

Oversight Role of Parliament and the Management of Public Finances in Uganda

A Financial Approach

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ABSTRACT

The oversight role of Parliament is a contested but fundamental concept in the structure of managing public finances in democratic countries. This article attempts to analyse key issues in terms of Parliament's oversight role and managing public finances in Uganda. Uganda has been implementing PFM reforms since the beginning of the 1990s. Despite remarkable improvements in many areas, there are still numerous challenges regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of government spending and the quality of service delivery using government funds (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development 2011:34). The article uses a mixed-method approach to provide contextual insight into the practical institutional obstacles that the Parliament of Uganda faces as an oversight institution. Furthermore, the article argues that the weaknesses in the structural and institutional framework exacerbate the many challenges the Parliament of Uganda faces in terms of its oversight role.

INTRODUCTION

Managing public finances refers to collecting sufficient resources from the economy in a proper manner, along with allocating and using these resources efficiently and effectively to constitute good financial management (Kivumbi 2013:70 and Okello 2012:29). Public financial management (PFM) covers the processes and institutional arrangements (stakeholder roles and responsibilities) involved in planning, budgeting, managing and reporting of both financial and non-financial public-sector resources (*Public Expenditure and Financial Management Handbook* 2012:19). In this article, the management of public finances is measured in terms of the budget formulation, budget execution, accountability and reporting.

For the purposes of this article, an understanding of the concept 'accountability' is necessary. Accountability can be seen as a key concept in financial management and is central to managing finances within the public sphere. Traditionally, accountability meant "being answerable for one's behaviour or actions" (Van der Waldt, Van Niekerk, Doyle, Knipe and Du Toit 2002:264). Visser and Erasmus (2002:365) explain the concept of accountability as, "Relating to the obligation to account for responsibilities conferred to an individual, and covering the full range of resources under the control of institutions and includes performance accountability". Therefore, accountability refers to an administrative authority's legal obligation to report to, and reason on, its functioning to other organs that have the right to give effect to its responsibilities (Majam and Du Toit 2017:66).

Within the context of PFM, the broader view of accountability in financing reporting is more relevant. In general, the broader definition is applicable to both private and public institutions. However, one can argue that public institutions' financial affairs create more public interest than that of private institutions. For this reason, the wider definition of public accountability seems to be more appropriate in financial management within the public sector. Importantly, managers in the public sector are all accountable for their decisions and actions, including the financial implications or consequences that these decisions may have (Majam and Du Toit 2017:66).

To maintain accountability within government, financial control is necessary. Financial control is required so that public funds are not misused, as well as to ensure that financial transactions are recorded in a transparent manner. A distinction can be drawn between external and internal control. With external control, institutions outside the organisation exercise control. In turn, internal control refers to exercising control measures by responsible units and persons from inside the relevant institution (Majam and Du Toit 2017:66).

External control deals with the "control exercised by the legislators at the conclusion of the financing process" (Cloete 1998:207). Within the national sphere of

government, it is Parliament that has to accept responsibility for all financial transactions that public executive institutions have to incur. To ensure that Parliament is held accountable, the Legislature provides for a structuring framework where organisational arrangements are put in place to implement various financial functions. Furthermore, it prescribes work procedures to be followed when managing public finance.

Parliament is the only authority that can approve the allocation of funds for national government departments. Therefore, the highest and final authority for public income (revenue) and expenditure is vested in Parliament. In addition to approving the respective budgets, Parliament has the opportunity to evaluate budget objectives to ensure that they are in line with citizens' needs. Parliament's oversight role refers to its legislative duty to monitor public entities' financial planning, spending and accountability measures (Killick 2013:78).

CONCEPTUALISING PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA

Undeniably, PFM underscores all government activities (Basheka 2012:45). As such, this article assesses the influence of Parliament's oversight role in managing Uganda's public finances.

Uganda has been implementing PFM reforms since the beginning of the 1990s. While recent assessments show impressive improvements in many areas (Kivumbi 2013:23), numerous challenges remain. Particular challenges relate to the effectiveness and efficiency of government spending and the quality of service delivery using government funds (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development 2011:34). Government has launched a new PFM strategy to address these challenges (Uganda PFM Reform Strategy 2011/2012–2016/2017).

The strategy aims to implement financial reforms such as improving the participation of citizens and civil society groups in managing finances to guarantee full compliance to existing laws (Muzaale 2013:43) and to sanction public officials who divert public funds (Okello 2013:40). Institutions such as Uganda's Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) and the Inspector General of Government have tried to ensure they work hand-in-hand with the public and civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure effective PFM (Muzaale 2013:49). However, government has not supported the various partners to help refine and streamline PFM reforms and systems. Notably, the reforms aim to improve predictability in releasing funds to end-users, as well as increase the participation of citizens and civil society groups (Ochieng 2016:56). This particularly relates to determining how the funds should be spent, improving procurement planning and management, ensuring timely follow-up on all audits and inspecting findings (Kivumbi

2013:34), improving record keeping in public administration bodies and increasing awareness of the PFM legal framework (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development 2011).

Despite reforms, Kivumbi (2013:76) maintains that many gaps concerning managing public funds in Uganda remain. Public sector entities are characterised by gross breaches of financial regulations, misappropriations, improper use of government assets, missing vouchers, large-scale diversion of funds, long-term reconciled and irreconcilable accounting figures, inflated payrolls, extensive failure to collect revenue and debts, as well as the fact that important financial decisions are made with little regard to their effects (OAG Reports, 2011/2012, 2013/2014, 2015/2016).

Corruption in Uganda is widespread and is seen as one of the greatest obstacles to the country's economic development (Gibbins 2014:57). Along with widespread corruption, limited transparency and accountability threatens both access to, and quality of, public services (Kivumbi 2013:81). Citizens view corruption as a severe and growing problem. However, the political will to address this seems to be lacking, which poses a true challenge to implementing the proposed reforms (Kasozi 2010:76).

There are growing cases of financial irregularities in many of Uganda's public institutions (Auditor-General's Report 2012). Massive public funds are misappropriated resulting in low levels of social services being rendered to the country's citizens (Mugambwa 2014:23). Several other cases involving financial malpractices in the public sector have been reported in the media (World Bank Report 2010). These cases of financial malpractices relate to fund embezzlement and misappropriation (World Bank Report 2009).

In Uganda, procurement is one of the government sectors most vulnerable to corruption (Basheka, Oluka and Tumutegyeize 2012:34). The extensive funds spent through procurement, along with the high levels of bureaucracy often involved in such processes, provide opportunities for rent-seeking behaviour (Kivumbi 2013:58). As such, one of government institutions' key goals is to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of public procurement systems to improve procurement performance.

Despite recent reforms, such as regular audits of public institutions and placing more emphasis on procurement planning and management, public procurement remains a complex and vulnerable area for corruption in Uganda. Furthermore, procurement performance has been affected by a lack of effective reporting systems, procurement agencies' poor record management and a failure to investigate and punish corruption (Inspectorate of Government 2011).

Despite the rules in place, findings from value-for-money audits conducted by the Auditor-General show that Uganda's procurement processes have many flaws (Kasozi 2010:33). For instance, the audits reveal that, in many cases, there

is a lack of adequate needs assessments and widespread wastage of funds. Furthermore, audits reveal that procurement is often carried out outside pre-established procurement plans; contracts are signed without confirming the availability of funds; and bidding processes are often manipulated to limit the number of bidders (Inspectorate of Government 2011:45). Another common corruption scheme in the procurement sector is where the public official deliberately delays planning to justify emergency processes, which are often carried out with limited or no competition (Magezi 2016:15).

Due to these common irregularities and weak legal structures, the OAG has found it challenging to examine the accounts of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) thoroughly (Kivumbi 2013:67). As extensive public funds are misappropriated, the quality and level of social services rendered to citizens have been affected (Mugambwa 2014:23). The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has reported cases of fund misappropriation (Kivumbi 2013:13). The PAC is a committee of selected members of Parliament that has been mandated to audit the revenue and expenditure of the Government of Uganda (PAC 2015). The PAC is re-elected every five years and includes no more than 30 members (Okello 2012:34). The Chairperson is always a member of the opposition. Its chief function is to examine the audit report of the Comptroller and the Auditor-General (CAG) after it is submitted to Parliament for review (PAC 2015). Moreover, it has been found that the PAC does not review the audit reports on time. Although the audit reports for the 2015/2016 financial year have been published, they have not yet been examined by the PAC, which causes a backlog in audit functions (PAC Report 2015).

According to the Parliamentary PAC Report (2015:42), the Ugandan Government has lost trillions of shillings through embezzlement. This is contradictory to the institution's responsibility to instill a culture of good financial management to guard public funds, among other things (Okello 2012:45).

Several other cases of financial malpractices within the public sector have been reported in the media (World Bank Report 2010). Notably, cases of financial malpractices mainly revolve around embezzlement and fund misappropriation (World Bank Report 2010). Although these may not be conclusive, they provide an indication of the extent to which Ugandan finances are mismanaged. Audit institutions have failed to report some cases of funds misappropriation and the culprits have not been brought to book (World Bank Report 2010). Even in cases where funds were spent and not accounted for, the reports delayed exposing such inefficiencies and they were merely referred to the concerned audit structures (World Bank Report 2010).

As far as managing Uganda's public finances are concerned, the Parliament of Uganda, along with the PAC, the Inspectorate of Government, the Police, Judiciary and the OAG play an oversight role.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A cross sectional survey research design was adopted, as it provides a systematic, factual and accurate description of the subject under study. As noted before, the article applied a mixed-method approach by triangulating quantitative and qualitative research methods. A sample of 140 respondents was drawn from a population of 178. This included 30 members of Parliament's PAC, 10 officials from the OAG, 10 officials from the Inspectorate of Government, 20 officials from Civil Society organisations and 108 members of the public (opinion leaders).

Quantitative data was generated from the surveys. As part of the deductive process, an interview guide was developed, piloted, refined and updated throughout the course of the empirical work. Interviews were conducted in a guided conversation style and most interviews were carried out face-to-face. However, certain interviews were conducted telephonically, as busy respondents were more prepared to find time for telephone interviews in their schedule.

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) program. The researcher applied regression analysis to test the degree of relationships between the study variables. Qualitative data was analysed using both thematic and content analysis.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The findings revealed that Parliament does not examine the reports that various public entities send on time. Furthermore, interview findings revealed that Parliament has not examined reports on irregularities relating to PAC meetings and the frequency of recesses throughout the year in a timeous fashion. The aforementioned results are in line with a study by Muzaale (2014:56), which found that the PAC does not examine audit reports on time. In line with the above, one research respondent noted that: "Cases of deliberate witch-hunt and bribery groping the committee and infighting within the committee with some members has slowed down the process of examining the reports on time". In doing so, the PAC has missed the target. Some members of the PAC have also been linked to corruption, with reports indicating that they are bribed, a factor which explains delay (Muzaale 2013:56).

Notably, audit reports for the 2015/2016 financial year have been published. However, they have not yet been examined by the PAC, which causes a backlog in auditing functions. Regarding the aforementioned results, Kivumbi (2013:45) states that the existing auditing structure delays bottom-up communication, as there is a three-year turnaround time from the time an audit report is submitted and discussed to when the PAC takes action. A PAC member, who

was a respondent in the current research, noted that, “The existing backlog in Parliament is due to the many commitments PAC has and yet the number of sittings of the committee are few. This has affected the operations of PAC towards preventing the mismanagement of funds” (Interview Kampala 2015).

Olupot (2016:34) highlights that Parliament is responsible for the audit process, including the committees’ respective roles in reviewing audit reports. Similarly, it was observed that Parliament emphasises effective follow-up procedures to ensure that audit recommendations are implemented.

However, Okalany (2015:45) points to a number of reasons why the PAC has not exercised its oversight function. Okalany (2015:56) states that committee members’ sub-standard levels of qualification and experience negatively affects the PAC’s performance, as some members lack the skills to read, understand and interpret the audit and financial documents presented to the committee. This problem stems from failure to constitute the committee members based on good qualifications.

To remedy this skills gap, Ochieng (2016:67) recommends that PAC members’ appointments should be based on professional competence and experience. Furthermore, the regulatory framework should be overhauled; the timeframe for submitting financial and audited reports, and review by the PAC, should be strictly in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995; and non-compliance should be punished.

Mugambwa (2014:45) states that, where there is no internal reformative committee in place, the PAC and civil society put external pressure on government to be more transparent and accountable. In line with this, study findings revealed that the 10th Parliament of Uganda has not maintained effective oversight of government’s finances through the PAC, as many had expected at the start of President Yoweri Museveni’s fifth term in power. President Museveni’s term, which will come to an end in 2021, labelled, *Kisanja Hakuna Mukyezo*, can be translated in English as “A term where there is no mercy for thieves who steal public money” (Mugambwa 2014:45). Parliament continues to harass and subpoena anyone it chooses during investigations of those who appear before the PAC. However, Parliament is yet to launch workshops to familiarise members with the scope, approach and methods of auditing procedures

Uganda’s legislative framework is sufficient to bind government to adhere to good audit and financial management principles. Kakuba (2013:56) states that gaps are still evident, despite the fact that Parliament emphasises effective follow-up procedures to ensure that audit recommendations are implemented.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, gives the Auditor-General the power to audit the accounts of, or appoint auditors for, government statutory corporations, commissions, authorities, agencies and other bodies, as established by an Act of the National Assembly. However, due to the OAG’s limited staff

corps, it is impossible to audit over 800 public entities within a year. This lag time is exacerbated when the PAC fails to examine the handful of generated reports on time.

Although the OAG cannot directly appoint auditors for statutory corporations, it is expected to provide such corporations with a list of qualified practitioners from which the bodies are expected to appoint their external auditors (Ochieng 2016). In view of the alleged cases of malpractice in certain state corporations, Muzaale (2013:45) suggests that the Auditor-General takes full control of auditing these corporations or be allowed to appoint the auditors that will be 100% permanent and functional in these institutions.

As noted earlier in the article, Kivumbi (2013:55) states that this oversight role is tapered, since scheduled sessions to review OAG reports do not take due cognisance of other role players' schedules. For example, review meetings are scheduled when Parliament is in recess.

In relation to Parliament's mandate, Kakuba (2013:31) states that the oversight role is lacking. Hence, there is a need to streamline processes. Although the Parliament of Uganda is divided into committees and specialised oversight committees to supervise independent investigative bodies, these committees' roles should be scrutinised. In addition, government departments, agencies and Bills should be strengthened and supported. This creates what Kivumbi (2013:78) describes as "shadow oversight roles". Indeed, the oversight role remains a challenge. This could be attributed to Parliament's delays in examining documents forwarded by PFM institutions such as the OAG.

Three respondents cited that Parliament is lax in acting on the OAG's audit recommendations. Given that the PAC lacks the mandate to initiate independent investigations, it has not been particularly active in its oversight role (Tendo 2016:87). As such, the PAC is dependent on the OAG. A case in point is where Parliament failed to act when the pension scam case reached a dead end after police and the judiciary initiated the case at the beginning of 2013 (Muzaale 2013:23). The authors of this article support the observations by Muzaale (2013:23) that, at times, Parliament has failed to be proactive about high-profile cases, such as the 2013 pension scam.

In the current research, 60% of respondents revealed that Parliament has an obligation to support the various audit institutions. In line with this, Magezi (2016:58) notes that the Inspector General of Government (IGG) needs to be vested with more power to prosecute the 'big fish' without any interference. A case in point is where former IGG, Justice Faith Mwendha, failed to prosecute the perpetrators in the *Temangalo* corruption scandal where the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) lost billions of shillings.

The survey's findings reveal that political influence in government matters have hampered the fight against public fund mismanagement. In the current study, one

member of the PAC revealed that the 10th Parliament of Uganda has to create a committee that will directly support the country's auditing functions. Regarding the aforementioned, Kakumba (2016:87) raises an important question: If existing committees in Parliament (including the PAC) are failing, what unique role will the audit function structure committee perform?

Current research findings revealed that mechanisms exist for committees to obtain information from the executive to exercise their oversight function. On the contrary, the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) (2014) states the mechanisms for oversight committees to obtain information from the Executive are not clearly defined. The oversight committees do not have adequate power to request and receive responses on the Executive's actions on recommendations. However, sometimes they receive reports from the Executive on actions taken based on the Executive's discretion. Okalany (2015:34) highlights that the Executive should respect Parliament's recommendations. Kivumbi (2013:13) argues that Parliament's powers are derived from the Rules of Procedure for the Parliament of Uganda, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, as well as the Budget Act and the Access to Information Act.

While Okalany (2015) agrees with the aforementioned recommendation, PAC members who were interviewed argue that there is a need to streamline existing laws, so that they are in line with Parliament's mandate. Furthermore, these respondents call for legislative amendments to strengthen these powers. As such, there is need for follow-up mechanisms to ensure that committee mechanisms are implemented. Seabright (2006:42) states that, in general, parliaments are responsible for oversight. In the case of the Ugandan Parliament, this oversight function starts with the PAC. Parliament's primary scrutiny function entails whether government funds are spent appropriately, as well as to control reports on taxation and revenues. Usually, parliamentary engagement with the budget has several stages (Naluwairo 2013:23). First, Parliament votes on public funds, after which it monitors budget execution. Finally, Parliament considers whether budget implementation complied with its wishes.

Parliament scrutinises the economic value-for-money, efficiency and effectiveness of public spending and generally holds the government and its civil servants accountable for delivering public services with financial resources (Schiavo-Campo and Tommasi 2009:56). Committees' mandates have changed in line with delivery models for public services. To make the most of taxpayers' money, mandates have spread beyond government departments to examining public bodies and private companies that provide public services (Ruthrock 2007:34).

On the contrary, the researcher has found that the PAC has been reduced to a toothless watchdog. Various authors are of the opinion that the fault lies at the door of the government. They state that politicians in power and bureaucrats have developed a personal stake for secrecy, shying away from accountability to

Parliament and the people. Despite examples of misappropriation of state funds, many go free because they are well placed in political circles.

A research respondent who supports the aforementioned view states that: “I am surprised that the present Public Accounts Committee has appeared to be impotent in discharging the responsibilities of the nation and there ought to be no excuses for that, why should the corrupt appear before PAC and after left free”. This might explain why the PAC reports remain on the shelves year in and year out. Robinson and Peter-Stella (in Muzaale 2013:34) state that, “Governments have perfected the art of treating parliamentary committees as sinecures and their reports as documents to be consigned to the dust-gathering morgue of secretarial shelves”. As such, ministers and bureaucrats are not inhibited by the thought that the PAC would be questioning them about any profligacy on their part (Kivumbi 2013:44).

According to Muzaale (2013:47), it is unfair that East African governments treat parliamentary committees as unimportant addendums. Given the many topics legislators have to handle, the author blames Parliament for being sluggish in handling issues tabled before it. This is supported by Okello (2012:31), who states that, as Parliament has several matters to deal with; members take their time to deliberate on issues relating to the management of public finances. This is exacerbated by irregular parliamentary sittings, which undeniably slows down the process of examining OAG reports on managing public finances

Table 1: Regression analysis for the relationship between ‘the oversight role of Parliament’ and the ‘management of public finances’

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.512 ^a	0.262	0.214	0.51018
a. Predictors (Constant), oversight role of Parliament				

Table 1 provides the *R* and *R*² values. The *R* value is 0.512, which represents the simple correlation and, therefore, indicates a moderate degree of correlation. The *R*² value indicates to which extent the dependent variable, ‘management of public finances’ can be explained by the independent variable ‘oversight role of Parliament’.

The standard error of the estimate is .51018 and the adjusted *R*² value is 0.214. Therefore, the adjusted square value of 0.214 implied that ‘oversight role of Parliament’ predicts the ‘management of public finances’. In other words, the management of public finances is dependent on the oversight role of Parliament by 21.4%.

Table 2: Analysis of variance showing the results on the relationship between the ‘oversight role of Parliament’ and the ‘management of public finances’

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.360	1	0.360	1.385	0.242 ^a
	Residual	30.453	117	0.260		
	Total	30.813	118			
a. Predictors: (Constant), oversight role of Parliament b. Dependent Variable: management of public finance						

Source: (Primary data 2016)

Table 2 represents the degrees of freedom associated with the sources of variance. The total variance has $N-1$ degrees of freedom. The regression degrees of freedom correspond with the number of coefficients estimated at minus 1. Including the intercept, there are five coefficients, so the model has $5 - 1 = 4$ degrees of freedom.

The Error degree of freedom is the df total minus the df model: $118 - 1 = 117$. The mean square is the mean squares, the sum of squares, divided by their respective dfs . The F-statistic is the mean square (regression), divided by the mean square (residual): $0.360/0.260 = 1.385$.

In testing the null hypothesis that all the model coefficients are 0, the p-value is compared to some alpha levels. The full model is not statistically significant

Table 3: Summary statistics showing the coefficient for the ‘oversight role of Parliament’ and the ‘management of public finances’

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.579	0.192		13.429	0.000
	Oversight role of Parliament	0.061	0.052	0.108	1.177	0.242
a. Dependent Variable: management of public finance						

Source: (Primary data 2016)

($F = 0.380$, $df = 118$, 1 , $sig. = 0.242$), even though the 'management of public finances' was statistically significant ($p > .05$) by itself.

The value for this table had total degrees of freedom of 118, as four observations had missing data and were not included in the analysis. The other degree of freedom corresponds to the intercept (constant) of the regression line. F-statistics is 1.385 and, given the strength of the correlation, the model is statistically significant ($p > .0005$).

As per the SPSS statistics generated, the equation ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times 1 + \beta_2 \times 2 + \beta_3 \times 3 + \beta_4 \times 4 + \epsilon$) becomes: $Y = 2.579 + 0.061 \times 1$. The above regression equation has established that taking all factors into account (adoption of an oversight role of Parliament), constant at zero for 'effective public fund management' will be 2.579.

The findings also show that, taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in the scores of the 'oversight role of Parliament' would lead to a 0.061 increase in the scores of 'effective public fund management'. At a 5% level of significance and a 95% level of confidence, processes show a 0.242 level of significance. Overall, the 'oversight role of Parliament' had the greatest effect on 'effective public fund management' ($\beta = .108$).

The focus is on three predictors: Whether they are statistically significant and, if so, the direction of the relationship. The average class size (oversight role of Parliament, $b = .061$) is significant ($p = .242$), but only just so, and the coefficient is positive which would indicate that larger class sizes is related to management of public finances.

The effect of 'oversight role of Parliament' ($b = .061$, $p = .242$) is significant and its coefficient is positive. This indicates that, the greater the systems, the higher the management of public finances. For example, the standard error of the strength coefficient is 0.052. A 95% confidence interval for the regression coefficient for strength is constructed as (0.061 ± 0.052) , where k is the appropriate percentile of the t distribution with degrees of freedom equal to the Error df from the ANOVA table.

The t-test for systems equals 1.177, and is statistically significant. This implies that the regression coefficient for the 'oversight role of Parliament' is significantly different from zero. Note that $(1.177)^2 = 1.385$, which is the same as the F-statistic (with some rounding error).

The coefficient for the 'oversight role of Parliament' is 0.061. This implies that for a one unit increase in the 'oversight role of Parliament'; we would expect a 0.6.1 unit increase in *api00*. As such, for every one standard mark increase in the 'oversight role of Parliament', the model predicts an increase of 0.061 which is the same as a 6.1 score. The constant is 2.579, which is the predicted value when the 'oversight role of Parliament' equals zero.

The results in table 4 show that the 'oversight role of Parliament' explains 0.333 of the variation in management of public finances (adjusted $R^2 = 0.333$). The R

Table 4: Regression summary of ‘oversight role of Parliament’ and ‘management of public finances’

Management of public finances	Standardised β	Sig. P
Oversight role of Parliament	0.199	0.006
Adjusted R ² = 0.333, F = 1.385, p = 0.000		
a. Dependent Variable: Management of public finances		

Table 5: Summary statistics showing the test of between subject effects

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dendent Variable: management of public finance					
Source	Type III of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	29.740 ^a	111	0.268		
Intercept	659.111	1	659.111		
Legal framework	4.804	8	0.601		
Institutional framework	5.486	15	0.366		
Oversight role of Parliament	0.460	8	0.058		
Legal framework* Institutional framework	0.000	0			
Legal framework* Oversight role of Parliament	0.000	0			
Institutional framework* Oversight role of Parliament	0.000	0			
Legal framework* Institutional framework* Oversight role of Parliament	0.000	0			
Error	0.000	0			
Total	916.302	112			
Corrected Total	29.740	111			
a. R Squared = 1.000 (Adjusted R Squared = .)					

value is 0.012, which represents the simple correlation and, therefore, indicates a moderate degree of correlation.

The R^2 value indicates to which extent the dependent variable, 'management of public finances' can be explained by the independent variable. Therefore, the adjusted square value of 0.333 implies that the 'oversight role of Parliament' predicts the 'management of public finances'. In other words, 'management of public finances' is dependent on the 'oversight role of Parliament' at a value of 0.333.

The regression model was good/ significant ($F = 1.385$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The 'oversight role of Parliament' ($\beta = 0.199$, $p = 0.006$) significantly positively influenced 'management of public finances'. The magnitudes of the respective betas suggest that the 'oversight role of Parliament' positively predicted 'management of public finances'.

In relation to the results in table 5, the p value of 0.000 is less than the standard α of 0.05. This suggests significant differences between the means listed in the table. Raising the α level however, would allow the researcher to accept the alternative hypothesis of equality between means.

According to the values in the 'genre' row of this table, and based on the standard α of 0.05, subjects in the three independent variable categories do not have significantly different recall of characters ($F = 0.00$, $p = 0.000$). They do, however, have significantly different recall of the story's setting ($F = 0.00$, $p = 0.000$) and plot ($F=0.000$, $p = 0.000$). The differences in these dependent variable scores provide a mathematical explanation for the differences in canonical variate scores.

While calculating the results, the analysis considered differences in the management of public finances in the three independent variable conditions. Hence, the designation of a Type III Sum of Squares value in the 'Tests of Between-Subjects Effects' table.

DISCUSSION

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, gives Parliament budgetary oversight powers. For instance, it has mandated Parliament to manage and approve the country's annual budget, while the Legislature has to approve supplementary budgets once in a while. However, due to the Legislature's interference, Parliament has to dance to the Executive's tune. Ramkumar and Shapiro (2010:97) note that the budgetary process mirrors the nation and reflects planned and actual revenue and expenditure. Conversely, a prior study by Thomas and Robert (2008:41) states that an unplanned budget might not reflect the true and planned expenditure and revenue.

When handling financial management, Parliament has to abide by established laws. Despite having many members who are not accountants, the PAC has failed

to seek the services of legal and financial experts to help crack down on malpractices. Hendrick and Hendrick (2011:57) point to the absence of personnel with the required skills, knowledge and financial experience within the ranks of the PAC. The authors ascribe this situation to an absence of established laws and guidelines on who can be members of the PAC.

The PAC's inability to take decisive action to implement recommendations is because the Ugandan Constitution does not confer on the Legislature any powers to enforce decisions. The study by Hendrick and Hendrick (2011:51) states that previous research on government financial decision-making and financial condition analysis relied mainly on single or multiple case study analyses on Parliament's role, with a specific focus on the PAC. However, Tanzi (2008:75) looks at the PAC from the point of view of how it examines the OAG's reports.

Parliament has overseen public finances at all levels. For example, it has reviewed and approved annual budget estimates, approved the establishment of public funds, as well as monitored budgets and public finances and related matters. Furthermore, it has approved the budget policy statement (BPS) and the Budgetary Review and Outlook Paper (BRPOP). Concerning Parliament's oversight role; Rakner, Mukubvu, Ngwira, Smiddy and Schneider (2011:32), state that Parliament approves the allocation of public funds, as well as monitors budgets and public finances and related matters.

As part of its oversight role, Parliament has the power to establish an emergency fund and has taken responsibility for macro-economic policy formulation and management. It has often formulated economic and financial policies in cooperation with other spheres of government. According to the findings in the PAC Report (2013) Parliament relates well with CSOs in Uganda (PAC Report 2013). CSOs attend sittings and, to some extent, have been whistleblowers on corrupt acts of government officials. They also sensitise the public to parliamentary activities. Where Government delays to take appropriate action on the recommendations made by the PAC and CSO, they hold public demonstrations and debates that place more pressure on the Executive.

The research highlighted that Parliament does not examine the reports sent by the Auditor-General on time. In line with this, Magezi (2016:23) similarly noted that audit reports of the 2014/2015 financial year have been published, but not yet examined by the PAC, which causes a bottleneck in auditing functions. The existing audit structure delays bottom-up communication and there can be a turnover time of up to three years from when an audit report is submitted and discussed to when the PAC takes action (MoFPED 2015). In line with this, Hendrick and Hendrick (2011) note that, although parliaments emphasise effective follow-up procedures to ensure that audit reports are examined on time, this may not be the case in developing nations, such as Uganda. As such, systems should be put in place and procedures should be followed to ensure that audit reports are examined on time.

CONCLUSIONS

In its oversight role, it was found that Parliament has ensured transparency, accountability and sound management of the revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of all public institutions. Parliamentary systems have redressed the budgetary imbalance of power and promoted transparency between the Executive and the Legislature. Public transparency has also become more prominent.

The research has found that Parliament has provided systems to encourage the simplification of procedures and transparency. This has helped make budget forecasts easier to understand and more credible. Although it has proved to be slow and mostly works under the influence of the Executive, it was found that Parliament has provided overall oversight over public finances at all levels.

Furthermore, Parliament has fulfilled its task of approving the allocation of public funds, budgets and finances and related matters, as well as reviewing annual budget estimates. However, it was condemned for passing supplementary budgets from State House, beneficial to the President. Despite strides in the right direction, Parliament's decisions on PFM were not always made judiciously and some members of the PAC have also been linked to bribery and corruption,

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parliament should be strengthened with a system of familiarising the members with the audit scope, approach and methods through workshops and vested powers should their recommendations not be implemented. As a matter of administrative routine, Parliament should provide all the necessary access and services to the media to facilitate their coverage of proceedings, so that the general public can familiarise themselves with parliamentary activities. Undeniably, this participative process will help support the fight against the mismanagement of public finances. Parliament should not use a lack of resources as an excuse to skip sittings and not deliberate on key matters. Instead, Parliament should fulfill its mandated role to the best of its ability using the limited resources available.

NOTE

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