

The Comprehensive Audit Coverage: Research Status and Prospects

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Abstract. Since the comprehensive audit coverage was proposed in 2014, there has been a lot of research on this in recent years. This paper uses CNKI as a carrier to collect literature from three main perspectives of the comprehensive audit coverage: concept, connotation extension, and realization path. Using normative research as the main method, this paper conducts an analysis and review of China's comprehensive audit coverage policy, in order to provide a certain theoretical basis and directional suggestions for follow-up research.

1 Data sources

This paper uses CNKI as the data source, searching with the term "the comprehensive audit coverage" as of December 31, 2020. A total of 942 papers were obtained, including 113 papers from core journals and higher-level journals (Including 1 paper from EI and 58 papers from CSSCI). After excluding 16 papers from laws, regulations and statements related to the comprehensive audit coverage, a total of 926 papers were obtained (specific as shown in Table 1). It can be seen from the table that since the comprehensive audit coverage has been a relatively new research topic, the relevant research literature has shown an increasing trend year by year and reached the maximum in 2018.

Table 1. Number of papers on the comprehensive audit coverage

Years	Number	Years	Number
2010	2	2016	154
2011	2	2017	157
2012	4	2018	168
2013	3	2019	157
2014	37	2020	154
2015	88		

2 Review of foreign research

The comprehensive audit coverage is a state audit policy with Chinese characteristics and there is no complete research related to it abroad. Based on the concept of the trustee economic responsibility, the foreign literature research part of this article mainly focuses on performance audit, audit accountability and government audit. It is expected to have certain reference significance for the research on the comprehensive audit coverage in China.

2.1 Performance audit

Salvatore Schiavo-Campo (2001) elaborated on the methods to strengthen the performance of public expenditure management, and believed that it is necessary to construct the performance indicators in layers, and there is a relationship between the indicators at all levels [1]. Rudi Turksema (2007) pointed out that when analyzing performance audit projects, the strategic objectives of the audit should be prioritized and the working methods should be as diverse as possible [2]. Stephen K. A. (2011) believes that carrying out performance audits will help increase the effectiveness of government work and improve government work processes [3]. Ringa Raudla (2016) proposed that even if performance audits did not lead to specific changes in policies or organizational practices, performance audits are useful [4].

2.2 Audit accountability

Anders Hanberger (2009) pointed out that it can lead citizens to actively participate in audit accountability to improve government work [5]. John Wanna (2007) believes that the function of audit accountability is to

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assist the federal government to manage and report on its use of resources [6]. Based on his research on the value of money (VFM), Justin Keen (1999) proposed that the evidence for audit accountability comes from the public accounts of the House of Representatives, and its purpose is to be responsible to the Congress for the use of resources by public agencies [7]. Simon D. Norton (2008) found that the function of audit accountability is to supervise the government and its administrative departments, and the effectiveness of supervision is closely related to the authority of the constitution and the legitimacy of supervision [8].

2.3 Government audit

On the nature of auditing abroad, it was first proposed in Encyclopedia Britannica: Auditing is the inspection of corporate activities, account books and statements by accounting experts other than the accounting personnel who were originally responsible for preparing the accounts. Later, the western academic circles experienced the stages of "process theory", "audit cybernetics", and "trusted responsibility theory". David Flint (1988) believes that one party's related party has the obligation to perform entrusted economic responsibilities to the other party or other related parties, and the existence of this relationship is an important prerequisite for audit [9]. DeFraja's research (2010) found that government audit outsourcing is effective, and the central government should hire private independent accounting firms [10]. Guithrie (2011) believes that only a simple technical point of view cannot define the function of government auditing. Government auditing should be a product that reflects individual activities, organizations, systems, sociopolitics, and socioeconomic levels [11].

3 Review of domestic research

3.1 The concept of the comprehensive audit coverage

The comprehensive audit coverage is the core of state audit work in the new era, and is a clear requirement of the Party Central Committee and the State Council of PRC on state audit. The definition of the concept of the comprehensive audit coverage in the existing literature is mostly based on the interpretation of policy documents. According to the national documents and the spirit of leadership speeches, this paper proposes the following concept of the comprehensive audit coverage: the comprehensive audit coverage is a deep, focused, ordered and effective audit and supervision of public funds, state-owned assets, state-owned resources, and leading cadres economic duty. The scope of audit should be extended vertically to departments, units and individuals, and the audit should be done with due diligence, and all audits must be rigorous and accountable.

3.2 Connotation extension of the comprehensive audit coverage

At the 2013 National Audit Work Conference, the Auditor General first proposed the principle of "deep, focused, ordered and effective" for the comprehensive audit coverage, laying a foundation for subsequent theoretical extensions [12]. On this basis, scholars have explored the scientific definition of audit content, the scientific control of audit focus, and the comprehensive play of audit functions.

3.2.1 Audit content

To implement the requirements of the comprehensive audit coverage, auditors should eliminate blind spots in the field of auditing and extend the audit content to performance audits and institutional audits. The purpose of this is to shift the post-audit supervision of the audit cycle to the comprehensive management of the audited objects before, during and after the event. The boundary of the audit must be maximized and the blind spots of audit supervision must be completely eliminated, so as to correctly provide the basis for government decision-making and give full play to the function of the audit "immune system" [13]. In short, highlight the "fullness" of the audit scope, and combine the risk-oriented concept and the principle of importance to provide a theoretical basis and ideas for the breadth of the audit content.

3.2.2 Audit focus

The core of the comprehensive audit coverage is comprehensive coverage of key audit object which is the organic combination of key units, key capital chains and key areas. We should correctly grasp the similarities and differences between the comprehensive audit coverage and audit focus, and implement the comprehensive audit coverage based on the audit focus at the initial stage of the comprehensive audit coverage policy [14].

3.2.3 Audit function

At present, China's state audit is no longer merely an audit of fiscal revenues and expenditures, nor an audit of financial laws and regulations, but has turned to an audit business structure based on authenticity, taking into account efficiency, accountability, and governance, and paying equal attention to economic benefits and economic responsibilities. The purpose of the comprehensive audit coverage is to enable audit institutions to perform their statutory duties and give full play to their supervisory functions. We should focus on the quantity and quality of the audit work. While advancing the high-quality development of the audit business, we should also promote the continuous expansion of the scope of audit coverage and audit objects [15].

3.3 The realization path of the comprehensive audit coverage

3.3.1 To improve the system guarantee for the comprehensive audit coverage

The prerequisite for achieving the comprehensive audit coverage is the improvement of the national audit legal system and the strengthening of the national auditing compulsory power. However, the existing audit legal system still stays in the traditional financial audit model. We must take seriously the issue of improving national audit laws from the height of constitutionally governing the country, and truly realize the audit supervision required for the comprehensive audit coverage. It is necessary to optimize the government's environmental audit supervision mechanism, strengthen the capacity building of the national audit department, and improve relevant laws and regulations at the same time [16]. In addition, audit information disclosure system, audit supervision accountability system and audit supervision result transformation system should be regarded as the three focal points to achieve the strategic goal of the comprehensive audit coverage [17].

3.3.2 To formulate an overall strategy for the comprehensive audit coverage

In the overall implementation strategy of the comprehensive audit coverage, the traditional audit model should be optimized, and the quality of the work of the comprehensive audit coverage should be controlled from the macro-strategic level. At the same time, we should further innovate the audit resource integration model, speed up the construction of audit systems and standards, and explore audit strategies.

First, the scope of government audits should be clarified. We should establish the comprehensive audit coverage work mechanism from five levels: key audit objects, audit subject and object, audit power supervision, big data audit, and overall deterrence of audit [18]. Second, it is necessary to innovate audit work methods. Innovate the realization path of the comprehensive audit coverage from six aspects: updating audit concepts, creating an audit atmosphere, understanding audit requirements, integrating audit resources, innovating audit methods, and strengthening audit rectification [19]. Third, it should integrate actual audit resources. The audit plan should be formulated scientifically, and resources, rights and responsibilities should be strictly checked. It is also necessary to grasp the key points and timing of the audit as much as possible, and formulate a feasible path to achieve the comprehensive audit coverage [20].

3.3.3 To innovative the specific methods of the comprehensive audit coverage

Based on the specific areas of national auditing, scholars have proposed a series of specific implementation strategies and implementation methods for the

comprehensive audit coverage, for example: In the field of financial fund auditing, the conflicts between insufficient resources and tasks should be dealt with, the key points of the audit and the blind areas of the audit, and the relationship between the flow of funds and the stock should be dealt with [21]. In the field of community auditing, a community audit model of "government auditing as the leading role, internal auditing as the basis, and social auditing as the supplement" should be formed, which is a response to the implementation of the policy of the comprehensive audit coverage [22]. In the field of budget execution auditing, an evaluation index system should be constructed consisting of four dimensions: format accuracy, compliance with standards, completeness of accounting and consistency of correlation [23]. In terms of audit methods, we should start from two aspects: breaking through organizational boundaries and sharing resources, and use audit sampling methods to reasonably control audit risks, so as to achieve the comprehensive audit coverage [24].

3.3.4 Big data technology facilitates the comprehensive audit coverage

The comprehensive audit coverage is facing the problem of increasing audit tasks, but traditional auditing methods and means cannot achieve the problems of obtaining, storing and processing massive amounts of audited data. And through big data analysis, the contradiction problem of the mismatch between audit requirements and audit resources can be solved. Innovative scholars strongly promote the combination of emerging big data technology with traditional auditing, thereby promoting the implementation of the comprehensive audit coverage. They believe that the innovation of audit technology methods driven by the comprehensive audit coverage should be targeted, systematic and organizational as the core, and explore the realization path based on big data technology [25]. And the technical foundation of the comprehensive audit coverage in the context of big data mainly includes the innovative use of Hadoop, cloud computing-related technologies, cross-industry data association and clustering and other big data mining technologies, etc.

4 Conclusion and prospect

For the research of the comprehensive audit coverage, the main focus is on the use of normative document research methods, and the research focus is mostly on the concept, connotation extension and realization path of the comprehensive audit coverage. Existing research on the significance of the comprehensive audit coverage has been relatively in-depth: The comprehensive audit coverage extends horizontally to public funds, state-owned assets, state-owned resources and the economic duty of leading cadres, which provides an overall scope for future research. Its coverage extends vertically to units, departments and individuals, which provides a reference for future research. The policy efficiency and

effect requirements are deep, ordered, focused, and effective, which is of reference significance for the future construction of an evaluation system for the comprehensive audit coverage. On the path to achieve the comprehensive audit coverage, scholars have carried out specific measures in four major directions: improving the system of the comprehensive audit coverage, formulating an overall strategy for the comprehensive audit coverage, innovating specific methods for the comprehensive audit coverage, and boosting the comprehensive audit coverage through big data technology. However, the existing research lacks empirical considerations on the efficiency and effectiveness of the comprehensive audit coverage policy in recent years, and this should be the focus and research direction of future research.

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