



## Impact of Transparency and Accountability on healthcare Projects in Peshawar

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**Abstract:** This exploratory study is aimed to investigate the impact of good governance practices of transparency and accountability on project performance in public health sector hospitals of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The research signifies a noteworthy advancement in a sequence of healthcare industry studies designed to illustrate the influence of effective governance on the performance of healthcare projects. Transparency and accountability are the major determinants of good governance having impact on healthcare project outcomes in the hospitals of Peshawar. The study will focus on three significant healthcare projects in the KP province: the "Sehat Card," "RBC," and "Insulin D - Talk." The study selected a sample size of N= 121, using a simple random sampling technique to choose the project planning, monitoring, and implementing authorities, including administrators, project leaders, heads of hospital departments, doctors, and other project staff members. Standardized surveys were conducted to gather quantitative data on the prevalence, frequency, and perceived effectiveness of selected governance practices among project staff members. The study revealed that transparency and accountability significantly influence project outcomes. The project demonstrated strong performance, and the study is significant as it represents the initial use of an international evaluation standard to measure the effectiveness of healthcare projects in Pakistan. The UNDP's principles of good governance were utilized to assess their influence on the performance of healthcare projects. Hence, the recommendations of the study show the importance of transparency and information in decision-making. They also emphasize coordinating with policymakers, healthcare managers, and project managers to improve governance practices and project outcomes. Similarly, such research initiatives are encouraged in private healthcare and other industries.

**Keywords:** Good governance, project performance, transparency, accountability.

### 1. Introduction

This study explores the impact of the good governance principles on project performance in public health sector hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By using quantitative research methods, this study aimed to understand how good governance principles impact project outcomes comprehensively. Through the research it identifies how the key governance factors, transparency and accountability contribute to successful project implementation and proposes recommendations for enhancing project governance in the health sector.

The public health sector projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the hospitals of Peshawar, demand improvement because of the governance issue. Even with adequate efforts in healthcare delivery many projects fail to deliver on set goals and objectives because of poor resource management, lack of policy disclosed to the

stakeholders, low stakeholder involvement, and poor accountability and responsibility mechanisms. These governance deficiencies can result in inefficiencies, diminished quality of care, and, ultimately, adverse health outcomes for the population.

Effective governance is crucial for the success of health sector projects, yet there is limited empirical evidence on how specific governance principles impact project performance in developing regions like Peshawar. Understanding the role of governance in public health projects is essential for developing strategies to enhance project outcomes and ensure sustainable improvements in healthcare delivery.

This study aimed to evaluate the influence of transparency and accountability on project performance and provided actionable recommendations for enhancing governance practices in the health sector to improve project outcomes.

## 1.1 Research Objectives

Focusing on research questions, the study had the following objectives:

- i. To evaluate the impact of good governance practices, accountability and transparency on the outcomes of public health projects.
- ii. To propose strategies and recommendations for improving governance in health sector projects relating to accountability and transparency.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Project performance

As per De Wit (1988), project management success is separated into standard metrics like time and cost and the evaluation of final objectives. Müller and Jugdev (2012) pointed out that determining project success requires analysing objective and subjective factors at closure. For a project to succeed effectively, it must adhere to these metrics. Determining project success is intricate, including the quick results of project aims and their future relevance. Sustainability in a project is defined by Khan (2000) as a constant provision of value during that project's entire life. Rani et al.'s (2021) findings show that the success of a project involves project management success and more considerable project success.

### 2.2 Transparency and Accountability (good governance principles) in public health sector)

The concept of project governance, as described by Turner (2009), involves the structure that defines project goals, the methods for attaining those goals, and the procedure for overseeing performance. It has been acknowledged as a critical element in achieving project success (Song et al., 2022). Joslin and Müller (2016) propose that effective project governance can improve the probability of project success, resulting in increased interest from both academia and industry professionals in gaining a comprehensive grasp of project management and governance. As defined by Bovaird and Löffler (2003), public governance refers to how stakeholders engage to impact the outcomes of public projects. Furthermore, the UNDP has articulated five principles of Good Governance based on its definition in "UNDP governance and sustainable human development" (UNDP, 1997, 2005). This study is focused on the Transparency and accountability practices using the UNDP guideline of good governance principles. As per the World Bank (2010), public accountability involves three interconnected groups: the general public, political leaders and supervisors, and service providers. These groups aim to hold each other accountable and ensure high-quality public services. Accountability, as highlighted by Cavill and Sohail (2007) and Reich (2018), motivates significant players to deliver quality services and combats corruption. Bertok (2005) further emphasizes that a lack of accountability fosters a culture of low performance and corruption in the public sector. Transparency in decision-making and adherence to rules and regulations are essential for ensuring accessibility to information and promoting trust in government projects (UNESCAP, 2009; Ayob, 2009). Bertok (2005) emphasizes that transparency is crucial in understanding procedures and methods for managing contracts and public finances to prevent corruption (Reddy et al., 2020). Lack of transparency can seriously compromise the integrity and fairness of the public sector (Reich, 2018).

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between transparency, accountability, and project performance in the healthcare projects of Public Hospitals in Peshawar, KP.

Figure 1: Characteristics of good governance



Note: Adapted from UNESCAP,2009.

These principles provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and practicing good governance. The study used three theories: agency theory, stakeholder theory, and transaction cost economic theory (TCE). Muller (2011) emphasized the significance of agency and transaction cost economic theory (TCE) in evaluating governance systems, particularly in project governance. TCE involves the decision to produce internally or procure externally, aiming to minimize organizational transaction costs. Stakeholder theory suggests involving stakeholders in decision-making when managing public healthcare services can enhance service quality and productivity (Amis et al.,2020; Savedoff, 2011). Additionally, stakeholder relationships are determined by Power, Legitimacy, Urgency, and Salience (Magness, 2008).

### 2.3 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

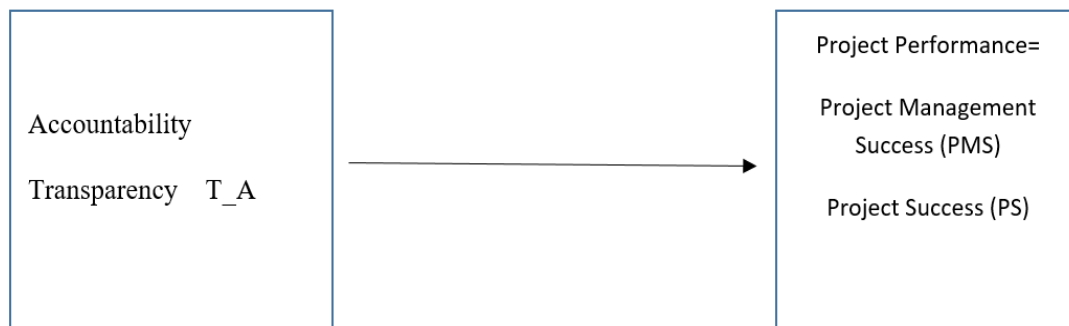
The following framework was developed for the study based on the literature on project performance, Public sector project governance, and good governance principles.

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of the study

Good Governance

(Independent Variable)

(Dependent Variable)



The study evaluated three healthcare projects in public-sector hospitals in Peshawar, KP: Sehat Insaf card, Regional Blood Centre (RBC), and Insulin D talk. These projects were chosen based on completing multiple phases, aligning with the study's objectives. The Sehat Insaf Card initiative provides the entire KP population with free medical care, covering secondary and tertiary care illnesses. The "Extension of D-TALK & Insulin for Life Program" offers free diabetes medicines and insulin, and the National Blood Transfusion Project, now called the Safe Blood Transfusion Project, operates on a centralized model of Regional Blood Centers (RBCs), ensuring safe blood

transfusion for six public hospitals in Peshawar. The study's selection of projects in the intermediate stage allows for valuable data on early implementation challenges and operational experiences. This approach provides a clear picture of the project's impact at an evolving stage. (Patton, 2014; Rossi et al., 2003).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sampling

The study required a simple random technique to select the project planning, monitoring and implementing authorities, such as administrators, heads of projects, heads of hospital departments, doctors and the rest of the project staff. As a more significant 30-sample size is acceptable for random sampling (Sekran,2008 ), it is intended to reach a 100-sample size. A total sample of 121 project providers for the three selected projects was used. The population of the research was further divided into two parts, i.e., project managers (Principals) like hospital Medical superintendents or Directors who were involved in the Planning and monitoring phase, and the project team (the agents), like Doctors and other hospital staff who were involved in the execution phase; this gave an insight into the part.

The “Sehat Card” project included 45 team members, accounting for 37% of the total sample. The “Insulin D Talk” project involved 41 team members, representing 34% of the sample. The “RBC” project had 35 team members, representing 29%. The total sample comprised 121 team members, with these percentages up to 100%. This distribution reflects the proportional involvement of team members across the projects, with “Sehat Card” having the highest representation, followed by “Insulin D Talk” and “RBC” with the smallest share.

Table 1: Detail of the project team sample for each project

Name of Project	Frequency	Percent
Sehat card	45	37.2
Insulin D Talk	41	33.9
RBC	35	28.9
Total	121	100.0

The gender distribution of the Projects’ team sample showed that out of 121 respondents, 107 were male, representing 88% of the total. In comparison, 14 respondents were female, making up 12% of the sample. This distribution was presented with the cumulative percentage reaching 100% when both genders were combined.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Method

Quantitative research methodology involves using numerical data and mathematical techniques to analyze and validate theories and assess correlations between variables (Taherdoost, 2022; Check & Schutt, 2012; Leavy, 2018; Babones, 2016). Kabir (2016) noted the usefulness of questionnaires in gathering data from a wide range of stakeholders, such as project and hospital directors , heads and implementing staff of public healthcare projects. Standardized surveys were administered to collect quantitative data on the prevalence, frequency, and perceived effectiveness of chosen governance practices across different projects from diverse projects staff. This data provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of public healthcare projects and facilitated improvements based on stakeholder feedback.

#### 3.3 Data collection Instrument

The survey questionnaire used to gather data from project staff consisted of two main parts. The first part contained closed-ended, multiple-choice questions to collect background information about the participants and the projects. This information included their positions, total years of experience, and the number of years spent on the projects. The second part of the survey focused on the participants' evaluation of the project based on their work experience. It emphasized good governance principles and project management success objectives, such as time, quality, and budget. Participants were asked to rate these aspects on a Likert scale 5, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire for project staff had a total of fifty-four (54) items, divided into

categories such as Project Management Success (18), Project Success (13) and Transparency and Accountability (23).The UNDP principles of good governance were analysed separately through a different set of statements for each principle.

**4. Results and Analysis**

The results were analysed using quantitative data to check their credibility and validity. Different statistical and analytical tools were applied to the data, using SPSS software to analyse and interpret it. In SPSS, the Alpha Cronbach test was run to ensure the validity and reliability of the project staff questionnaires used in this research. In addition, the multiple regression test and Pearson Correlation were used. The study tested the significance level at a 0.05 confidence interval, which means that if the significance level is 0.05, the equivalent confidence level is 95%. The following conditions represented statistically significant results: The P-value in a hypothesis test was smaller than the significance level; thus, the confidence interval in this study excluded the null hypothesis value.

**4.1 Econometrics Model**

$$Y (PP) = \alpha + \beta_1 (T\_A) + e \text{ (regression econometric model) ..... equation 1}$$

- In this equation, **PP** represents Project Performance, which is a dependent variable
- **(T\_A)** denotes transparency and accountability as a measure of good governance practices (independent variable).

**4.2 Reliability**

As in Table 2 The reliability statistics output indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient value is 0.893 (89%) based on standardized items.

Table 2: Reliability study of the project performance from the project team perspective

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items	Sample size
0.891	0.893	54	121

This means that the questionnaire instrument used to measure the Performance of projects in public sector Hospitals in Peshawar has good internal consistency among its 54 items. The reliability is calculated for the sample size of 121.

**4.3 Correlational Analysis**

Pearson correlation coefficients (r) is used to investigate the bivariate correlation.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient for Dimensions of the projects' performance from the project team perspective

Correlation Matrix		PMS	PS	T_A
Project Management Success (PMS)	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Project Success (PS)	Pearson Correlation	0.545*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Transparency & Accountability (T_A)	Pearson Correlation	0.676	0.491	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Table 3 explains the correlation analysis and provides Pearson correlation coefficients "r" between pairs of variables in the instrument for Projects' Performance used in this study. The "r" values help determine the direction of the relationship. As Table 3 illustrates, the correlation between the two dependent variables of Project Management Success (PMS) and Project Success (P.S.) was found to be highly and positively correlated( r= 0.545, p=.000). This explains the significance of the link between the PMS and P.S. in the same direction. The correlation between the Independent variable Transparency and accountability (T\_A) and the dependent variable Project Management Success (PMS) was found to be large and positively correlated ) as r =0.676,p=.000. Thus, the correlation between Transparency and accountability and another dependent variable, Project Success (P.S.), was moderately and positively correlated as r= 0.491,p=.000.

**4.4 Conducting regression analysis on project performance factors: assessing variance and model fit**

This study conducted regression analysis using the domains of Projects' Performance Instrument to check the degree of variation in 'Projects' Performance' as dependent on other domains, including Transparency & Accountability. The R-square value (R<sup>2</sup>= 0.693) indicates that the model as a whole (which includes both dependent and independent variable) is statistically fit and significant (F=33.552, p=.000], as the p-value is less than .005.

Table 4: Sum Up Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Dependant Variable Project Performance ( )			F	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>	Std Error
	B	T	Sig				
(Constant)	1.386	2.480	.015	33.552	0.000	0.693	.559
(T-A)	.274	1.543	.001				.178

**4.5 Econometric Model of the Study**

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 (X1) \dots\dots\dots \text{eq.1}$$

$$\text{Project Performance} = \alpha + \beta_1 (\text{Transparency \& Accountability}) \dots\dots\dots \text{eq.2a}$$

$$PP = \alpha + \beta_1 (T\_A) \dots\dots\dots \text{eq.2b}$$

$$PP = 1.386 + 0.274 (T\_A) \dots\dots\dots \text{eq3}$$

The results (from eq. 3) show that a 1 unit change in Transparency & Accountability (T.A.) will bring a 0.274 unit change in Project Performance. Similarly, a 100% change in Transparency & Accountability will result in a 27% change in P.P. The value of  $\beta_1 = 0.274$ , (t=1.543, p=.001), as the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis of 'No Variation' is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that variation (improvement) in Transparency and accountability can result in a change (improvement) in Project Performance.

**5. Conclusion**

The study aimed to examine the impact of good governance practices on the performance of healthcare projects in public sector hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It revealed that these governance practices of transparency and accountability significantly influence project outcomes. The project demonstrated success in project management and overall outcomes, including adherence to budget and deadlines, high patient satisfaction, and fair access to healthcare services. Overall, the project's performance was strong based on both project management success and project success. The study is noteworthy as it marks the first application of an



international evaluation standard to assess the effectiveness of healthcare projects in Pakistan. The UNDP's principles of good governance, transparency and accountability were applied to evaluate their impact on the performance of healthcare projects to enhance the delivery of healthcare services. The analysis from various projects' staff in the healthcare project highlighted several key aspects of transparency and accountability. Most of them confirmed efficient documentation prior to project implementation, but there were mixed views on the accessibility of the online database. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices varied, with some praising robust systems and others noting limitations. The project staff are dedicated to accurately documenting services, addressing patient complaints, and reporting incidents promptly. They prioritize privacy, educate patients about their care, and gather feedback to enhance care standards. The staff are actively involved in quality improvement initiatives through training and continuous improvement efforts. Overall, the project demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability. However, there are notable disparities in database accessibility, M&E practices, and reporting consistency across hospitals that need to be addressed for improved governance and service quality.

The study's recommendations are based on the findings highlighting the importance of transparency and access to information in decision-making processes and decisions. It stresses the significance of providing stakeholders with the necessary information to build trust and engage them in decision-making. Open communication systems, regular reports, and updates are essential elements. The study thus suggests training staff on decision-making, communication, ethical decision-making, and conflict resolution to implement transparency principles. Additionally, it emphasizes the adoption of standard reporting formats and using digital platforms for communication and information sharing. Involving stakeholders in decision-making through advisory panels and constant invitations to participate in meetings is recommended to improve transparency and legitimacy. The recommendations emphasized the need to engage with policymakers, healthcare administrators, and project managers in order to enhance governance practices and project performance. It underscored the significance of providing comprehensive training on effective governance to the health management team, with the aim of fortifying the healthcare system and improving patient outcomes in the country.

The future research phase needs to examine how effective governance principles contribute to healthcare project performance by expanding the research to other districts and provinces in Pakistan to understand better the similarities and differences in governance processes and their impacts. The studies also need to explore the effects of governance structures on healthcare project delivery using cross-sectional methods with neighboring countries' healthcare systems. Furthermore, the study recommends conducting similar investigations in the private sector and exploring governance principles in other industries.

## 5.1 Discussion

The quantitative analysis revealed a strong correlation between effective Good governance practices and improved healthcare project performance. The correlation between the two dependent variables of Project Management Success (PMS) and Project Success (P.S.) was found to be highly and positively correlated. This explained the significance of the link between the PMS and P.S. in the same direction. The correlation between the Independent variable Transparency and accountability (T\_A) and the dependent variable Project Management Success (PMS) was found to be large and positively correlated. The correlation between Transparency and accountability and another dependent variable, Project Success (P.S.), was moderately and positively correlated. Further, the results from multiple regressions showed that variation (improvement) in Transparency and accountability can result in a change (improvement) in project performance. In this study, Transparency and accountability had the third highest impact on project performance in Peshawar's public sector hospitals, with variation rates of 27%.

Research shows that the healthcare projects strongly emphasise Transparency and accountability in governance practices. Accountability, Transparency, and incentive structures (Agency Theory) can enhance governance and project outcomes (Eisenhardt,1989; Jensen & Meckling,1976). The findings highlighted a commitment to comprehensive documentation before project implementation, proactive management of patient complaints, and a multi-faceted approach to monitoring and evaluation.

The system encompassed regular monitoring and evaluation, quality checks, and structured reporting requirements. The accountability framework was supported by both internal project teams and external agencies, ensuring comprehensive oversight. Hospital management was critical in adhering to project requirements and maintaining Transparency. While the findings revealed areas for improvement, such as the need for standardisation in database accessibility and reporting practices, the overall commitment to Transparency and accountability within the healthcare projects was evident, and the findings highlight a well-structured and multi-faceted approach to accountability within the project. Despite acknowledging areas for improvement, the dedication to Transparency and accountability within the healthcare projects highlighted the positive role of good governance in delivering

high-quality healthcare services. Agency Theory advocates for adopting transparent measures to mitigate information asymmetry between principals and agents, leading to improved decision-making and resource management by examining how accountability mechanisms and incentive structures impact project performance. Also, the influence of Transparency on reducing information asymmetry and enhancing governance in public health projects should be assessed (Eisenhardt,1989; Jensen & Meckling,1976; Shleifer & Vishny,1997). In the previous study conducted by Kaini (2013), it was suggested that one of the cornerstones of healthcare governance, Transparency or openness, positively impacts health outcomes. Multiple studies have underscored the significance of Transparency in the effective governance of a healthcare system (Jafari et al., 2019; McMichael & Healy, 2017; Reich, 2018).

The project staff exemplified a strong commitment to accurately documenting services, addressing patient complaints through various channels, and promptly reporting incidents to the appropriate authorities. A systematic approach to gathering feedback from patients and their families is in place to evaluate satisfaction and enhance care standards. The staff's involvement in quality improvement initiatives is evident, as they actively engage in training and continuous improvement efforts.

The insights from the analysis offered valuable input for further strengthening governance practices and advancing the delivery of high-quality healthcare services. All institutions must be responsible and answerable to the public and their stakeholders. Specifically, institutions should be accountable to those whom their decisions and actions will impact. Accountability cannot be achieved without Transparency and adherence to the Rule of law (Gao & Yu,2020; Meuleman,2021). Decisions must be implemented by rules and regulations. Additionally, it is essential to ensure the free flow of information, making it accessible to those affected by the application of these decisions (Reddy et al.,2020).

## 5.2 Future Directions

The study could be expanded to include multiple hospitals in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province and encompass research in other provinces of Pakistan, such as Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. This expansion would allow for the replication of the study in diverse geographical and administrative settings to identify similarities or differences in governance processes and their outcomes across various country regions. Additionally, conducting similar research in the private healthcare sector and exploring governance principles in other industries, such as education and finance, is recommended to gain a comprehensive understanding of governance practices in Pakistan.

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