

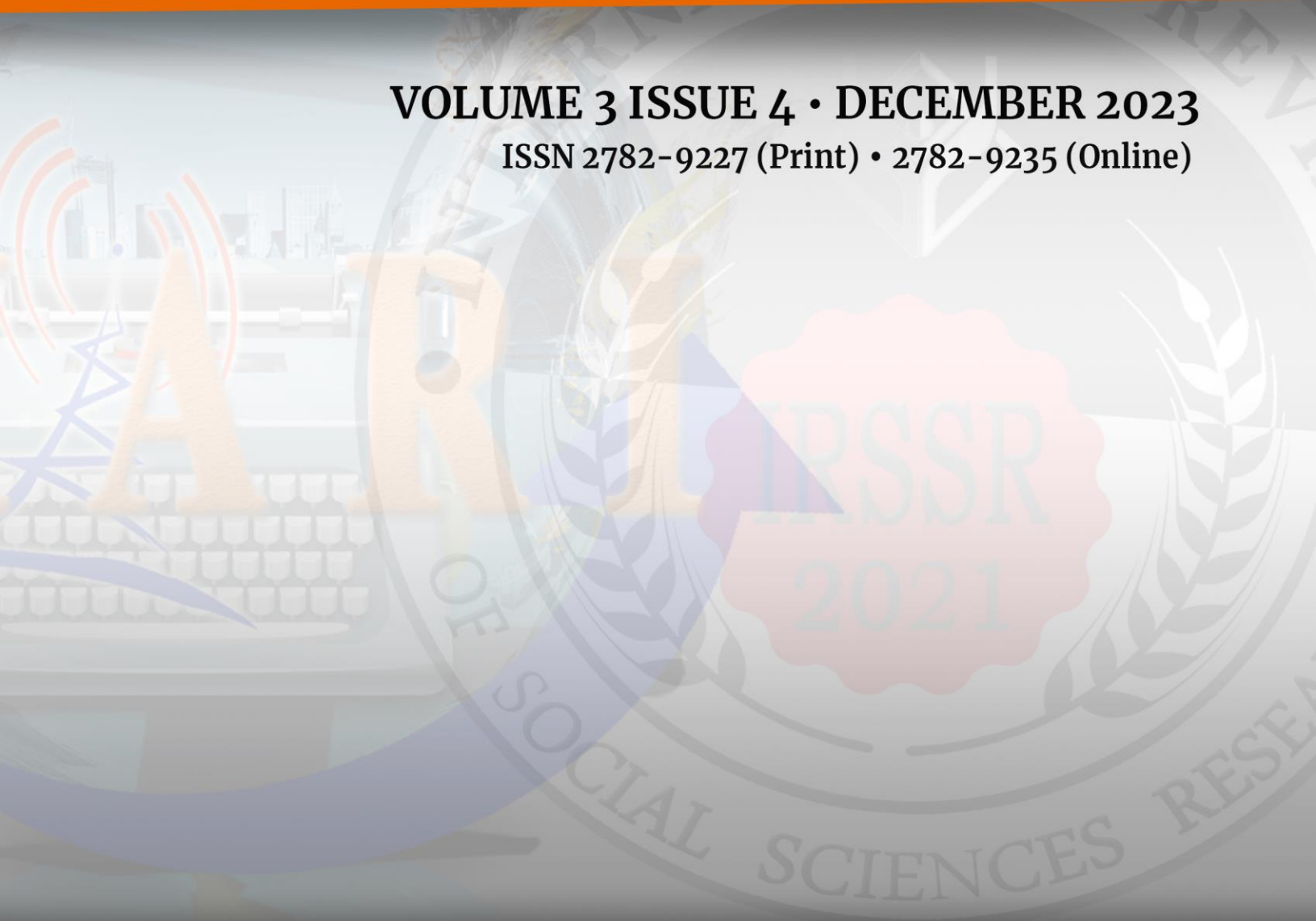


INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

OF SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 4 • DECEMBER 2023

ISSN 2782-9227 (Print) • 2782-9235 (Online)



Copyright ©2023

The author(s)



This journal contains open-access articles published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

For publication concerns, contact the publisher at irssr@iari.org.

ISSN 2782-9227 (Print)
2782-9235 (Online)

Published by:

Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated
South Spring Village, Bukal Sur
Candelaria, Quezon, Philippines
Postal Code 4323

Contact Number: (+63) 916 387 3537

Visit the website <https://iari.org>





INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

ISSN 2782-9227 (PRINT) 2782-9235 (ONLINE)

Volume 3 Issue 4 | December 2023

ISSN 2782-9227 (Print)

2782-9235 (Online)

This journal is published quarterly every March, June, September and December.

For more information, visit the website <https://iari.org/journals/irssr>.

D I S C L A I M E R

Although the article follows rigorous process of evaluation and peer review, the authenticity of the data and information is the sole responsibility of the author. Furthermore, the standpoint and perspective of the authors as expressed in their research articles do not necessarily reflect that of the publisher, the journal and the editorial board.

Aims and Scope



International Review of Social Sciences Research (IRSSR) is an open access peer-reviewed quarterly journal focused on the complex nature of human being, its interaction with the community and its relation to the society and the environment. It emphasizes the theoretical and practical concepts of social sciences; people, community and society. Moreover, there are multitude of areas such as social issues, current events, environment, humanities, history, and education, among others. The diverse fields of knowledge under the umbrella of social sciences offer interesting areas suited for different methods of research. This allows researchers to apply multiple designs to describe, analyze and evaluate historical, current and futuristic situations or events.

The journal employs rigorous double-blind review to ensure quality publications. Authors receive comment through feedforward communication approach. It is the prime objective of the reviewers to help authors improve the quality of the papers. As the journal promotes internationalization and collaboration, the multi-dimensional perspectives of the author and reviewers add high value to the research article. Moreover, the journal has solid support system for copyediting and formatting. The journal ensures that the research articles are within the standards of international publication.

It publishes high quality research papers that uses quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. The journal aims to entice a diverse spectrum of readers from the different parts of the globe.

The journal covers, but not limited to, the following:

Anthropology

- Human development;
- Geography;
- History and historiography;
- Language and culture;
- Social structure; and
- Belief systems.

Economics

- Microeconomics and macroeconomics;
- Efficiency in production and exchange;
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI);
- Employment and Unemployment;
- Economic development;
- Inflation and Deflation;
- Economic systems; and
- Economic theories.

Political science

- Government and governance;
- Public administration;
- Law and politics;
- Public policy;
- International relations; and
- Foreign trade.

Psychology

- Educational psychology;
- Cognitive psychology;
- Social psychology;
- Developmental psychology;
- Clinical psychology;
- Health psychology;
- Community psychology;
- Cross-cultural psychology;
- Personality and personality development;
- Human behavior; and
- Human happiness.

Sociology

- Environmental development and sustainability;
- Religion and culture;
- Traditions and beliefs;
- Criminology, crime and the law;
- Community and community development;
- Poverty, health and wealth;
- Population and international migration; and
- Social issues and trends.

Humanities

- Philosophy and religion;
- Communication and Modern Languages;
- Ancient and Modern Literature;
- Arts and Art Appreciation;
- Millennial and Gen Z; and
- Cultural, ethnic and gender studies.

Editorial Board

Dr. Tengku Intan Suzila Tengku Sharif
Universiti Teknologi Mara Pahang Branch
Editor-in-chief

Dr. Celedonia R. Hilario
Northwestern Visayan Colleges
Associate Editor

Section Editors

Dr. Marzena Smol
Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Dr. Portia R. Marasigan
Laguna State Polytechnic University, Philippines

Dr. Cherry Mae Reyes-Teodosio
Aklan State University, Philippines

Editorial Board

Dr. Richard Ryan C. Villegas
National University, Manila, Philippines
Bank)

Dr. Roldan C. Ragot
Bangko Kabayan (A Development
Philippines

Rev. Edgar Allan Dela Cruz Mendoza, PhD
Pearl of the Orient International Auxiliary Chaplain
Values Educators Inc., Philippines

Dr. Ma'rifah SH MH
Sultan Adam College of Legal Studies
Indonesia

Dr. Sumi V. S.
Maulana Azad National Urdu University, India

Dr. Ana Raissa Trinidad-Lagarto
University of Southeastern Philippines

Atty. Jose I. Dela Rama, Jr., D.C.L.
Tarlac State University School of Law, Philippines
Myanmar

Wai Wai Than
Sagaing University of Education,

Jherwin P. Hermosa
Laguna State Polytechnic University, Philippines

Dr. Wilfredo D. Dalugdog
Laguna State Polytechnic University –
Siniloan Campus, Philippines

Dr. Gautam Makwana
Mizoram University (A Central University), India

Dr. Ariel E. San Jose
Southern Philippines Agribusiness and
Marine and Aquatic School of
Technology

Richard C. Gabris
Far Eastern University – Alabang, Philippines

Dr. Kurt S. Candilas
Lourdes College, Philippines

Dr. Jay Mark B. Santos
La Consolacion University Philippines

Dr. Bernardo N. Caslib, Jr.
University of the Philippines Manila

EDITORIAL POLICIES

Statement of Open Access

The IIARI upholds and supports open access research publication that allows global sharing of scholarly information without restrictions. Through this platform, free access to shared information promotes knowledge and education. As such, this journal publishes open-access research articles that anyone can reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercial or non-commercially, with proper attribution. The articles' first publication in the journal should always be acknowledged.

Copyright

The open-access articles herein are published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Authors retain the copyright but grant the journal the right to the first publication. Authors can use any contents of the article provided there is proper acknowledgement. Reprint and reproduction of the article does not require prior permission. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Repository Policy

The authors are allowed to deposit their articles in institutional repositories, publish in institutional websites and upload in social networking sites with proper attribution and link to the article's DOI. This journal uses OJS/PKP submission that allows archive of pre-print. The post-print in PDF version is also deposited in Internet Archive for long-term preservation of the articles.

Authors' Warranties

Upon signing the copyright transfer form, authors ensure that:

- The article is an author's original work.
- It is not considered for publication nor any part previously published elsewhere.
- The author confirms, to the best of his knowledge, the authenticity and integrity of the data gathered.
- There is no fabrication, plagiarism, material misrepresentation, academic dishonesty, discriminatory and bigoted language contained in the article.
- The author obtains prior permission for the use of any previously published text or material owned by another person.

Peer Review

The journal recruits external experts in the field to assist the editor in the evaluation and selection of the papers. They are selected based on their qualification and specialization. All submitted papers duly accepted by the editor for suitability to journal scope or structural requirements are sent to the reviewers. The journal editorial staff reserve the right to choose the appropriate reviewer based on their knowledge of the topic. The journal adheres to the double blind peer-review process. Neither the author nor the reviewers know each other's identity. Invitations are sent to potential reviewers. Thereafter, the paper is sent only to those who agreed to accept the review invite. The editor makes the decision after the receipt of at least two reviews.

For other editorial policies and publication details, you can visit the following:

Editorial Policies: <https://iiari.org/journals/irsr/policies/>

Author Guidelines: <https://iiari.org/journals/irsr/guidelines/>

ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING

This journal is included in the following abstracting and indexing databases.



Article Identifier



Repository

OJS / PKP



Table of Contents

<u>Citizens' Assessment of the Municipal Services Provided by Mymensingh City Corporation</u>	1
<i>Sharmin Begum & Tanjil Ahmed</i>	
<u>Board Composition and Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in Ethiopia</u>	26
<i>Lakachew Walie Zeleke, Wario Guyo, & Makori Moronge</i>	

Citizens' Assessment of the Municipal Services Provided by Mymensingh City Corporation

¹Sharmin Begum & ²Tanjil Ahmed

Abstract

City Corporations, which are crucial in defining the urban environment, have a significant impact on the quality of life of their residents. Hence, this study aims to explore citizens' assessment and satisfaction with the different services provided by Mymensingh City Corporation. Employing an exploratory research approach, the study gathers quantitative data through surveys. The findings of the study revealed that 24% of participants strongly agreed that the Mymensingh City Corporation upholds the Citizen Charter while providing services, 38% were satisfied with the MCC's present services, 12% claimed to have participated in the MCC decision-making process, 22% concurred that the MCC demonstrates an adequate level of transparency and accountability in its operations, 24% were satisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defense, and 38% said that the MCC had done a good job of upholding urban planning. These statistics clearly indicate that MCC has enough scope to improve its overall performance regarding enhancing citizen satisfaction. Since the survey was conducted during the pandemic, it has restricted gathering data from an adequate number of respondents. However, there is a scope for further research by applying a mixed method with a large sample size. Finally, necessary policy recommendations have been discussed in the study that may improve the performance of the MCC.

Keywords: *citizens' assessment, municipal services, citizen charter, urban planning, accountability and transparency, Bangladesh*

Article History:

Received: September 1, 2023

Accepted: October 14, 2023

Revised: October 13, 2023

Published online: October 30, 2023

Suggested Citation:

Sharmin Begum & Tanjil Ahmed (2023). Citizens' Assessment of the Municipal Services Provided by Mymensingh City Corporation. *International Review of Social Sciences Research*, 3 (4), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.53378/353020>

About the authors:

¹Assistant Professor. Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University Trishal, Mymensingh-2224. Email: sharminpags15@gmail.com

²Corresponding author. Lecturer. Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University Trishal, Mymensingh-2224. Email: tanjilahmedtaj@gmail.com

© The author (s). Published by Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated.



This is an open-access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Bangladesh will be among the top three fastest-growing economies by 2030, and now it is considered one of the top emerging economies in the world (Economic Relations Division, 2021). Bangladesh has been undergoing massive urbanization because of its speedy and sustained economic progress (Chandan, 2017). At present, 39.71 percent of the total population of Bangladesh lives in urban areas (World Bank, 2023). However, numerous issues are invading towns and cities as a result of the rapid migration of rural residents to cities and the unchecked population growth. In fact, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is facing complexities providing public services to the growing population in the cities (Hasan, 2022).

In Bangladesh, civic services are provided through local government bodies (urban and rural). The urban local government comprises city corporations and municipalities (*Pourashavas*), which are vital parts of the delivery of services to people residing in cities and towns. On the other hand, municipalities and city corporations have the capacity to generate sufficient revenues and largely depend on budgetary transfers from the central government of Bangladesh (Bhuiyan, 2011). Though city corporations have their own budgets, the tremendous needs of population and limited fiscal support act as a barrier to operating and maintaining the desired level of services at urban local government (Bhattacharya et al., 2013). As the rate of urbanization increases, citizens' demands for urban services from the government are also increasing promptly. To address the issue, the GoB has established a total of 12 city corporations and 328 municipal corporations to ensure better management of the city structure and public services (LGED, 2019). Though there is a threat of massive resource crises and overpopulation, several city corporations and *Pourashavas* in the country have reputation of exemplary practices (Chandan, 2017). The innovations in the public service delivery system have made a notable change in city corporations and municipalities (Kernaghan, 2011).

The 'Vision 2021' of 'Digital Bangladesh' has empowered local government institutions to provide services and information in minimum time with low cost. As the government has established e-service delivery networks at the local level in both urban and rural areas, it has promoted an acceleration in service efficiency (Amin et al., 2022). The convenient access to services and information with digitalized delivery systems resulted to a mindset of transparency and accountability in the urban citizens (Hasan, 2016). Hence, the authorities of municipalities and city corporations are now recognized for their good work in some sectors.

The government has taken initiatives to solve the age-old problems of several institutions and tried to build their capacities to fulfil citizens' demands and consequently assure sustainable urban development. However, it is essential to identify how far municipalities and city corporations are ensuring better services to their respected citizens (Afroj et al., 2021). Therefore, this study focused on citizens' assessment regarding the services provided by the City Corporations of Bangladesh, specifically the newly formed Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), as part of the urban local government, and evaluated how they provide and ensure public services to citizens. In this context, it measured the citizens' assessment of the municipal services provided by the MCC through analyzing the existing service delivery practices and evaluating the extent of citizens' satisfaction with the services. In addition, the citizens were also asked recommendations to improve the services of the MCC.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Structure and service delivery of local government

The government body that deals mainly with difficulties or issues connected to a certain population within a particular territory under the authorization of the central government is called local government (Aurora, 2016). The constitution of Bangladesh defines local government as an administrative unit that shall be entrusted to bodies and composed of elected persons based on the law (Parliamentary Affairs and Law, 2020). Urban government refers to the process of governance where the government (elected representatives) and stakeholders decide how to prepare a plan and execute the plan for ensuring sustainable development (William, 2020). According to UNESCAP and UN-Habitat, urban government is a body that contains a range of actors and organizations for ensuring urban development. It determines the strategic planning for the development of urban areas like road and traffic management, drainage, and other development (UN-Habita, 2010).

In Bangladesh, the local government is divided into two broad categories, urban local government and rural local government. Essentially, in towns and cities, urban local government (municipality and City Corporation) is playing a noteworthy role in ensuring the civic services of its huge population and maintaining the standard of living. The urban local government of Bangladesh is composed of two tiers: city corporations and *Pourashava* (Jamil & Panday, 2012). City Corporation is an urban government institution that consists of several wards and is headed by an elected people's representative. The corporation is headed by an authority named

'Mayor' who is directly elected by the citizens of certain urban areas. In addition, a group of councilors was also elected from each ward under the corporation (Ahsan, 2012). In the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009, the functions of city corporations are stipulated to be pertinent to the needs of citizens and urban development. However, these functions need to be carried out in an acceptable manner to ensure better services to citizens.

The GoB has established a total of 12 city corporations and 328 municipal corporations to ensure better management of city structures and public services (LGED, 2019). The 'Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009' outlines urban services in Bangladesh in 28 broad categories, including public health; birth, death, and matrimonial registration; medical facilities; water supply and sanitation; ferry facilities; local market and slaughterhouse management; town planning; building construction; road development; traffic control; public security; disaster management; graveyard and crematorium management; and public transportation (Sddiqui, 2008; Afroj et al., 2021). For instance, the Local Government Department (LGD) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) conducted several urban development projects with financial help from various development partners and government funds to strengthen the service delivery of municipalities and city corporations (LGED, 2018).

The present urban local government system of Bangladesh is presented in table 1. There is a separate set of local governments based on urban and rural areas. Urban local government institutions are called city corporations and *Pourashava*.

Table 1

Urban Local Government System of Bangladesh

Level/Unit	Name	Headed by	Election method	Revenue authority
Mega City	City Corporation	Elected Mayor	Direct Election	Yes
Small City/Town	Municipality (<i>Pourashava</i>)	Elected Mayor	Direct Election	Yes
Cantonment area	Cantonment Board	Government Nominated Chairman	Not Applicable	No

Source: Adapted from Taukdar (2009, p. 45 as cited in Chowdhury and Deb, 2012, p. 3)

2.2. Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC)

The twelfth city corporation of Bangladesh is Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), which is the municipal government of the city of Mymensingh. The boundaries of the city corporation, composed of 33 general wards and 11 reserved wards, were set out in a gazette on January 28, 2019. The government updated Mymensingh to Bangladesh's 12th city corporation on October 15, 2018. The National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganization and Reform (NICAR) approved the formation of the city corporation on April 2, 2018 and the first election was held on May 5, 2019. NICAR had previously formed the Mymensingh division, the eighth in the country, on September 14, 2015. The division includes Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, and Netrokona. The MCC was announced within three years. The total area of the new City Corporation is 91.135 square kilometers. The total population of the area is 813,114. Ekramul Haque, the mayor of the now-defunct Mymensingh Municipality, has been serving as the administrator of the newly formed city corporation.

According to the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, an administrator's term can last for a maximum of 180 days. The city has to elect a new public representative before the administrator's term ends. According to the election commission, the city corporation has 296,938 voters who exercised their franchise in the maiden MCC election on May 5, 2019. However, only councilors were elected because Awami League mayoral candidate, Ekramul Haque Titu, has already been elected unopposed. There are 33 general councilor posts, 11 seats are reserved for women. The Electoral Voting Machine (EVM) were used in all 127 polling stations (Voting in Mymensingh City Polls Underway, 2019).

2.3. Satisfaction with government services

Urbanization can foster economic growth, reduce poverty, and deal with climate change issues if adequately planned and managed. The globe is quickly urbanizing, and most individuals will live in cities and towns in a few decades. Hence, the potential of cities to provide services and build infrastructure accurately, along with their ability to handle environmental aspects and local economies, depends upon institutional capabilities, the quality of local governance, and the disbursement of financial and other resources (World Bank, 2022). Citizens' demand for urban services is increasing promptly due to the increasing rate of industrialization and urbanization (Gabriela and Elisa, 2013).

According to Osman (2016), Bangladesh is no longer behind in upgrading the delivery of public services to accommodate citizens' requirements by making them less time-consuming, effective, and accessible. While studies showed that citizens at the different local government offices are generally satisfied (Karim, 2015; Kasem et al., 2022; Afroj et al., 2021; Andaleeb et al., 2007), there were reports and studies on the dissatisfaction concerning the services they have received at local governmental institutions (The Business Standard, 2019; International Republican Institute, 2023; Bhuiyan & Islam, 2023; Cockcroft et al., 2011; Mannan, 2013; Akter, 2023). However, there are more pressing issues beyond dissatisfaction with the government services. For instance, Ahmed and Akter (2022) explored the significance of people's participation in terms of ensuring good governance, i.e., accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in local government institutions in Bangladesh through quantitative approach and found that people are less aware of their participation rights in the different avenues of local government, which is considered a major issue behind ensuring good governance at the local level. People's participation is crucial for improving overall public service delivery in the government (Ahmed & Akter, 2022; Muriu, 2013; Osborne & Strokosch, 2022; Patel, 2011; Uddin, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2022).

According to Mahmud (2021), citizens' satisfaction is a prominent factor in urban governance since it reflects people's trust. Karim (2015) illustrated the assimilation of online-based services through e-governance along with traditional methods of public service delivery in areas such as online payments of utility bills, education-related services, registration-related services, license renewal, land records, e-mutation, and health service information that are accessible to residents, which opened up a comfortable service-receiving experience for citizens. In contrast, people have dissatisfaction with the duration and processes required to receive services from local government institutions. The time discrepancy in the Citizen Charter or website and the delivery time of information or services made citizens dissatisfied (Osman, 2016; Mahmud, 2021). Other studies assessed the various departments providing various services. For instance, Mian et al. (2013) found that Mymensingh municipality suffered from huge solid waste due to irregular waste management and unconsciousness; the responsible authority failed to manage waste. Waste management is a core function of municipalities that can be improved by ensuring the regularity of management work, building people's awareness, and improving waste treatment (Mian et al., 2013). In another study, Barua et al. (2020) emphasized

the awareness-building and participation of citizens in safety and security programs, for instance, earthquake-related programs. It is evident from the study that most residents are unaware of the earthquake vulnerability of the Mymensingh area. In this regard, they added that citizens' knowledge and consciousness about earthquake susceptibility are limited. Despite such a lack of knowledge, some residents have better assessments and are willing to volunteer to engage the community in awareness building (Barua et al., 2020).

Other pressing concerns are emphasized in various studies. For example, Basher et al. (2012) described the reality and challenges of slum dwellers in Mymensingh. They added that the urban population and the number of slum dwellers are growing, and inclusive policy is needed to provide them with municipal services. Meanwhile, Afroj et al. (2021) assessed Dhaka North City Corporation (DCC) and concluded that the urban government has to be more pragmatic, dependable, and participative, as well as recruiting adequate human resources and appropriate amenities. Due to the potential adverse effects of the massive population growth in metropolitan areas, DNCC appears to be unable to provide for the needs of the current population. Islam (2022) suggested strategies to make city corporations in Bangladesh efficient by building partnerships with stakeholders, adequate planning for land and relevant facilities, sufficiently trained human resources, proper allocation of budgets, decentralized decision-making, reducing overlapped actions of different government institutions, and upholding accountability and transparency with effective Citizen Charters.

While there are studies on the functions of local government institutions and services available in municipalities as well as city corporations in Bangladesh, there is a notable lack of studies that emphasized the twelfth city corporation of Bangladesh and how citizens evaluate the overall performance of MCC. Moreover, as a newly formed city corporation, there is a need to evaluate municipal services through citizen's assessment.

3. Methodology

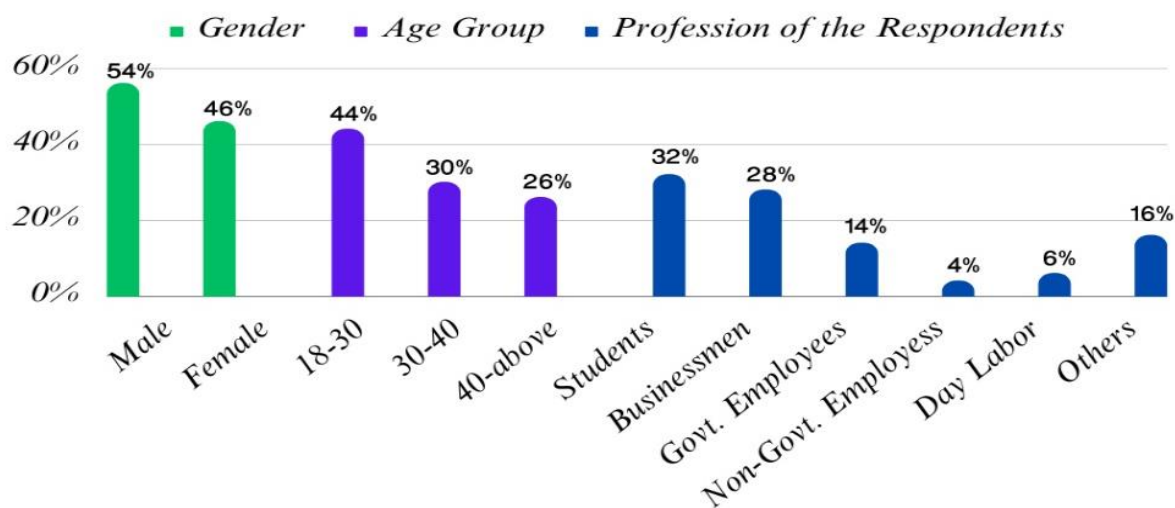
This study aimed to evaluate the services of MCC from the citizens' perspective; therefore, this research followed an exploratory approach where a quantitative method was utilized. As data collection is essential while conducting any research, primary data has been collected following the survey method with a self-administered structured questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured by following content validity with the opinions of experts (Almanasreh et al., 2021) renowned for the assessment of municipal services in

Bangladesh about the inclusion of required items and the deletion of extraneous ones. Furthermore, the questionnaire was pre-tested before the final data collection.

The study area was the MCC, as it is easily accessible for the researcher and data collection team. The sample for this research was drawn following the convenience sampling method from citizens who availed the services of MCC. It is worth mentioning that the field survey was conducted during the pandemic in 2021; consequently, the data collection was affected. During the pandemic, the movement of citizens was limited. Therefore, the sample size of the study was comparatively small, a limitation of this study that might vitiate the actual representation of the population. Survey data were collected from hundred respondents who availed the services of MCC as shown in figure 1. The collected data were organized characteristically, and then percentage analysis was applied. Quantitative data were presented in graphs, and the responses were shown in percentages using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Figure 1

Demographic information of the participants



Source: Field Survey on MMC, 2022.

The study surveyed a representative cross-section of citizens and compiled their opinions on the quality and efficiency of urban local government services. The characteristics of the samples showed that 54% were male and 46% were female. Approximately 44% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18 to 30 years. This segment of the population had an optimistic view of city corporation's services. The younger generation stated a preference for

more open communication and openness with city corporation authorities, and they demonstrated a greater tendency to use digital platforms. On the other hand, only 26% of respondents were over the age of 41. This group showed a balanced view of city corporation's services, emphasizing the need for maintaining existing infrastructure and services rather than solely focusing on introducing new initiatives. They valued consistency and dependability in the provision of services and preferred face-to-face meetings with city corporation officials.

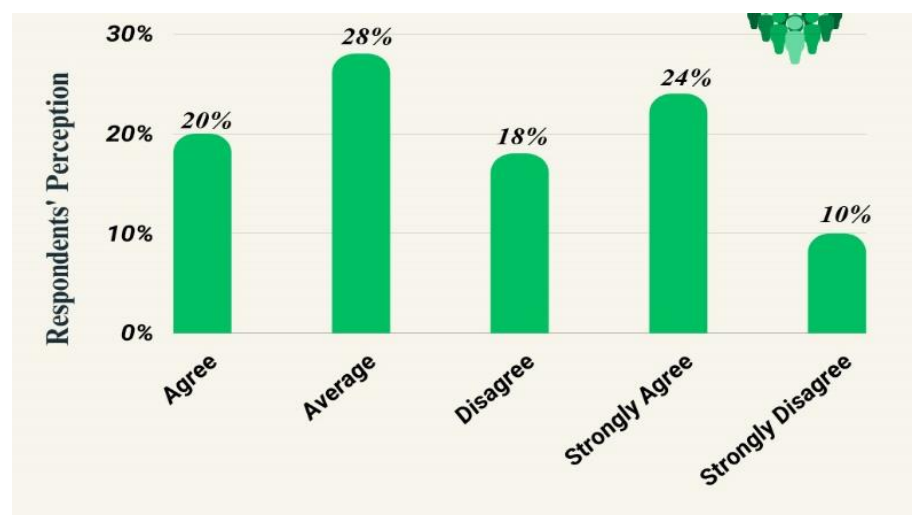
Students made up around 32% of the respondents, and they stressed the importance of citizen-friendly and sustainable city corporation services for its residents. In addition, almost 28% of respondents identified as businesspeople, and this group stressed the need for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in city corporation's services. Businessmen often gave more priority to services that directly affected their day-to-day operations, such as transportation infrastructure and reliable utility provisions. Only 14% of respondents were government officials. Government officials underlined the need for efficient departmental collaboration to ensure flawless service delivery. In order to promote accountability and confidence, they also emphasized the need for transparent decision-making procedures and public involvement.

The research ethics were followed in the conduct of the study particularly voluntary participation, privacy, consent before interviews and surveys, as well as respondents' confidentiality. The study assured that no participants, entities, or groups belonging to any section were abused or forced to give their assessments.

4. Findings and Discussion

Figure 2

*MCC's Adherence to
Citizen Charter*

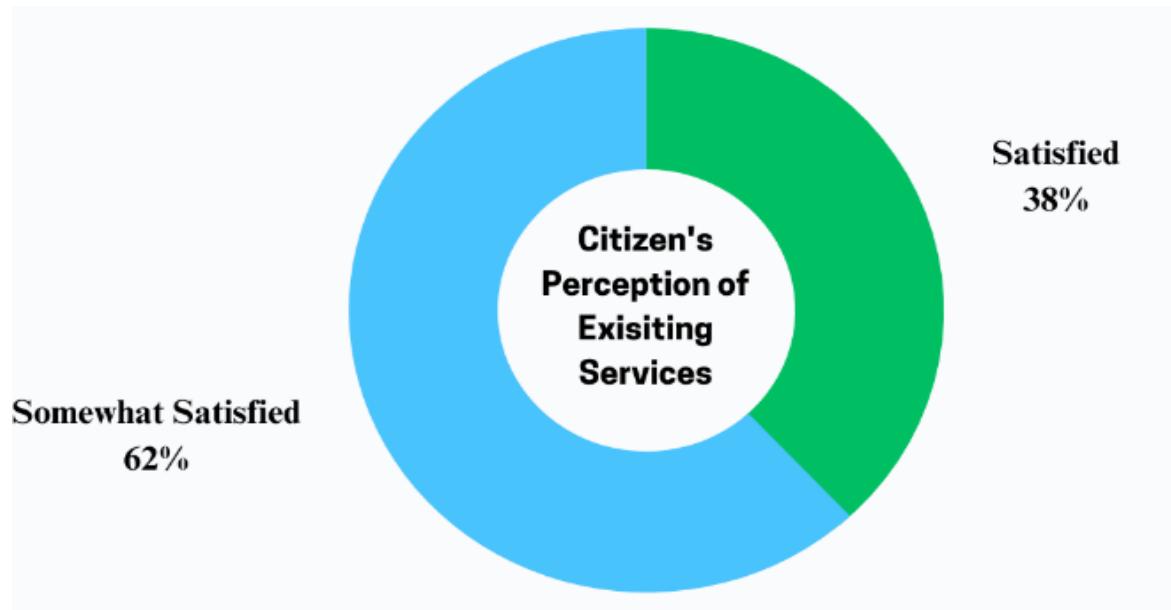


*Source: Field Survey on
MMC, 2021.*

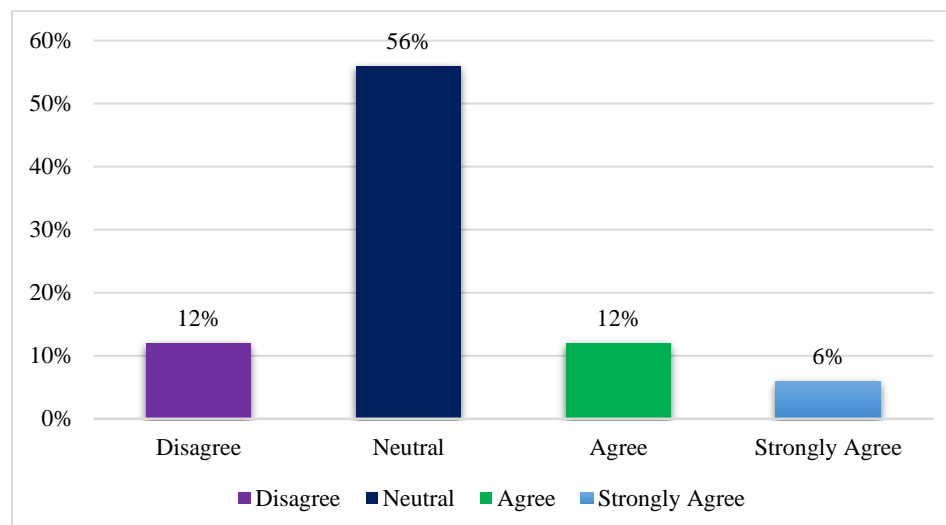
The study explored the public assessment of MCC's adherence to the Citizen Charter while delivering services. The survey results provided vital insight into how citizens view the MCC's commitment to the Citizen Charter. According to the survey, approximately 24% of the participants strongly agreed that MCC upholds the Citizen Charter while providing services. This group of people showed great faith in the MCC's commitment to maintaining the values and norms specified in the Citizen Charter. Moreover, they articulated that MCC routinely complies with the requirements of the charter while providing services, exemplifying transparency, accountability, and citizen-centricity. Furthermore, 20% of respondents agreed with the assertion that the MCC upholds the Citizen Charter. This group indicated support for the MCC's efforts to uphold the Citizen Charter, albeit not with the same fervor as the group in strong agreement. Although there may be potential for improvement in certain areas, they agreed that the MCC typically abides by the values of the charter. In contrast, almost 18% somewhat disagreed. This group voiced some concerns over the MCC's consistency in upholding the principles of the charter such as situations where the charter's principles were not entirely followed or where there was a breakdown in communication on how the charter should be applied.

The findings on citizens' assessment of maintaining the Citizen Charter are diverse, with varying degrees of agreement and disagreement. While a notable portion of the respondents strongly agreed with the MCC's commitment to the charter, a smaller percentage expressed moderate disagreement. The results highlight the importance of continuous efforts by the MCC to effectively communicate and demonstrate its adherence to the Citizen Charter. Addressing the concerns of the respondents who expressed moderate disagreement can lead to increased citizen trust and confidence in the MCC's service delivery processes. Regular evaluation and transparent reporting of the MCC's progress in fulfilling the Citizen Charter's goals can further enhance citizen satisfaction and ensure the corporation's accountability towards its constituents.

Figure 3 shows the degree of satisfaction with the existing services of MCC. The results suggest that 62% of the respondents expressed being 'somewhat satisfied' with the services provided by MCC. This implies that a majority of the respondents have a moderate level of contentment with the current facilities and services offered by the city corporation. The remaining 38% of respondents said they were satisfied with the MCC's present amenities and services. Compared to those who are just somewhat pleased, this group seemed to be more optimistic and indicated a greater degree of satisfaction.

Figure 3*Satisfaction with the existing services of MCC**Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

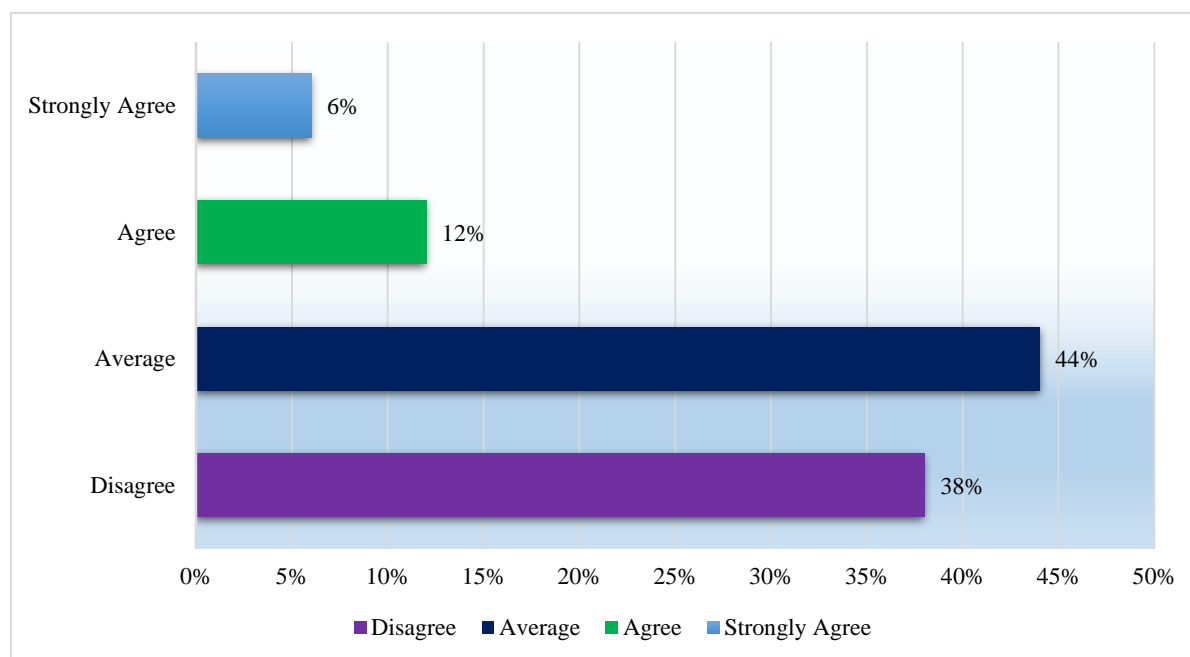
Overall, the results indicate a generally optimistic attitude about satisfaction with the current services provided by MCC. The high satisfaction rating of 38% shows that a sizeable percentage of respondents were very happy with the services offered, while the group that is just somewhat satisfied offers room for development.

Figure 4*Provision of instant information service delivery**Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.*

The findings regarding the immediate information service delivery reflect the opinions of respondents regarding the timeliness and efficacy of the information services provided by MCC. According to the survey data, 26% of respondents agreed that MCC offers its citizens quick information services. This indicates that one-fourth of the surveyed population believes that the city corporation provides timely and effective public information delivery. However, the biggest proportion of respondents (56%) assessed the manner of information delivery to be "neutral." This neutral response suggests that more than half of respondents do not have a strong positive or negative view of MCC's immediate information service delivery. They may view the service as neither exceptionally efficient nor deficient. Conversely, 12% of respondents completely disagreed with the statement, and argued that MCC does not provide timely or immediate information services. The unfavorable answer from this group reflects MCC's unresponsiveness to provide real-time information to its citizens. Although there is positive assessment among citizens regarding MCC's instant information service delivery, there are still certain areas that need attention and improvement. The MCC should improve its information services, satisfy citizen expectations, and promote a more active and informed community.

Figure 5

Citizen's engagement in service-related decisions



Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.

The findings on citizen participation in service-related activities of MCC indicate the level of people's involvement and participation in the city corporation's decision-making and

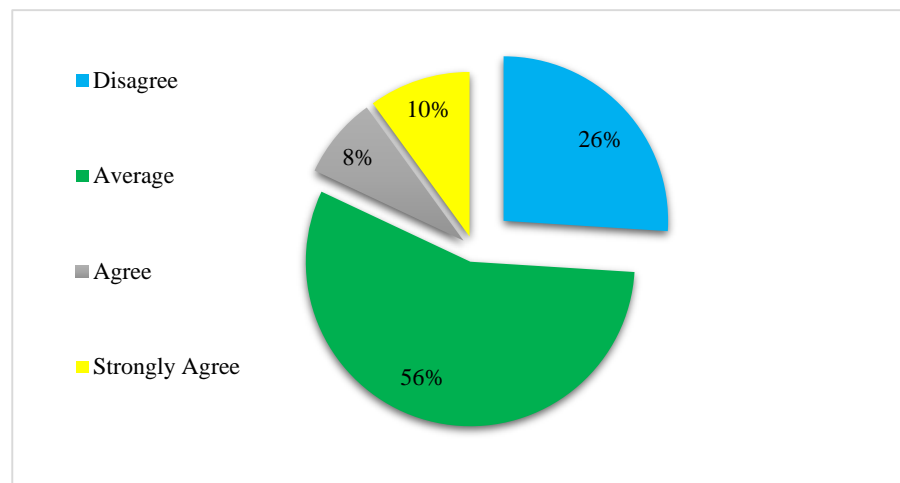
service delivery processes as shown in figure 5. The survey data reveals that only few (12%) claimed to have participated in MCC decision-making process and service delivery activities. This suggests that a relatively small proportion of the population actively participates in city corporation initiatives. Such statistics also suggest that MCC has the potential inability to ensure active participation of the citizens in its decision-making process. Conversely, a large number of respondents (38%) disagreed that they took part in the decision-making process and service-related activities at MCC. This shows that a sizable portion of the population does not feel engaged or active in the city corporation's service delivery operations. The substantial percentage of respondents who disagreed with their involvement raises the possibility that there is a lack of opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of MCC. At the same time, it was observed that citizens' poor knowledge and communication about options for citizen engagement created the impression that there was a poor collaboration between the public and the city corporation. Relatively, the major percentage of respondents (44%) reported that they sometimes (very rarely) participate in MCC activities related to service delivery. This neutral response suggests that a considerable portion of the population has limited or sporadic engagement with the city corporation's initiatives.

The findings indicate that MCC must increase citizen participation in service-related activities. By addressing the challenges, seizing the opportunities, and implementing the suggested strategies, MCC can promote active citizen participation and create a more inclusive and collaborative approach to service delivery, resulting in more effective and citizen-centered governance.

Figure 6

Proper Service Delivery according to Citizen Charter

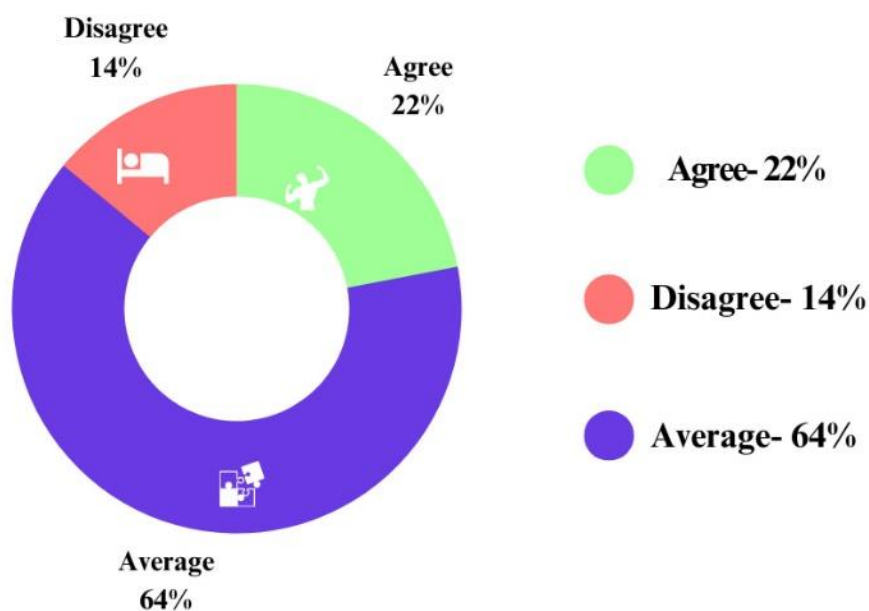
Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.



The findings on proper service delivery based on the citizen charter indicate the people's level of satisfaction with city corporations' performances and services. According to the survey data, the majority of respondents (56%) indicated that MCC's service delivery, as outlined in the Citizen Charter, is "average." This apathetic response suggests that a significant portion of the respondents does not perceive the service delivery to be either exceptional or severely efficient. In contrary, 10% of those respondents strongly agreed that MCC delivers services in accordance with the Citizen Charter's promises. This shows that a small but considerable portion of respondents are very satisfied and believe the city corporation is successfully keeping its promises. On the other hand, 26% of the survey participants disagreed somewhat with the claim that MCC's service delivery complies with the Citizen Charter. This indicates that a sizeable percentage of the populace is not totally satisfied that the city corporation is providing services in accordance with the promises made in the Citizen Charter.

The 10% of respondents who gave positive responses suggest that MCC has improved the alignment of its service delivery with the Citizen Charter. There is still work to be done since the majority noted "average" service performance and a sizable portion voiced mild dissatisfaction. In this context, MCC should seek to enhance its service delivery and make sure that it complies with the requirements established in the Citizen Charter by addressing the areas for improvement and actively involving people in the process.

Figure 7
Citizen's Assessment
regarding MCC's
Transparency and
Accountability

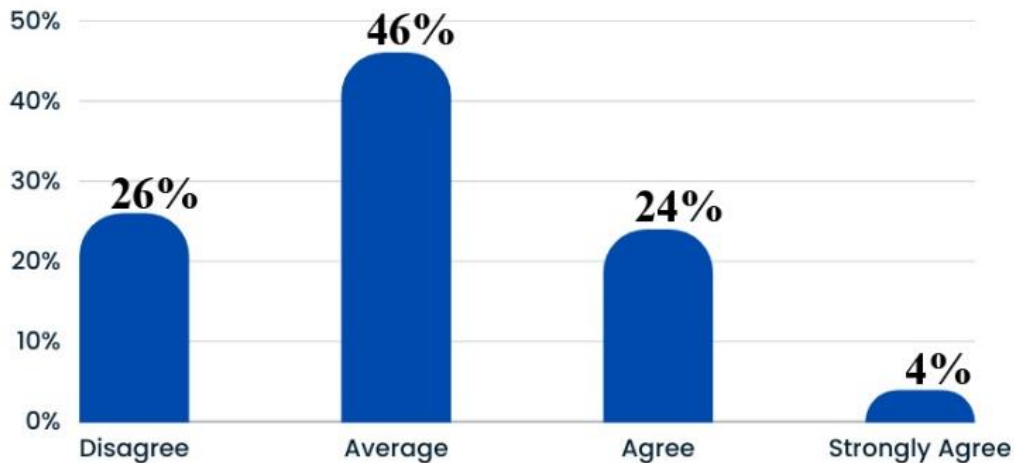


Source: Field Survey,
MCC 2021.

Building public trust and confidence depends heavily on the degree of accountability and openness. The survey illustrates how the citizens felt about MCC's accountability and openness, and the results in figure 7 show a mixed response. The majority of the respondents (64%) conveyed that the MCC's transparency and accountability are average. This suggests that there may be opportunity for development in this area, as a significant portion of the population holds a neutral stance. In order to increase public trust and participation, it is essential for a public-facing organization such as the MCC to pursue greater levels of transparency. The 22% of respondents concurred that the MCC demonstrates an adequate level of transparency and accountability in its operations. This group has faith in the MCC's practices and public relations, as evidenced by their accord. Moreover, respondents argued that the MCC has taken some measures to assure transparency in its operations, but there is still room for improvement. However, it is notable that approximately 14% of respondents disagreed with the statement regarding the MCC's transparency and accountability. This group's dissenting opinion demonstrates that there are concerns regarding the MCC's level of transparency and accountability. In this context, the findings suggest that MCC should consider both positive and negative feedback in order to improve its practices and bolster its transparency measures.

Figure 8

Proper maintenance of complain sheets of citizens



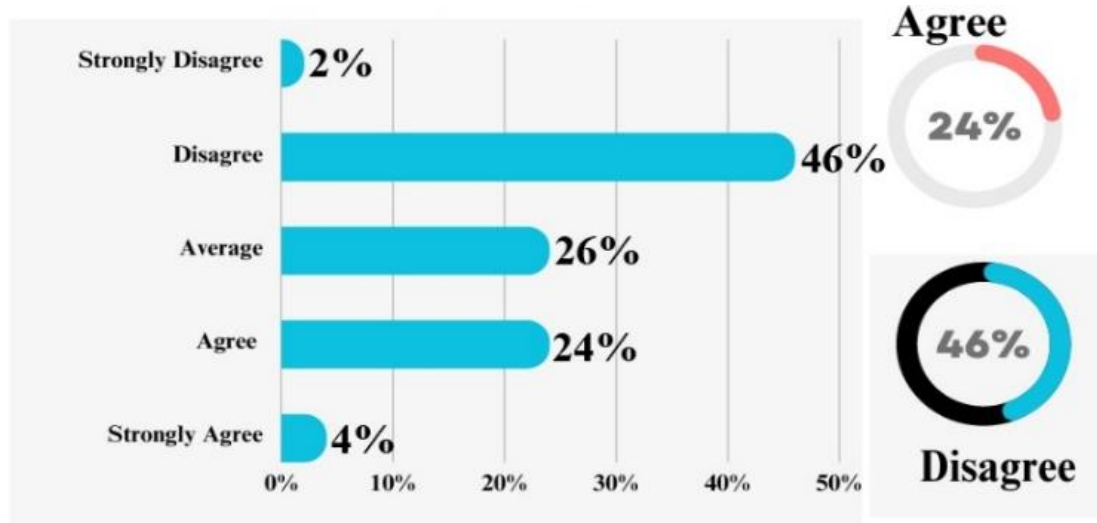
Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.

The proper maintenance of complaint sheets is crucial for any organization, especially for entities like the MCC that interact closely with citizens. As shown in figure 8, the 46% of the

respondents argue that the proper maintenance of complaint sheets of citizens is average. This finding suggests that a sizable section of the population has a neutral opinion. It implies that the MCC's complaint forms have some issues. For assuring public satisfaction and speedy problem resolution, a reliable and effective complaint sheet system is crucial. Although 24% of the participants agreed that the MCC is successfully maintaining complaint sheets of citizens, 26% of the respondents disagreed about the proper maintenance of complaint sheets of citizens. The discord within this group suggests that some people have reservations and misconceptions about how the MCC handles complaints. The finding also indicates the bureaucratic complexity, mismanagement, and poor coordination of the MCC in terms of the management of citizen's complaint. Largely, the results indicate that the citizen's assessment of the MCC's upkeep of complaint sheets is conflicted. Although a significant fraction of respondents believes it to be average, a sizable portion either agrees or disagrees with the assertion. This suggests that both the good and the bad parts of the MCC's complaint sheet system need adjustment.

Figure 9

Effort for maintaining public safety and civil defence



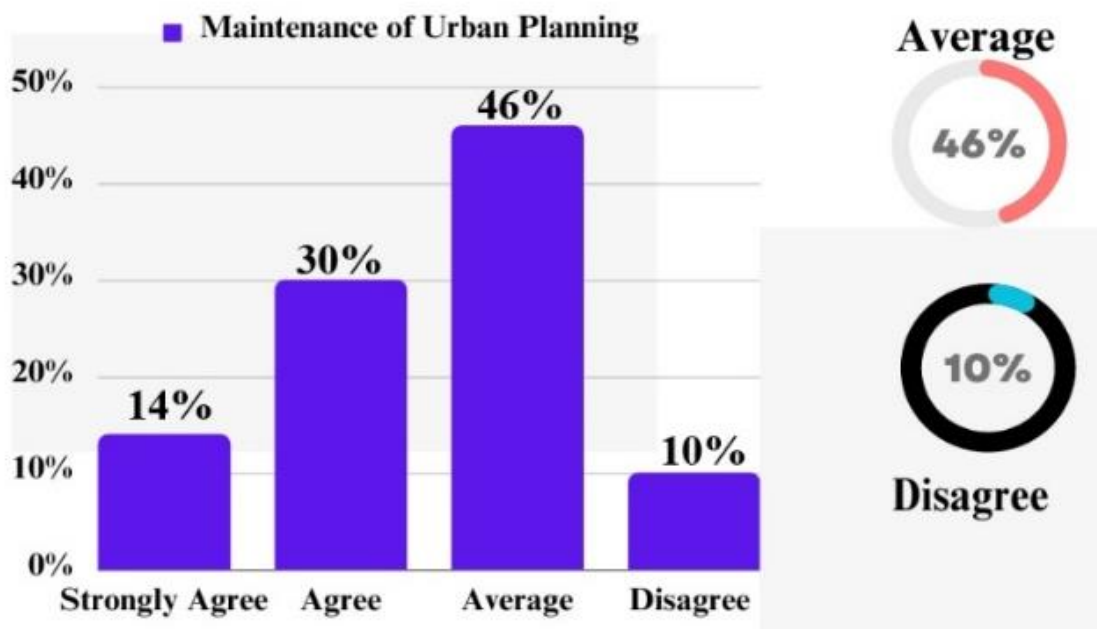
Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.

Ensuring public safety and civil defense is a fundamental responsibility of the MCC. The surveyed data in figure 9 reveal that 46% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defense. This is a substantial portion of the population that does not view the MCC's efforts to ensure the safety and security of the community as sufficient. Such a high percentage of disagreement suggests that the MCC's approach to public

safety may contain flaws or concerns. However, improving public safety and civil defense requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort involving multiple parties, including citizens, law enforcement, emergency services, and urban government. In order to address the issues of public safety and civil defense, the MCC can work to improve its safety measures, crisis response strategies, and public communication. The MCC can demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community it serves by actively soliciting feedback and instituting the required changes.

Figure 10

Maintenance of Urban Planning



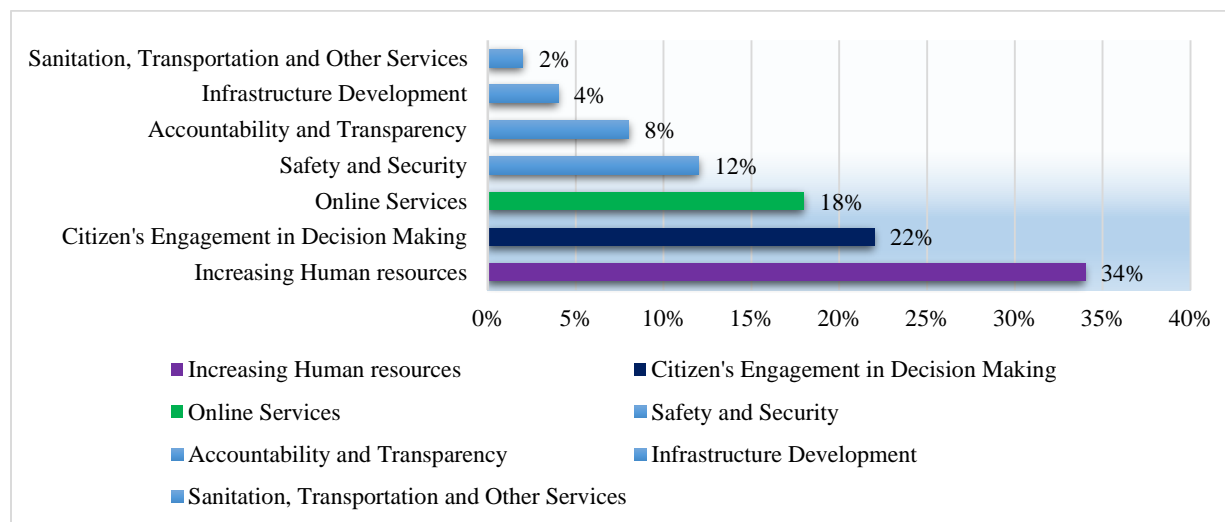
Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.

MCC is responsible for urban planning in the region, and it is essential to assess how the public perceives its effectiveness in this role. In this context, the findings in figure 10 illustrate the MCC's urban planning activities based on the field survey. Out of the total respondents, 46% expressed their opinion that the MCC's maintenance of urban planning is average. This indicates that a significant portion of the population holds a neutral position, suggesting that there may be space for development in certain areas. Meanwhile, 38% of the respondents said that the MCC had done a good job of upholding urban planning. The agreement of this group demonstrates a degree of satisfaction with the existing condition of urban planning and shows that the MCC has

made progress in upholding its duties. On the other hand, 10% of the respondents disagreed that the MCC is appropriately upholding urban planning, on average. This divergent opinion suggests that MCC has enough room to improve and expand urban planning according to its urban policy. Overall, the results indicate that public satisfaction with the MCC's effectiveness in upholding urban planning varies. While a sizeable portion of respondents think MCC's urban planning operations are average, there is a sizeable group that is satisfied with the efforts. The need for more research and possible improvements in the urban planning process is highlighted, but still, a considerable percentage of people are not happy. These results can serve as a springboard for the MCC to engage in additional dialogue with the public, identify areas for improvement, and work toward a more successful and well-received urban planning strategy.

Figure 11

Recommendations for enhancing services at MCC



Source: Field Survey, MCC 2021.

The respondents were asked to provide valuable insights for improving services at MCC, and most of them (34%) emphasized increasing the number of officials to deliver services promptly. This statistic indicates that there may be understaffing at the MCC resulting to service delivery delays for citizens. The respondents believe that with larger staff and officials, the MCC would be able to carry out its duties more efficiently, resulting to faster service delivery to residents. In addition, 22% of the respondents emphasize the significance of involving citizens in the MCC's decision-making process. This finding demonstrates a growing cognizance of participatory governance, in which citizens desire to actively shape the policies and initiatives of

their municipality. This indicates a desire for greater openness and inclusivity in the MCC's operations, as involving citizens in decision-making can result in solutions that more accurately reflect the requirements of the community. Moreover, 18% of participants believe that the MCC should prioritize the expansion of online services. This finding reflects the increasing digitization and use of technology in the delivery of public services. Respondents may consider that offering more online services, such as bill payments, service requests, and information dissemination, can make residents' interactions with the MCC more expedient and effective. The respondents also share their thoughts on the safety and security of the city corporation's citizens, the infrastructural development of the MCC, and the accountability and transparency of the MCC's officials.

5. Conclusion

In Bangladesh, city corporations are responsible for administering a variety of functions, such as urban planning, waste management, sanitation, healthcare, education, infrastructure development and many more. They play a pivotal role in enhancing the standard of life for city dwellers while addressing the issues connected with increasing urbanization, population density, and climate-induced migration and displacements. Citizens' assessment and ideas about city corporations are indispensable for achieving a sustainable city, considering citizens are the primary beneficiaries of such services. On that account, this study attempted to identify the current scenario of MCC's services and citizens' assessment of those services.

The findings exhibit MCC's efforts to maintain the Citizen Charter. However, citizens recognized the need for improvement in several areas; they felt that the MCC generally adheres to the charter's values. The majority of respondents opined that they are satisfied with the services provided by the MCC, implying that most respondents have a moderate level of contentment with the current amenities and services. Although the participation of citizens in the decision-making process of city corporations is significant for ensuring better urban governance and facilities, a notable percentage of respondents disagreed with the statement that they took part in the decision-making process and service-related activities at MCC. Conversely, citizens were dissatisfied with the MCC's efforts to preserve public safety and civil defence; that disagreement suggests the MCC's approach to public safety needed greater concern.

In accordance with the findings, this study recommends actions to enhance the service delivery at municipalities and city corporations, eventually attaining sustainable urban

governance in Bangladesh. Firstly, prioritizing citizens' needs and preferences in policy formulation and planning phases through encouraging participation of citizens in decision-making processes. Secondly, awareness-building campaigns among citizens to access information and services from online platforms might reduce the time and complexities. In addition, strictly following the citizen charter will enhance the overall experience of citizens with municipal services. Thirdly, determining distinct accountability mechanisms for the utilization of resources, allocation of funds, budget preparation, and performance measurement of service delivery at city corporations. Fourthly, building capacity through partnership with NGOs and private sectors for sustainable urban planning, advancement of services, and trained human resources. Apart from building capacity, adequate budget allocation for infrastructure development has to be considered with high priority to confirm the inclusion of all for better access to municipal services. Overall, a further study could be conducted following a mixed method with a large sample size for a rigorous understanding of citizens' assessment of the city corporation's overall performance in delivering services effectively. The implications resulting from such an endeavour can help to determine how service quality can be improved by initiating pragmatic remedies, eventually achieving better urban governance in Bangladesh.

6. Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh and Research and Extension Centre, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University for providing financial assistance. The authors confirm that the information contained herein is entirely unique and devoid of any instances of plagiarism. Furthermore, the authors assert that there are no conflicts of interest pertaining to the present study, authorship, or publication of this manuscript.

References

- Afroj, S., Hanif, F., Hossain, M. B., Fuad, N., Islam, I., Sharmin, N. & Siddiq, F. (2021). Assessing the Municipal Service Quality of Residential Neighborhoods based on SERVQUAL, AHP and Citizen's Score Card: A Case Study of Dhaka North City Corporation area, Bangladesh. *Journal of Urban Management*.10(3). pp.179-191. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2021.03.001>.

- Ahmed, T., & Akter, T. (2022). People's Participation in Ensuring Good Governance at Local Levels in Bangladesh: A Study on Union Parishads. *Journal of Governance and Development*, 1(2), 27–46. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.8019219>
- Ahmed, T., Rahman, A., & Akter, T. (2022). Recent Practices of People's Participation in Different Avenues of Rural Local Government. *PCD Journal*, 10(1), 133–167. <https://doi.org/10.22146/pcd.v10i1.5096>
- Ahsan, A. H. (2012). *Local Administration in Bangladesh: Problems of Coordination*. Dhaka: A H Development Publishing House. p. 59
- Akter, M. (2023). Citizens' Satisfaction with the Digital Land Services of Upazila Land Office: A Study of Barishal Sadar Upazila, Bangladesh. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 69(2), 468-481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00195561221142621>
- Almanasreh, E., Moles, R. & Chen, T., F. (2019). Evaluation of Methods Used for Estimating Content validity. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 15(2), 214-221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2018.03.066>.
- Amin, A. M., Nion, S. R. and Badhan, M. R. R. (2022). The Impact of Digitalization in Local Governance Procedure on Rural Area: A Study on Companiganj Upazila, Sylhet, Bangladesh. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*. 13. 54-63. doi: 10.7176/JESD/13-8-06
- Aurora, N. (2016). The Definition and Importance of Local Governance. *Socail and natural Sciences Journal*, 10(1), p.6.
- Barua, U., Tamanna, A., Islam, I., Akhter, M., S., Mannan, S., Islam, M., A., Ahsan, R. and Ansary, M., A. (2020). People's Awareness, Knowledge and Assessment Influencing Earthquake Vulnerability of a Community: A study on Ward no. 14, Mymensingh Municipality, Bangladesh. *Natural Hazards*, pp. 1121-1181. doi:10.1007/s11069-020-04028-2
- Basher M. S., Haque, M. M, Ullah, M. S., Nasreen, S. A., Begum, A. A., Islam, M. N., Akhter, S. and Haque, M. S. (2012). Lifestyle Pattern in Selected Slums in Mymensingh Municipal Area. *Mymensingh Medical Journal*, 2(21), pp. 207-212. doi:22561760

- Bhattacharya, D., Monem, M., Baniamin, H. M., and Rezbana, U. S. (2013). The Unheard Voices: Citizen's Assessment of the State of Governance and Service Delivery in municipalities (Pourashaas) and City Corporations in Bangladesh. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).
- Bhuiyan, J. H. (2011). Local Government System in Bangladesh: An Assessment. *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*, 53(1), 96–108. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45148548>
- Bhuiyan, M. A. & Islan, M.A. (2023). Assessing citizen satisfaction of urban local government service and infrastructure in Bangladesh: A case study of Pabna municipality. *Environment and Social Psychology*. Volume 8 Issue 3 doi: 10.54517/esp.v8i3.1671
- Chandan, M. S. (2017, November 03). Urban Development: The Promise of Municipalities. Dhaka: *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/the-promise-municipalities-1485469>
- Chowdhury, M. S., and Deb, P. (2012). Urban Local Government and Environmental Management in Bangladesh: A Study on Chunarughat Paurashava. *Bangladesh Development Research Centre (BDRC)*. Virginia: Bangladesh Development Research Centre (BDRC).
- Cockcroft, A., Milne, D., Oelofsen, M. et al. (2011). Health services reform in Bangladesh: hearing the views of health workers and their professional bodies. *BMC Health Serv Res* 11 (Suppl 2), S8 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-11-S2-S8>
- Economic Relations Division. (2021). *Bangladesh Country Statement for The UN Committee for Development Policy Triennial Review Meeting*, 22-26 February 2021.
- Gabriela, A. and Elisa, M. (2013). Bangladesh: The Path to Middle-Income Status from an Urban Perspective. *World Bank Publications*., p. 52.
- Hasan, M. R. (2022, 27 January). Urban planning in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities. *The Business Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/supplement/urban-planning-bangladesh-challenges-and-opportunities-362911>
- Hasan, S. (2016). Public Service Delivery in Digital Bangladesh: Strategies and Challenges to Citizen Outreach. *International Journal of Social Science*, 5 (1), pp.7-17.

- International Republican Institute's (IRI) Center for Insights in Survey Research (CISR) (2023). National survey of Bangladesh March-April 2023
- Ishtiaq, J. and Panday, P. (2012). Inter-Organizational Coordination and Corruption in Urban Policy Implementation in Bangladesh: A Case of Rajshahi City Corporation. *International Journal of Public Administration*. 35. doi: 10.1080/01900692.2012.661169.
- Islam, M. R. (2022, April 14). Making City Corporation effective. *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/columns/making-city-corporation-effective-1649869161>
- Karim, M. R. (2015). E-Government in Service Delivery and Citizen's Satisfaction: A Case Study on Public Sectors in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Managing Public Sector Information and Communication Technologies (IJMP ICT)*, 6 (2), pp. 49-60. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.5121/ijmpict.2015.6205>
- Kasem, M.I., Salam, U.B. & Rahman, M.S. (2022). Exploring the Sustainability of Service Process Simplification in Bangladesh
- Kernaghan, K. (2011). Innovations in Municipal Service Delivery. *Municipal World*, December 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.municipalworld.com/feature-story/innovations-in-municipal-service-delivery/>
- LGED (2019). List of Pourashava / City Corporation (Division wise). Retrieved from <https://oldweb.lged.gov.bd/UploadedDocument/UnitPublication/10/686/List%20of%20Paurashava%20City%20Corporation-28May2019.pdf>
- LGED (2018). Guidelines for Activity of e-Governance Initiated. p.2 Retrieved from <https://www.ccc.org.bd/elements/guidelines.pdf>
- Mahmud, R. (2021). Citizen Satisfaction in the Service Delivery of City Corporations in Bangladesh. *Scholars Journal of Research in Social Science*, 1(2), 1-13.
- Mannan, M.A. (2013). Access to Public Health Facilities in Bangladesh: A Study on Facility Utilisation and Burden of Treatment. *Bangladesh Development Studies* Vol. 36, No.4

- Mian, M.M., Paul, A. K., Alam, M.D., Rasheduzzaman, M. and Saifullah, A.S.M. (2013). Solid Waste Management Practice in Mymensingh Municipal Area, Bangladesh. *Journal of Environmental Science and Natural Resources*. 5. doi:10.3329/jesnr.v5i2.14813.
- Muriu, A.R. (2013). Decentralization, citizen participation and local public service delivery: A study on the nature and influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery in Kenya, *Schriftenreihe für Public und Nonprofit Management*, No. 17, Universitätsverlag Potsdam, Potsdam, <https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus-65085>
- Mymensingh City Corporation to Hold First Election on May 5. (2019, April 05). Dhaka: bdnews24.com. Retrieved from <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/03/25/mymensingh-city-corporation-to-hold-first-election-on-may-5>
- Osborne, S.P. & Strokosch, K. (2022). Participation: Add-on or core component of public service delivery? *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. Volume 81, Issue1, Pages 181-200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12536>
- Osman, F. A. (2016). External Inducement, Internal Support: Explaining the Health Sector Policy Gains in Bangladesh. *Public Policy and Governance in Bangladesh*. Routledge.
- Parliamentary Affairs, J., & Law, M. o. (2020, September 1). The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh | 59. Local government. Retrieved from Bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd: <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367/section-24613.html>
- Patel, S. L. (2011). Reinventing local governments: People's participation and empowerment. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 72(2), 403–407. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42761425>
- Siddiqui, K. (2008). *Local Government in Bangladesh* (3rd ed.). (K. Siddiqui, Ed.) Dhaka: The University Press Limited (UPL)
- Syed Saad Andaleeb, Nazlee Siddiqui, Shahjahan Khandakar (2007). Patient satisfaction with health services in Bangladesh. *Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 22, Issue 4, July 2007, Pages 263–273, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czm017>

- Taukdar, M. R. (2009). *Rural Local Government in Bangladesh* (1st ed.). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Osder Publications, p. 45
- The Business Standard (2019). 62% people unhappy with local govt services. Available at: <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/62-people-unhappy-local-govt-services>
- The World Bank (2023). *Overview*. The World Bank. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh?view=chart>
- The World Bank (2022). *Strengthening Urban Management and Service Delivery through Performance-Based Fiscal Transfers*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/brief/strengthening-urban-management-and-service-delivery-through-performance-based-fiscal-transfers>
- Uddin, N. (2019), "Empowerment through participation in local governance: the case of Union Parishad in Bangladesh", *Public Administration and Policy: An Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 40-54. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PAP-10-2018-0002>
- UN-Habita (2010). *The state of Asian cities 2015. Urban Transformations: Shifting from Quantity to Quality*. Nairobi: UNESCAP. Retrieved from <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/urban-governance/concepts-and-debates/what-is-urban-governance/#unescap-unhabitat-2010>
- Voting in Mymensingh City Polls Underway. (2019, May 5). Dhaka: DhakaTribune. Retrieved from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/election/2019/05/05/voting-in-mymensingh-city-polls-underway>
- William, A. R. (2020, September 4). What is Urban Governance? - GSDRC. Retrieved from GSDRC: <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/urban-governance/concepts-and-debates/what-is-urban-governance/>

Board Composition and Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in Ethiopia

¹Lakachew Walie Zeleke, ²Wario Guyo & ²Makori Moronge

Abstract

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of board composition on performance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ethiopia through descriptive survey and correlational research designs. The study achieved 72.6% response rate from 276 chief executives and 199 board chairpersons analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed a positive relationship between board composition and performance of local NGOs. The results also showed that majority of the boards are characterized by limited diversity (male dominated), lack clearly constituted board committees and challenged on enablers of board function (infrequent meetings). Nonetheless, board diversity, effectiveness of the boards in carrying out their functions, and the existence of board committees were all important factors for determining performance of NGOs. With these findings, the study recommends setting of clear eligibility criteria for board appointments/elections, setting term limits, holding regular elections, regular appraisal of board and CEOs performance, induction of new board members, providing clear terms of references and encouraging gender diversity. Since the study was based on views of the board chairpersons and chief executive officers, secondary data and assessments of the external stakeholders can be used to triangulate the findings.

Keywords: board, board composition, performance, non-governmental organizations

Article History:

Received: November 6, 2023
Accepted: November 28, 2023

Revised: November 27, 2023
Published online: December 6, 2023

Suggested Citation:

Zeleke, L.W., Guyo, W. & Moronge, M. (2023). Board composition and performance of non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia. *International Review of Social Sciences Research*, 3 (4), 26-46. <https://doi.org/10.53378/353029>

About the authors:

¹Corresponding author. PhD Scholar (Leadership and Governance), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Email: lakachewwalie@gmail.com

²Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology



© The author (s). Published by Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated.

This is an open-access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

1. Introduction

The uneven funding trends of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the last two decades with current cuts to official development assistance (ODA) by developed countries has been cited as the biggest threat to their existence (Bond, 2020). In fact, data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) showed that global income for international NGOs grew at a steady rate between 2003-2009, followed by a more rapid growth until 2015-2016, followed by a plateauing and then a decline. The decline disproportionately affected the smaller local NGOs which depend on the international NGOs for a significant amount of their incomes (upwards of two thirds) (Tallack, 2020). According to a financial survey, it was projected that 52% of organizations would hardly survive through 2023 (Bond, 2020).

In Ethiopia, 552 NGOs were shut-down between 2009 and 2016, of which 44% closures were due to lack of funds (Ariti et al., 2018). This was mainly occasioned by the implementation of Proclamation No. 621/2009 law governing registration and regulation of Ethiopian charitable NGOs limiting the foreign funding to local Ethiopian civil society organizations to only 10% if engaged in human rights related work. The law was passed with the intention of reducing the vulnerabilities of sensitive domestic issues to manipulation by imported agendas that may accompany foreign funds. To survive, most rights-based NGOs in Ethiopia had to change their mission statements to become service provision NGOs. They are not allowed to engage in advancement of human and democratic rights, promotion of equality of gender, ethnic groups and religion, promotion of the rights of children and persons with disability, promotion of conflict resolution and the promotion of the efficiency of justice and law enforcement services (Gebre, 2016). These changes in objectives further aggravated the situation with traditional funders gradually losing interest to even fund the allowable 10% (Ariti et al., 2018).

In the wake of this funding crisis, NGOs were more than ever required to be innovative and reposition themselves for alternative sources of funding, and be efficient and effective in utilization of limited funds they have (Recadina & Ouma, 2017). Survival of local small NGOs will therefore greatly depend, among others, on the NGOs' boards capacity to navigate this emerging trend and offer strategic direction and support efficient and effective resource management and utilization. An achievement which would greatly be impacted by the board characteristics (Mihail et al., 2022).

Scholars, practitioners, and policy makers have been engaged in ongoing debates regarding the impact of board composition on performance of NGOs. While the concept of board composition has been defined from different perspectives, the common themes and traits revolve around board size (Martin & Herrero, 2018), mix of inside and outside directors (Sener et al., 2011), board demographics such as heterogeneity of education levels, experience, background, class, gender, race, ethnicity, board independence, board assigned roles and board diligence among other attributes (Butler 2012; Srivastava et al., 2018; Chemweno, 2016; Amedi & Mustafa, 2020). These characteristics can have a significant influence on the board's effectiveness, decision-making processes, and ultimately, the overall performance.

The influence of board composition has been widely studied to establish correlations with board outcomes (Chen & Wu, 2016). Moreover, literature has shown various conflicting evidence on the effects of board attributes such as diversity, functionality and committees on non-governmental organizations. With respect to board diversity, Recadina and Ouma (2017) identified occupational diversity with a strong correlation to performance among NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Similarly, Alabede (2016) established that moderating effect of board diversity strengthens the relationship between outside directors and operating performance as well as between board size and operating performance with an important moderating role in corporate governance. Rao and Tilt (2016) showed that gender, tenure and multiple directorships have the potential to influence board functioning and performance with some interaction effects between gender and multiple directorships but the relationship between independent/non-executive directors was unclear. Additionally, Chapple and Humphrey (2014) did not find evidence of an association between gender diversity and performance but established some weak evidence of a negative correlation between having multiple women on the board and performance.

Regarding board functions and effectiveness, Amadi (2015) reported that more than half (51%) of the NGOs in Kenya do not have functioning board of directors. Similarly, Omar et al. (2016) reported that only 50% of the Malaysian non-profit organizations board members were committed in generating funds for their organizations. On the other hand, Kemei and Mweberi (2017) described that more than 80% of non-governmental organization boards in Kenya adopt good corporate management practices to enhance functionality of their boards. The study also established that efficiency, responsibility, transparency, and integrity have a positive effect on

financial performance of NGOs in Kenya. Likewise, Puyvelde et al. (2018) assert that indeed interactions in the boardroom really matter and are generally positively associated with both board chairs' and chief executives' perceptions of board effectiveness.

Concerning board committees, a study by Amadi (2015) reported that more than half of the NGOs in Kenya do not have board committees. For the corporates, Mihail et al. (2022) reported that the average number of committees per board was 1.66 among Romanian firms. The study also showed that 57% of the boards had audit committees, 31% remuneration committees, and 30% nomination committees. Further, a study by Chen and Wu (2016) investigated 6,000 firms in the USA and painted a positive picture by indicating that 99.9% of the firms had audit committees, 98.1% compensation committees, 84.8% governance or nomination committees, 21.2% executives, 12.1% finance committees and less than 10% for all other committees.

The influence of board composition has been widely studied to establish correlations with board outcomes (Chen & Wu, 2016). Nonetheless, most of this literature come from outside Ethiopia (Amadi, 2015; Kemei & Mweberi, 2017; Recadina & Ouma, 2017) and are cases from the corporate world (Adams & Ferreira, 2009; Alabede, 2016; Chapple & Humphrey, 2014; Chen & Wu, 2016; Mihail et al., 2022; Puyvelde et al., 2018). While some studies show positive effects of board composition on performance (Alabede, 2016; Kemei & Mweberi, 2017; Rao & Tilt, 2016; Puyvelde et al., 2018; Recadina & Ouma, 2017), others show negative (Adams & Ferreira, 2009), no relationship (Chapple & Humphrey, 2014) or unclear findings (Rao & Tilt, 2016). These mixed findings in the literature on the relationship between board composition can be attributed to differences across studies in measures of performance, methodologies, time horizons, omitted variable biases, other contextual issues and lack of clarity on when and which concept of diversity may be important (Adams et al. 2015). Understanding board composition, therefore, allows deeper insights into the role of boards and their optimal design. Further, literature on the effect of board composition on performance of non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia is not exhaustive. Hence, the objective of this study was to examine the influence of board composition on performance of non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical background

Agency theory. Proponents of this theory see organizational shareholders or stakeholders and managers as distinct entities, often with contrary or conflicting interests on organizational-related decision-making matters (Booth-Bell & Jackson, 2021). They see managers and shareholders/stakeholders as having different goals resulting in potential governance issues. The theory was proposed to mitigate this potential risk by promoting robust monitoring of managers and employees considered to always act in their own self-interest. The theory is built on the assumption that human beings by their very nature are self-centered and unless constrained, they will act in manner that prioritizes their interest against the goals of the shareholders/stakeholders. Hence, the theory focuses on determining the best way to manage the contract between shareholders/stakeholders and managers in an organization.

From NGOs perspectives, stakeholders can use the board as an information system to control and monitor managers and their assumed opportunistic behavior (Booth-Bell & Jackson, 2021). This seeks to reduce the associated risks and enhance overall performance. NGO boards are expected to be highly representative and in most cases board members are drawn from different stakeholders for the voices of the stakeholders to be heard in the board. These often include donors, beneficiaries, other NGOs and experts, government agencies among other stakeholders. Agency theory was appropriate for the study in that, effectiveness of a board in delivering its oversight role (function) has a direct impact on NGOs performance with regards to meeting its objectives (Adane et al., 2018). Agency theory is also seen as a basis for promoting board diversity. Butler (2012) argues that diverse boards present a possible deterrent to self-serving behavior on managers as diversity bring different perspectives on management decision making. For instance, Booth-Bell and Jackson (2021) opine that women monitor more aggressively than men and are more likely to attend more meetings. Thus, boards with three or more women explicitly monitor better whether the corporate strategy is being implemented resulting in more corporate transparency.

Resource dependency theory. The theory identifies resources as the key drivers of success in an organization. The theory proposes that organizations need internal and external

resources to sustain their long-term existence (Zehir et al., 2019). With respect to management, the theory indicates that board of directors represents a strategic and creative resource for any organization (Miller & Triana, 2009). The primary function of the board is therefore to provide different resource functions to the organization such as, expertise, channels for communicating information with external organizations, building important external relationships, advising the executive and legitimacy (Makhlouf et al., 2017). Thus, boards play a significant role in strategic decision making and in enhancing organizational performance.

This theory implies that NGOs depend on their boards as a crucial resource for managing external dependencies, reducing environmental uncertainty and reducing the transaction costs associated with environmental interdependency (Hillman et al., 2000). The board thus become a vessel for co-opting important external resource in the management of the NGOs. The proponents of this theory argue that where internal board of directors largely serve to provide organizational-specific information, outside directors primarily provide resources needed to deal with external factors such as uncertainty and external dependencies. This acts by bringing “outside” inside the organization, by having external board of directors who serve to link the organization with its external environment, may act to reduce external uncertainty and dependencies (Hillman et al., 2000).

2.2. Empirical review

2.2.1. Board diversity

The concept of diversity varies from context to context and the term is often difficult to be given an explicit meaning. Nonetheless, the diversity concept is underlined by the heterogeneity of attributes including education, experience, background, class, gender, race, ethnicity among other attributes (Butler, 2012). Board diversity in this context constitutes the range of backgrounds, demographics, skills, competencies and experiences that board directors possess collectively. It has been argued that board diversity may improve board functioning (Hillman, 2015) since decision making in groups may improve with diversity as creativity may increase and a broader set of alternatives may be considered. Further, diverse directors are expected to bring varied perspectives and enhance monitoring of managers as board diversity increases board independence (Adams et al., 2015).

Despite these propositions, past literature on relationship between board diversity and organizational sustainability performance remain inconclusive (Islam et al., 2022). A study by Recadina and Ouma (2017) identified board diversity attributes of age, occupational background and professional networks to have positive correlation with performance of non-governmental organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study established that occupational diversity was the strongest of the 3 variables followed by age diversity and then professional networks diversity. Further, a study by Alabede (2016) explored the effect of board diversity on corporate governance structure and operating performance. The study indicated that the moderating effect of board diversity strengthens the relationship between outside directors and operating performance as well as between board size and operating performance. The study concludes that board diversity plays an important moderating role in corporate governance.

A study by Rao and Tilt (2016) showed that gender, tenure and multiple directorships have the potential to influence board functioning and performance (measured as corporate responsibility). While the study also showed that the relationship between independent/non-executive directors was unclear, there is possible existence of some interaction effects between gender and multiple directorships. Additionally, a study by Chapple and Humphrey (2014) investigated whether having multiple women on the board is linked to performance. Overall, the study did not find evidence of an association between diversity and performance but established some weak evidence of a negative correlation between having multiple women on the board and performance. Adams and Ferreira (2009) studied the impact of board gender diversity on firm performance, and reported a negative relationship between the two. According to Adams et al. (2015), the mixed findings in the literature on the relationship between diversity and performance can be attributed to differences across studies in measures of performance, methodologies, time horizons, omitted variable biases, other contextual issues and clack of clarity on when and which concept of diversity may be important.

2.2.2. Board functions

In line with resource dependence theory, literature suggests that the board of directors serve functions beyond monitoring management on behalf of shareholders or stakeholders to providing advice and counsel to management and linking the organization to external contingencies. Thus, directors play a critical role in strategic decision making, helps to enhance

firm legitimacy by signifying the organization's stature or quality (Chen et al., 2022). Further, NGOs board members have the core responsibility of determining and articulating the organization's mission, vision (Recadina & Ouma, 2017), steering strategic planning and providing strategic direction (George & Sahay, 2018), defining and monitoring performance of organizational programs and services, providing legal and ethical oversight, financial oversight, evaluating the executives (Puyvelde et al. 2018), interacting with the community, and managing conflicts between staff members, communities, or both (Chen et al., 2022).

Effectiveness of the board in carrying out its functions is important for proper functioning of NGOs due to the board's key role of monitoring and supervising management behaviors, aligning the interests of donors and management, and protecting donor's and stakeholders' interests (Makhlouf et al., 2017). El-Dahdoh (2018) identified some of the behaviors related to the effectiveness of NGO boards to include, board members' attendance of compulsory meetings, quality of contribution by the board members during meetings, board members' knowledge of the NGOs' mission, services, and programs, members' general knowledge and good sense of all issues that the organization face, and availability of members to guidance when needed. Nonetheless, Amadi (2015) investigated the effects of board effectiveness on business planning and sustainability of NGOs in Kenya and concluded that more than half (51%) of the NGOs did not have functioning board of directors.

2.2.3. Board committees

The board committees are specialized subgroups of the board that exist to perform many of the board's most critical functions, such as setting executive compensation, identifying potential board members, and overseeing financial reporting (Kolev et al., 2019). Mihail et al. (2022) posit that establishment of board committees has been strongly recommended as a suitable mechanism for improving corporate governance, by delegating specific tasks from the main board to a smaller group and harnessing the contribution of non-executive directors. The proponents of this concept have argued that board committees provide specialization, efficiency, accountability, and costs (information segregation) benefits (Chen & Wu, 2016). The committees are expected to allow more diligent and comprehensive monitoring and advise to the executives leading to better outcomes. According to Kolev et al. (2019), smaller committees may meet more frequently, and draw on specialized expertise and abilities of their members, thus executing tasks

with greater efficiency and expediency. Moreover, due to their well-defined purpose and clear expectations, subcommittees face greater scrutiny from various stakeholders, which reduces individual free-riding and encourages more effective implementation of their duties (Kolev, et al., 2019).

A study by Amadi (2015) reported that more than half of the NGOs in Kenya do not have board committees. However, findings from the corporates provide more impressive result. A study by Mihail et al. (2022) among Romanian firms observed that the average number of committees per board was 1.66, with a standard deviation of 1.28. The study also showed that 57% of the boards had audit committees, 31% remuneration committees, and 30% nomination committees. Further, a study by Chen and Wu (2016) investigated 6,000 firms in the USA and painted a positive picture by indicating that 99.9% of the firms had audit committees, 98.1% compensation committees, 84.8% governance or nomination committees, 21.2% executives, 12.1% finance committees and less than 10% for all other committees. In Ethiopia, a study by Dato et al. (2018) investigated the related subordinate board structures which influence performance. The relationship between board size and financial performance metrics was shown to be mediated by the organization of the board committees. Importantly, board committee assists in improving operational self-sufficiency, reducing operating costs and increasing client outreach in rural communities. Further, authority, makeup, and compensation of the board of directors were specifically evaluated by Tura (2012) among corporates in Ethiopia. The study argues that boards should be suitably composed of non-executive and truly independent members who should be professionally competent.

3. Methodology

This study set out to establish whether board composition influences performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. A quantitative approach was used to investigate the relationships with both descriptive survey and correlational research designs. The study population was 2,201 local registered NGOs in Ethiopia (Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO), 2022). Fisher's formula was used to calculate the sample size as 327 ($n = Z^2pq / e^2$), where p and q are population proportions which are set at 0.5 each, Z being the critical z-value at the 95% confidence interval (1.96), and e being the margin of error of the sample proportion at 95% confidence interval (0.05). The sampled NGOs were then systematically drawn from the sampling frame provided by

ACSO. These constituted the units of analysis with the units of observations being the chief executives and board chairpersons of the sampled institutions.

A survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data with Likert Scale and factual responses, which can be independently verified. The questionnaire was developed through literature review and was subjected to expert opinions and pre-testing before use. Questionnaires were distributed to the chief executive officers and board chairpersons of the sampled local NGOs operating in Ethiopia. The study adopted a drop and pick strategy where completed questionnaires were dropped at the NGOs head offices and collected after three weeks. As part of the questionnaire cover letter, a statement on research ethics was included. The statement informed the respondents that participation was voluntary and that all information would be held confidential.

The factual questions were used to establish the nature of board composition while a Likert scale was used to assess board composition and performance measured through accountability and effectiveness. Factual questions were used to corroborate the findings in the rating scale. Statistical analysis was used for quantitative data to infer meaning to the larger population and also to create an understanding of the relationship between independent variables and NGO performance in Ethiopia. The findings were presented in tables and charts.

4. Results and Discussion

The study achieved 72.6% response rate, of which 58.14% were chief executive officers and 41.86% board chairpersons. This shows a fair representation of the key respondents in the study. Majority of the respondents were males (84.75%) with females accounting for only 15.25%; an indication of male dominance in top leadership of NGOs, congruent with the report by EMAH Social Development Consulting (2022) suggesting cultural barriers as the key drivers of low number of women in top leadership in Ethiopia. The findings also show that majority (83.65%) of the respondents had worked in the NGO field between 1 to 10 years, 12.06% for 11 to 20 years and 4.29% for above 20 years, an indication that most respondents had been in their organizations long enough to understand the nature of its performance and stakeholders' engagement. Majority had masters' degrees (44.8%) followed by bachelor's degree (38.8%), certificate/diploma (10.6%), PhD (4.4%) and ESLCE (1.4%). The data established that majority (33.5%) of the sampled NGOs were registered between 2011 and 2020, 30% between 2001 and

2010, 19.1% between 1991 and 2000, 5.9% between 1981 and 1990, 7.4% between 2021 and 2022 while 4.2% earlier than 1980. This showed that majority of the local NGOs were new (<11 years) when it comes to operation in Ethiopia. Further, majority (27.7%) of them had between 11 and 20 employees, 25.4% over 20, 24.6% between 5 and 10, and 22.3% between 1 and 5 employees. This confirms that majority of the NGOs are small and have limited human capacity.

Regarding board composition, findings in table 1 show that majority (78.74%) of the organizations had male board members ranging between 1 and 5 while 21.03% had male members ranging between 6 and 10 and only 0.23% had organizations with more than 10 male board members. The findings also show that most (93.44%) of the organizations had between 1 and 5 female board members, and 6.56% of the organizations had between 6 and 10 female board members. This is an indication that there are relatively more males in the NGO boards compared to the females. Findings show that nearly 15% of the boards have no female representation at all. This trend shows reduced diversity of the boards with respect to gender.

Table 1

Board gender composition

Number	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
1-5	337	78.73	342	93.4
6-10	90	21.02	24	6.6
Above 10	1	0.23	0	0
Total	428	100	366	100

The study sought to find the frequency of board meetings in a year. Table 2 shows that majority (50.5%) indicated board meetings held quarterly, 30.4% semi-annually, 7.1% annually, 9.6% on need arises and 2.5% monthly. Nearly half (47.1%) of the boards seems to be taking too long (> 6 months) before holding a meeting. This would limit effectiveness of board oversight on management activities. Even though 2.5% may seem to be small percentage, it is sign that the boards of these NGOs may not be giving the management adequate time to execute their mandates and possible lack of separation of responsibilities between the board and management.

Table 2*Frequency of board meeting in a year*

	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	11	2.5
Quarterly	221	50.5
Semi-Annually	133	30.4
Annually	31	7.1
As the need arise	42	9.6
Total	438	100.0

Majority of the respondents confirmed lack of clearly constituted board sub-committees with clear terms of references in their boards. This would indicate reduced efficiency and comprehensiveness of the boards' oversight role. Kolev et al. (2019) opined that board sub-committees allow more diligent and comprehensive monitoring and advise to the executives leading to better firm outcomes. That is, smaller subcommittee may meet more frequently, and draw on specialized expertise and abilities of their members, thus executing tasks with greater efficiency and expediency.

Table 3*Board sub-committees*

Sub-Committees	Frequency	Percentage	No. of Sub Committees	
			1-5	>10
I don't know	28	6.4	-	-
No	286	65.3	-	-
Yes	124	28.3	95.4%	4.6%
Total	438	100.0	95.4%	4.6%

On board diversity, table 4 shows that slightly above one third of the respondents agreed that there is enough diversity in their boards (39.58%, $M=3.0$; $SD=1.251$). The findings further show in detail that only 39.4% of the respondents agreed that there is a clearly defined eligibility criteria for individuals to serve on the board of the organization such as experiences, qualifications and gender. This means that six out of 10 local NGOs lack eligibility criteria for appointment of board members. In addition, 30.6% agreed that their boards consist of the executive and non-executive members (internal and external directors) on a balanced proportion; an indication that six out of ten of these boards may lack balanced opinions for board decision making.

Table 4*Board composition and functionalities*

Board Composition	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Diversity							
There is a clearly defined eligibility criteria for individuals to serve on the Board of the organization such as experiences, qualifications and gender	19.3	21.6	19.7	28.7	10.7	2.90	1.302
The Board consists of the executive and non-executive members (internal and external Directors) on a balanced proportion	16.0	30.6	22.8	20.4	10.2	2.78	1.230
The organization has a maximum term limit for a Board member to serve in the organization	6.9	15.7	21.7	34.0	21.7	3.48	1.189
The organization conducts regular Board elections/appointments as stipulated in the byelaws/ constitution	19.8	22.3	25.3	21.5	11.1	2.82	1.282
Sub Category	15.5	22.55	22.38	26.15	13.43	3.0	1.251
Functions							
As a Board member or CEO, I have received induction on the roles and responsibilities of the Board and management	13.6	25.2	28.4	22.4	10.4	2.91	1.197
The Board appraises at least annually the performance of the CEO based on set objectives	16.3	25.6	25.4	24.5	8.2	2.83	1.207
There is at least annual evaluation of the Board performance based on objectives set in order to improve effectiveness	16.3	26.3	26.5	20.8	10.0	2.82	1.222
Board formulates long term strategy and policy, review performance and mobilizes resources to achieve organizational goals	2.3	14.5	22.6	38.7	21.9	3.63	1.050
Sub Category	12.13	22.9	25.73	26.6	12.63	3.05	1.169
Aggregate	13.8	22.7	24.1	26.4	13.0	3.0	1.2099

The 55.7% agreed that the organization has a maximum term limit for a board member to serve in the organization showing that nearly half of the boards do not have clear term limits for

board members. Finally, 32.1% agreed that the organization conducts regular board elections/appointments as stipulated in the bylaws/ constitution. This shows that nearly, seven in ten of the boards do not have regular elections. Overall, this is an indication of inadequate diversity in the boards. Lack of diversity is a major concern as it can impede sourcing of wide range of views and voices, which is integral for strategic decision making, innovation and improvement of performance (Kueka et al., 2021).

On board functions, the findings revealed that slightly above one third of the respondents agreed that board members are effectively carrying out their functions as required (39.23%, $M=3.05$; $SD=1.169$). The findings further revealed that 32.8% of the respondents agreed that as a board member or CEO, they have received induction on the roles and responsibilities of the board and management. This could indicate that for six in ten boards, members may not be operating with a clear understanding goals and strategies of the organizations. However, 32.7% agreed that the board appraises at least annually the performance of the CEO based on set objectives, and 30.8% agreed that there is at least annual evaluation of the board performance based on objectives set to improve effectiveness. Quite a higher percentage, 60.6% agreed that board formulates long term strategy and policy, review performance and mobilizes resources to achieve organizational goals. Board effectiveness is important for proper functioning and enhancing performance of NGOs due to the board's key role of monitoring and supervising management behaviors, aligning the interests of donors and management, and protecting donors and stakeholders' interests (Makhlouf et al. 2017).

On the performance, majority (73.0%) of the respondents affirmed the availability of internal system of checks and balances that divides power and authority between management and the board, 22.8% said internal system of checks and balances that divides power and authority between management and the board were not available while 4.1% said they were not sure. The study findings presented in table 5 show that 53.5% of the respondents agreed that the perception of NGOs results is satisfactory, 37.2% that the government perception on outputs of NGOs is satisfactory, 28.5% that the media perception on the impact of NGOs is satisfactory, 26.9% that NGOs are accountable and transparent to the stakeholders, and 34.9% that the NGOs comply with government requirements. Despite majority (53.5%) of the public being satisfied by the performance of NGOs in Ethiopia, there is an indication of an indictment for poor

performance from the regulatory authorities and the public watchdogs (media). This could possibly mean that the stakeholders do not read from the same page and view performance in different perspectives. Thus, the need for stakeholders' engagement to create a better understanding for all. Cumulatively, the study shows average performance of Ethiopian NGOs where in slightly above one third (36.2%) of the NGOs, the respondents agreed that performance was satisfactory while 26.14% were neutral and 37.7% disagreed. This means only about one third of the NGOs satisfactorily achieve their objectives with about one quarter moderately achieving their objectives and the rest failing to achieve set objectives. The performance of NGOs in Ethiopia has been greatly influenced by contextual factors such as legal and administrative barriers, poor networking and cooperation among NGOs, lack of capacity, lack of information, and a lack of clear role on policy issues (Ariti et al., 2018).

Table 5

Descriptive statistics for performance

Performance Indicators	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
The public perception of NGOs results is satisfactory	8.0	20.9	17.5	38.7	14.8	3.31	1.189
The government perception on outputs of NGOs is satisfactory	8.7	23.8	30.2	29.8	7.4	3.03	1.088
The media perception on the impact of NGOs is satisfactory	16.7	30.0	24.8	22.3	6.2	2.71	1.166
NGOs are accountable and transparent to the stakeholders	18.0	24.0	31.0	22.9	4.0	2.71	1.127
The NGOs comply with government requirements	22.0	15.9	27.2	25.3	9.6	2.75	1.347
Aggregate	14.68	22.92	26.14	27.8	8.4	2.9	1.183

To test the study hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Cronbach's alpha for the 8 board characteristics and 5 performance measurement items were .849 and .738, respectively. Thus, the scales were found to be reliable and adequate for analysis. The results of the regression indicated that board composition explained 19.2% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = .192$, $F(1,473) = 113.68$, $p < 0.05$). It was found that board composition significantly predicted performance ($\beta = .44$, $t = 10.66$, $p < 0.05$) even though, there was a weak relationship between board composition and performance. In summary, the results show that board composition (diversity, effectiveness of carrying out its functions, & presence of board sub

committees) positively affect performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between board composition and performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. It means boards with members from diverse backgrounds (gender, education, experiences), more effective in carrying out their functions, and have sub-committees, tend to perform better. The findings support other research which found positive effects of board characteristics (Chemweno, 2016) and its composition (Adane et al., 2018) as major influencers of organizational performance.

Table 6

Model summary for board composition and performance

Source	SS	Df	MS	Number of obs	= 473
Model	63.313	1	63.313	F (1, 473)	= 113.688
Residual	262.857	472	.557	Prob > F	= .0000
Total	326.169	473	.689	R-squared	= .194
				Adj R-squared	= .192
				Std. Error of the Estimate	= .74626
Performance	Coef.	Std. Err.	Beta	T	P> t
Constant	1.567	.129	-	12.103	.000
Board Composition	.440	.041	.441	10.662	.000

5. Conclusion

The study showed a positive relationship between board composition and performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. The results showed that majority of the boards are characterized by limited diversity (male dominated), lack of clearly constituted board committees, and challenges on enablers of board function (infrequent meetings). Nonetheless, board diversity, effectiveness of the boards in carrying out their functions, and existence of board committees were all important factors for determining performance.

From the findings, it can be concluded that limited diversity impedes sourcing of wide range of views and voices, which is integral for strategic decision making, innovation and improvement of performance. Moreover, NGOs without sub-committees are most likely to face reduced efficiency, diligence and lack of comprehensiveness in monitoring and offering advice to the executives with negative effects on the organizational outcomes. This has created an

understanding on the role of board characteristics on performance and allowed for deeper insights into the role of boards and their optimal design for enhanced NGOs performance. Thus, the study recommends setting of clear eligibility criteria for board appointments, setting term limits, holding regular elections, regular appraisal of board and CEO performance, induction of new board members and providing clear terms of references, and encouraging gender diversity.

Since performance evaluation was based on board chairpersons and executives' opinions on accountability and effectiveness, inclusion of secondary data (reports) would improve the evaluation by providing an opportunity to triangulate the findings. Recognizing that the assessment of performance was from internal stakeholders, studies considering external stakeholders would help validate the findings. Similarly, the study only established a weak relationship between board composition and performance, further study should be done to find out the other factors that might affect performance of NGOs in Ethiopia. In this regard, future studies should consider wider scope in terms of period and include other international NGOs and other NGOs outside Ethiopia.

References

- Adams, R. B., J. de-Haan, S., Terjesen, and H. van-Ees (2015). Board Diversity: Moving the Field Forward. *Corporate Governance - An International Review* 23 (2): 77-82. doi:10.1111/corg.12106.
- Adams, R.B., and Ferreira, D. (2009). Women in the boardroom and their impact on governance and performance. *Journal of Financial Economics* 94: 291–309.
- Adane, Yrgalem Gebreslassie, Tadesse Getacher Engida, Yitbarek Abrha Asfaw, Hossein Azadi, and Steven Van Passel (2018). Determinants of internal governance quality: Evidence from corporations in Ethiopia. *Cogent Economics & Finance* 6: 1-17. doi:10.1080/23322039.2018.1537051.
- Alabede, James Oladapo (2016). Effect of board diversity on corporate governance structure and operating performance: Evidence from the UK listed firms. *Asian Journal of Accounting and Governance* 7: 67–80. doi:10.17576/AJAG-2016-07-06.
- Amadi, H. (2015). *The Impact of board effectiveness and business planning on financial sustainability of NGOs in Nairobi*. Masters Thesis, United States International University Africa.

- Amedi, Ari Muhammad Rashid, and Aree Saeed Mustafa (2020). Board characteristics and firm performance: Evidence from manufacture sector of Jordan. *Accounting Analysis Journal* 9 (3): 146-151.
- Ariti, Adenew Taffa, Jasper van Vliet, and Peter H. Verburg (2018). What restrains Ethiopian NGOs to participate in the development of policies for natural resource management? *Environmental Science & Policy* 89: 292-299.
- Bond (2020). Falling income, redundancies and programme cuts: can NGOs survive the next two years? *Bond*. 10 7. Accessed 7 25, 2023. <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2020/10/falling-income-redundancies-and-programme-cuts-can-ngos-survive-the-next-two-years/>.
- Booth-Bell, Darlene, and Jackson, P. (2021). Governance theory and board diversity. Where do the rationales for board diversity and governance theories converge. *Global Journal of Accounting and Finance* 5 (2): 70-87.
- Butler, S. R. (2012). All on board! Strategies for constructing diverse boards of directors. *Viginia Law and Business Review* 61.
- Chapple, L., and Humphrey, J. (2014). Does board gender diversity have a financial impact? Evidence using stock portfolio performance. *Journal of Business Ethics* 122 (4): 709-723.
- Chemweno, E.C. (2016). *Board characteristics and firm performance : evidence from Kenya*. Nairobi: Strathmore University.
- Chemweno, E.C. (2016). *Board Characteristics and Firm Performance : Evidence from Kenya*. Nairobi: Masters Thesis, Strathmore University.
- Chen, K.D., and Wu, A. (2016). *The structure of board committees*. University of Pennsylvania & Harvard University.
- Chen, Shili, Niels Hermes, and Reggy Hooghiemstra (2022). Corporate Social Responsibility and NGO Directors on Boards. *Journal of Business Ethics* 175 (3): 625–649. doi:10.1007/s10551-020-04649-4.
- Dato, M. H., Mersland, R., & Mori, N. (2018). Board committees and performance in microfinance institutions: Evidence from Ethiopia. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 13(2), 350-370.
- Debebe, R. (2020). The Effect of leadership style and organizational culture on performance of small and medium enterprises in Jig-Jiga city: A Literature Review. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA) Paper, 104822*.

- El-Dahdoh, S.I. (2018). *The Impact of Board of Directors Effectiveness on Improving Organizational Performance in Relief Associations*. Gaza: Masters Thesis, The Islamic University of Gaza.
- Gebre, Y. (2016). Reality Checks: The state of civil society organizations in Ethiopia. *African Sociological Review* 20 (2): 1-12.
- George, M., and Sahay, M. (2018). Relationship between corporate governance and board of directors in strategic planning. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics* 118 (20): 4503-4508.
- Hillman, A.J., Cannella, A. and Paetzold, R. (2000). The resource dependence role of corporate directors: Strategic adaptation of board composition in response to environmental change. *Journal of Management Studies* 235-255.
- Islam, R., French, E. and Muhammad Ali (2022). Evaluating board diversity and its importance in the environmental and social performance of organizations. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 1134–1145. doi:10.1002/csr.2259.
- Jnanathapasw, S.G. (2021). Thematic analysis & coding: An overview of the qualitative paradigm. *An Introduction to Social Science Research*. doi:10.6084/m9.figshare.17159249.
- Kemei, F.K., and Mweberi, E. (2017). Effects of corporate governance practices on financial management in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management* 5 (4): 599- 615.
- Kolev, K., Wangrow, D.B., Barker, V.L. and Schepker, D.J. (2019). Board committees in corporate governance: A cross-disciplinary review and agenda for the future. *Journal of Management Studies* 56 (6): 1138-1193.
- Kueka, T-Yong, I-Chi Chen, Yuen-Onn Choong, Saw-Chin Khor, Boon-Hui Bobby Chai, and Timothy Tzen-Vun Yap. (2021). Diversity within the board of directors. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science Research* 6 (1): 1-10.
- Makhlouf, Mohammed Hassan, Nur Hidayah Laili, Mohamad Yazis Ali Basah, and Nur Ainna Ramli (2017). Board of directors' effectiveness and firm performance: Evidence from Jordan. *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting* 8 (18): 23-34.

- Martín, C.J.a, and Begoña, H. (2018). Boards of directors: composition and effects on the performance of the firm. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja* 31 (1): 1015-1041. doi:10.1080/1331677X.2018.1436454.
- Mihail, B.A., Dumitrescu, D., Micu, C.D. and Lobda, A. (2022). The impact of board diversity, CEO characteristics, and board committees on financial performance in the case of Romanian companies. *Journal of Risk and* 15 (1): 1-16. doi:10.3390/jrm15010007.
- Miller, T., and M. D. C. Triana (2009). Demographic diversity in the boardroom: Mediators of The board diversity–firm performance relationship. *Journal of Management Studies* 46 (5): 755-786.
- Omar, Norliza, Roshayani Arshad, Nur Hayati Ab Samad, and Rina Fadhilah Ismail (2016). Effectiveness, accountability and understanding of non-profit organizations in Malaysia. *Malaysian Accounting Review* 15 (2): 127-150.
- Puyvelde, S.V., Brown, W.A., Walker, V. and Tenuta, R. (2018). Board effectiveness in non profit organizations: Do intetactions in the boardroom matter? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 1-5. doi:10.1177/0899764018762318.
- Rao, K., and Tilt, C. (2016). Board diversity and CSR reporting: an Australian study.m*Meditari Accountancy Research* 24 (2): 182-210. doi:10.1108/MEDAR-08-2015-0052.
- Recadina, W., and Ouma, C. (2017). Effects of board diversity on performance of non-governmental organisations in Nairobi County Kenya. *The International Journal of Innovatie Research and Development* 6 (7). doi:10.24940/ijird/2017/v6/i7/JUL17041.
- Ricciuti, E., and Calò, F. (2017). "NGOs and Governance." In *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, edited by A. Farazmand. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_3213-1.
- Sener, I., Varoglu, A. and Aren, S. (2011). Board composition and organizational performance: Environmental characteristics matter. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 24: 1481–1493.
- Srivastava, R. P., Adi Masli, and Sherwood, M.G. (2018). Attributes and structure of an effective board of directors: A theoretical investigation. *A journal of Accounting, Finance and Business Studies*. doi:10.1111/abac.12132.

- Tallack, B. (2020). 5 existential funding challenges for large INGOs. *Reliefweb*. July 02. Accessed 07 25, 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/5-existential-funding-challenges-large-ingos>.
- Tura, H. A. (2012). Overview of corporate governance in Ethiopia: The role, composition and remuneration of boards of directors in share companies. *Mizan Law Review*, 6(1), 45-76.
- Zehir, Cemal, Mine Afacan Findikli, and Kudret Çeltekligil (2019). Resource dependency theory, firm performance and producers-suppliers relationship. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences: Joint Conference: 14th ISMC and 8th ICLTIBM-2018*. Future Academy. 161-172. doi:10.15405/epsbs.2019.01.02.14.

