who was ready for interview on the first contact. To this end, the interview was conducted separately until the point of data saturation was met. Based on this, twenty-five participants participated in the study. All the conducted interviews were recorded and kept by the researchers. Besides, to protect participants' identity, anonymity was safeguarded by giving pseudonyms instead of using their direct names. Since the topic of the study is a delicate issue, the participants of the study did not want their name and workplace to be mentioned or quoted anywhere in the study. So there is no appendix with their names.

The interview process was passed through several steps. The first step was introducing the research topic including objectives of the interview, confidentiality, and their consent. The interview then begins with soft and background information which is used as a springboard to come to the core questions of the study. Next, the researchers raised key questions and used follow-up probes. Finally, the interviewees were given the opportunity to ask questions and make final remarks before the session ended.

After the necessary data have been collected, thematic data analysis was used to analyze the study results. Thematic analysis is a tool used for categorizing, analyzing, and reporting themes. This analysis technique minimally organizes and describes the data set in detail. In this study, the researchers organized the data separately and generated categories, themes, and patterns to come to rich detail in line with the objective of the study.

Empirical Results

Effectiveness of the Commission in Combating Corruption

As mentioned earlier, several issues need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of ACCs. Under this section, the researchers assess the Commission's effectiveness based on the response of the study participants and document analysis. The criteria used to assess the Commission's effectiveness include independence, adequate resource, comprehensive mandate, transparency, adequate power of investigation, and cooperation (Arsema, 2010; De Sousa, 2010; Tewdros, 2009; TI, 2004; Pope, 2000).

Independence

The fight against corruption can only be effective if it is genuinely independent and free from undue interference (De Sousa, 2010). The independence of ACCs depends on the institutional position, appointment, and removal of the head and budget autonomy (UNDP, 2005; Pope, 2000). To become fully independent, ACCs should exist separately and independently rather than established as a unit or department within an institutional structure (Arsema, 2010; Mezmur, 2009). Accordingly, the Commission is established by the proclamation 237/2015 as an independent institution. It is not established as a unit or department within an institutional structure but exists separately as an independent government body.

There are provisions on the revised establishment proclamation in 2015 regarding the appointment, tenure, and dismissal of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner. Under this provision, the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner are appointed by the council of the region proposed with the region's Head (Article, 8). Their term of office shall be six years and may be reappointed when necessary (Article 11). Once appointed, the Commissioner or the deputy Commissioner may not be removed from office without their consent. However, suppose they violate the provisions of the relevant code of conduct or are unable to fulfill their responsibilities due to mental or physical illness. In that case, they will be removed from office (Article 13).

As to the Commission's customers, there is a suspicion that the appointment process may be politically motivated. The head of the region and his cabinets play a decisive role in the appointment process. The EACC is a government-sponsored institution that aims to support the fight against corruption instead of opposing the government. The appointment of Commissioners, therefore, is based on their loyalty to the ruling party. Global Integrity (2010) also reports that appointments to the EACC are not entirely free from executive domination. Nonetheless, if the Commissioners are loyal to the regional executives, they do not have the freedom to question and take measures to commit corruption. This process will pave the way for the regional executives to intervene in the Commission's investigation and prosecution activities.

Other criteria used to ensure the independence of the ACCs is budget autonomy. To be more neutral, such institutions should be free from severe financial constraints (Mezmur & Koen, 2011). Under amended Proclamation No. 237/2015, the State Government shall allocate a budget following the Commission's Annual Work Plan (Article 16). The allocated budget should be commensurate with its responsibilities, and there should be a law in place that prohibits a decrease in the current budget from last year's budget (Arsema, 2010). According to the Commission's report on budget allocations to the Commission, it increases year by year. Still, the increment in the annual budget allocation is not proportional to the Commission's increasing volume of works. However, the Commission's accountability to the Chief Executive

of the State limits the possibility of appealing to the Regional Council regarding the Commission's budget.

The legal framework that grants independence to the investigative and prosecutorial role of the FEACC would have also been extended to the Commission's preventive activities (Biruk, 2016). Similarly, regarding the practical aspect of securing independence in preventive activities, there have been attempts by some heads of institutions to unlawfully influence and intervene in the preventive works of the Commission, particularly concerning system-review studies. Some officials try to undermine the studies on systems and working procedures that aim to identify malpractices that may lead to corruption in various government offices and public enterprises. Thus, the Commission's independence for corruption prevention has not been assured fully, and it needs to be guaranteed both in law and practice. Therefore, the study concluded that although the Commission maintained its independence from any interference on investigation and prosecution activities legally, there were practical problems in budget autonomy and intimidation of the Commission's prevention activities by some government executive bodies.

Adequate Resources

ACCs should have sufficient resources to perform their functions effectively (UNCAC, 2004)**.** Nevertheless, the study participants confirmed that resource inadequacy is the major problem for the effectiveness of the Commission. The annual budget allocated for the Commission is insufficient to undertake its mission when one considers the size of the ANRS and the cost of fighting corruption. This budget deficit has hurt the Commission's financial sustainability and its key anti-corruption activities. The Commission's primary functions include education and training, systematic inspections, investigations, protection of whistleblowers and witnesses, distribution of printed and written materials, and more. In support of the participants' idea, one can vividly see the gap between the Commission's annual budget allocated and required each year. For example, in the year 2017/18, the budget requested by the Commission was 24, 786, 619 birr. However, the annual allocated budget was 10,732,053 birr, and for the year 2018/2019, the amount of budget the Commission's proposed to ask was 44,458,286 birr but, the maximum limit the Commission could ask for was 20,203,374 birr.

In addition to financial resources, staffing is another critical factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs. As indicated in the human resource data, the number of employees in each directorate is insufficient. There are only 87 staffs in the Commission. In 2017/2018, the Commission requested 34 staff members, but the regional government refused. The Commission will then be compelled to precede its work with the existing number of workforce. Hence, it is difficult to fulfil the Commission's broader responsibilities by using these small staff numbers. Based on the human resource data of the Commission, there are only eight prosecutors and seven investigators, ten property registrars, one public relation officer, two media professionals, and a small number of educational, training, and research professionals.

Furthermore, the problem is not the only number, but also there is a shortage of well-trained human resources. That indicates a gap in skill and knowledge among the existing professionals to perform at optimal levels. Thus, the study concludes that while resource adequacy is the primary factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs, the Commission is intensely tested by the financial problem, shortage of human resources, and skilled personnel and experts.

Comprehensive Mandate

There is no single solution for combating corruption. The comprehensive mandate of ACCs in fighting against corruption includes prevention, education, and investigation. Successful ACCs such as Hong Kong's ICAC adopted these three-pronged approaches (Meaghar, 2002). Ethiopia has also adopted these three approaches as a comprehensive mandate. Accordingly, the Commission has included these activities under its objectives and consists of separate departments and units, each responsible for carrying out those tasks. To this end, the Corruption Prevention Directorate is responsible for examining the systems and procedures in the public sector, identifying corruption opportunities, and making recommendations to plug the loopholes. This activity of the Commission is productive and used to save resource and time. According to the Commission's report in 2016/2017, the Commission protects 16,235,286 birr and 2184 care meter urban land through urgent system-review.

Besides, through its education and training department, the Prevention Directorate, as a second aspect, is working to create an aware society where corruption will not be tolerated by promoting ethics and anti-corruption education. To achieve the educational mandate, the Commission has been employing various mechanisms such as conducting training, producing and distributing publications and broadcast messages via radio, television, and website for various society sections. Pertinent to preventing and combating corruption in the 2016/2017 fiscal year, the Commission offers face to face training for 139,793 individuals.

Alongside the preventive and educational activities, the Investigation Directorate also focuses on investigating alleged corruption offences, pressing charges against suspected corruption offences, freezing and causing the confiscation of assets obtained through corruption, and providing protection whistleblowers and witnesses. The directorate identifies corruption cases through links with the police commission, media, complaints by the public, and research on institutions' performance. In its 2016/2017 report, the Commission confirmed that 973 records had been investigated, from these 516 records investigated by the Commission and 457 records by the Police Commission. However, there is a clear indication of gaps between the Commission's public and achievements' expectation. The reasons for this gap may include a lack of human capacity and limited resources. Thus, although the Commission adopted the three pronged approaches as a comprehensive mandate and made good progress, there is still a huge gap between the high expectations of the general public and the Commission's actual achievements.

Transparency

The transparency of ACC is essential for its effective functioning and for ensuring its credibility and building public trust. Thus, to be genuinely independent, ACCs have to be transparent in their activities (Meaghar, 2002). In line with this argument, the Commission publicizes its activities and anti-corruption awareness creation programs using newspapers, annual reports, brushers, and the regular magazines called *Finote Migbar* (a bi-annual magazine). The Commission also used broadcast media such as Amhara Television, Bahir Dar, Dessie, and Debre Birhan FM and social media like Facebook and website (www.anrseac.gov.et). Also, there are various facilities, including fax (+251582220397), telephone (+251582263740), and postal (1798) services for those who wish to provide information, tip-off, and comments during all business days. Moreover, the Commission is always open and willing to provide any information to every legal person. Therefore, the Commission uses these strategies of disclosing information to ensure transparency.

However, according to the Commission's clients, the Commission does not respond promptly to cases like tip-offs and corruption crimes. A customer, who came 30 kilometres

from Bahir Dar, stated that "information has been unduly delayed for long and the way it is presented does not take into account the rural and remote parts of the region". To rectify the delay, the Commission has decided to complete an investigation of tip-off and information within one month, unless the nature of the case requires time.

Another way of ensuring transparency of the Commission is asset registration and disclosure. In 2010, Ethiopia passed a proclamation that requires the disclosure and registration of assets. According to this proclamation, any official, elected, or public employees should register and disclose their assets. The Commission is empowered to conduct property registration and disclosure activities in the region. The Commission has registered the assets of about 47,000 government employees, appointees and elected officials. The proclamation also requires the Commission to verify the information entered by the registrants. However, due to lack of capacity, staffing, and incomplete electronic system, the Commission could not effectively verify the registrants' information.

The proclamation also states that all information related to registered property shall be available to the public. In this regard, there are public doubts about the Commission's readiness to disclose the registered data. The Commission has been criticized for failing to make the recoded information accessible to the public. The Commission and other judicial authorities have so far used the information for investigation purposes. Anyone who wants to know the appointee's registered assets or elected person can easily access a specific written request. The main reasons for restricting easy access to the registered information are the unavailability of applicable rules and guidelines in the Commission.

Therefore, it is plausible to state that the Commission guarantees transparency by submitting an annual report to the state council, publicizing activities using print and broadcast media, and accepting any information, tip-off, and comments through phone, email, fax postal services. The Commission has done a great job in registering public servants, appointees, and elected persons. However, it does nothing about the access to the registered information and verification of assets.

Adequate Powers of Investigation

To effectively investigate corruption cases, ACCs should have adequate powers. Some of the powers required for ACCs include but not limited to access documents, question witnesses, prosecution, freeze assets, seize passports, protect informants, and monitoring income and assets. Following the revised proclamation of 237/2015, the Commission has adequate and comprehensive investigation powers. The Commission has the power to receive and investigate allegations of corruption, search and seizure, investigation and surveillance, searching bank accounts, examining business and private documents, requiring suspects to provide details of their assets, income, and expenditure, detaining travel documents, freezing assets, and protecting the confidentiality of an investigation. Thus, in principle, the Commission has adequate power of investigation. In practice, due to financial constraints and human capacity, the Commission delegated the Police Commission and Justice Office to investigate corruption cases and respond promptly to the allegations. Therefore, according to the study participants, such delegation causes more inconvenience than improvement. The main problems identified by the participants included excessive bureaucracies and delays in the handling of corruption cases.

Cooperation

The ACC's primary role is facilitating coordination and cooperation between various institutions and the public to combat corruption. As to Johnston and Kpundeh (2002), the

establishment of cross-sectional and sectorial coordination is an essential factor for the effectiveness of the ACCs. Under article 20 of Proclamation No. 237/2015, the Commission mandated working and coordinating with various stakeholders. Consequently, the Commission is working with various government agencies to promote ethics and increase public participation in the fight against corruption at the regional level.

Accordingly, the Commission has established relationships and works closely with the Education Bureau, Technical and Vocational Training Bureau, Health Bureau, Agricultural Bureau, and Finance and Economic Bureau to combat corruption. The Commission's public relations department collaborates with the regional Media such as Amhara Television, Amhara Radio, Bahir Dar, Dessie, and Debre Birhan FMs and other press Media. That has helped give the Commission visibility in the media and printed press and initiates the public to cooperate in the fight against corruption. Moreover, to enhance the coordination of the Commission to a higher level, the Regional Anticorruption Coalition, which comprises government agencies, private sectors, civil societies, religious institutions, and others around 129 institutions, was formed in 2014.

The coalition is mandated to provide direction in the fight against corruption and to evaluate the implementation of anti-corruption measures at the regional level. In practice, however, the coalition members are not committed to working with the Commission. For instance, Bahir Dar University, University of Gondar, Wollo University, and Debre Birhan University are members of the coalition that do not contribute to the effectiveness of the Commission. Besides, the coalition is not inclusive as most of its members are government institutions that care less about the private sector and opposition political parties. This situation undermines the coalition and the Commission's credibility and trust in strengthening their public mobilization role.

The Commission has also coordinated with the Police Commission and Justice Bureau of the region by forming a delegation convention charter on 25th January 2018. Cooperation with the police helps expedite investigations, disciplinary actions, and the sourcing of information. It also helps to fill little gaps concerning the shortage of human resources of the Commission.

In summary, the study concludes that the Commission has launched a collaborative effort with different government offices, enterprises, and institutions in the region through various mechanisms. However, there is a problem with implementing agreements and monitoring the work started. This factor has impacted the effectiveness of the Commission to build a society that does not tolerate corruption.

Conclusions

Corruption is a significant impediment to democracy, good governance, and socio-economic development. For this reason, combating corruption is considered one of the government's top priorities. In many countries, anti-corruption institutions have been established as the major actors in fighting against corruption. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Commission in combating corruption. The Commission's effectiveness was assessed using institutional autonomy, resource, clearly formulated mandate, transparency, power of investigations, and cooperation with other stakeholders as a parameter. Hence, the Commission's effectiveness was measured by assessing the extent to which it has implemented the set criteria. Accordingly, the study's findings reveal that even though the Commission is playing a significant role in combating corruption, it is found to be ineffective. This is usually due to resource limitation in general and the gap between the Commission's public expectation and achievements in particular.

Based on the findings mentioned above, this study recommends different alternative measures to make the Commission more effective. Therefore, since fighting corruption is not a one-time campaign, it is recommended to disseminate ethics and anti-corruption education progressively among society members to promote zero-tolerance towards corruption. Besides, allocating an appropriate budget that considers the Commission's mission and the cost of fighting corruption should be the regional government's main concern. The strategies may apply by adopting specific policy directions, guiding government officials, religious and community leaders, educational institutions, and other concerned government organizations, civil societies, NGOs, and international organizations to provide the necessary support. Higher institutions should also play their role in strengthening the capacity of the Commission. In particular, those universities that are members of the ANRS Anti-Corruption Coalition should provide support by conducting research and providing community services.

The main limitation of this study is that it has not assessed the extent to which the Commission's work in the fight against corruption has satisfied the community. Therefore, it would be a good research idea to conduct further study to determine the level of public satisfaction in the work being done by the Commission in the fight against corruption.

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