

University Governance in the Legal Entrepreneurship of Intellectual Capital Around the Implementation of the SDGs

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Aim. The study's objective is to compare a theoretical model of university governance in the COVID-19 era. Since the literature consulted warns of the pandemic's impact on university governance, the factor structure was confirmed. Method. An exploratory, cross-sectional, and correlational study was carried out with a sample of 180 administrators, teachers, and students from a university in central Mexico selected for their participation in the social service system and professional practices in community health institutions. The instrument was evaluated using the Delphi technique in three phases: qualifying, comparative, and reiterative- reconsidered. The University Governance Scale was applied via Zoom session. The data were captured in Excel and processed in JASP. Reliability, validity, adjustment, and residual coefficients were estimated to contrast hypotheses. Results. The three-factor structure was corroborated: identity, reputation, and image. Although the first factor explained the highest percentage of variance, only 12 of 18 indicators correlated with its factors. Conclusions. The study's contribution lies in contrasting the university governance model in a scenario of exposure to COVID-19. Still, the study's limit lies in the non-generalization of the results to the university community.

1. Introduction

The history of university governance is extensive and varies across different cultures and educational systems over time (Koutoupis et al., 2021). The most significant milestones in the evolution of university governance are the following: Modern universities have their roots in the Middle Ages, with institutions such as the University of Bologna (founded in 1088) and the University of Paris (founded in 1150). In this period, universities emerged as autonomous institutions of learning, governed by professors and students, with a hierarchical structure and the participation of the Church.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the model of collegiate universities developed, in which institutions were divided into smaller colleges that awarded academic degrees and had a degree of autonomy. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Catholic Church dominated university governance (Martínez-Córdoba et al., 2021). Bishops and other ecclesiastical officials exerted significant influence over universities and their operations. Changes arose in university governance with the arrival of the Enlightenment in the 18th century. More excellent academic and scientific autonomy was advocated, and the absolute authority of the Church was questioned. Throughout the 19th century, many European universities became secularized and freed from ecclesiastical influence. National governments began to intervene more in the administration and financing of

universities. At the end of the 19th century, Germany introduced a modern university model characterized by greater specialization and the notion of an independent university faculty. This model influenced the development of universities around the world. In the 20th century, the university system expanded globally, with diverse governance approaches depending on countries and cultures. Some countries adopted more centralized and governmental models, while others leaned towards greater autonomy and participation of teachers and students in decision-making.

Recently, many universities have adopted more corporate governance structures, with boards of directors, presidents, and non-academic administrators taking a more significant role in decision-making (Gostin et al., 2020). In response to more corporate governance trends, some student and academic movements have advocated greater democratization in decision-making, promoting broader participation of faculty, students, and staff in university affairs. University governance continues to be a dynamic and evolving topic, adapting to changing social and educational needs and contexts (McGuirk et al., 2021). Each university institution's governance structure can vary depending on its history, traditions, and national educational systems. Governance and human capital formation are closely related since how a society or academic institution is organized and managed can significantly influence human capital development.

The term "human capital" refers to the skills, knowledge, experience, and competencies people possess that contribute to their productivity and ability to contribute to economic and social growth (Zhang, 2021). The formation of human capital is achieved through education, training, and people's personal and professional development. Conversely, governance refers to the structures, policies, processes, and practices through which decisions are made and authority is exercised in a society or institution. In the context of human capital formation, governance can influence in various ways:

Decisions about the educational system, investment in education, and the quality of training programs directly impact human capital development (Levy, 2021). Effective governance can ensure that coherent and well-focused educational policies are implemented.

Governance can ensure everyone has equal opportunities to access quality education, allowing human capital to be developed more equitably and effectively (Dutta & Fischer, 2021). Governance also plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education. Establishing educational standards, constantly evaluating and improving curricula, and training teachers are fundamental to developing highly qualified human capital.

Appropriate governance can encourage investment in research and development, resulting in scientific and technological advances that contribute to human capital development in innovative and cutting-edge areas (Williams, 2020). Well-structured governance can ensure that human capital formation is aligned with the needs of the labor market and the economy, focusing on developing skills and competencies relevant to the current and future context.

Inclusive governance, which includes the participation of academics, human resources experts, companies, and other relevant actors, can contribute to a more accurate formation of human capital adapted to the demands of the work environment (Larionova & Kirton, 2020). Effective governance committed to forming human capital can generate benefits at the individual social and economic levels. Investing in people's education and personal and professional development promotes sustainable growth and a more just and prosperous society.

The theory of university governance refers to the set of principles, models, and approaches that describe and explain how decisions are made and authority is exercised in university institutions (Ortega & Orsini, 2020). This theory addresses the power structure, different actors' roles, and a university's decision-making mechanisms. The theory of university governance highlights the importance of the autonomy of academic institutions. This implies that universities must be free to make educational and administrative decisions without undue political interference or excessive restrictions from the government or other external entities.

University governance involves the participation of various actors in decision-making (Ladi & Tsarouhas, 2020). These actors may include academic staff (teachers, researchers), administrative staff, students, and, in some cases, government representatives or external members on the board of directors. Universities usually have governing bodies that make crucial decisions. These bodies may vary by institution and country but commonly include a board of directors or governing council, an academic board, and a university president or president. University governance theory emphasizes the importance of transparency in decision-making and accountability to stakeholders, including students, staff, and society.

University governance also considers the university's interaction with its environment, including relationships with government, industry, community, and other external partners (Hsu & Liao, 2022). Given the diversity of interests and perspectives within a university, university governance theory also examines how conflicts are managed and agreements are reached between the actors involved.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted university governance, as academic institutions have been forced to face unprecedented challenges to ensure the continuity of education and the safety of their community (Elmarzouky et al., 2021). The rapid spread of the virus and the need to take urgent measures to protect the university community and adjust academic and administrative operations required universities to make agile and adaptive decisions. Governance structures had to respond quickly to new circumstances and take measures to mitigate risks and ensure continuity of learning.

Universities had to move to online teaching to prevent the spread of the virus (Collins et al., 2022). This involved an accelerated transition to online learning platforms and technologies, requiring rapid decisions on teacher training, access to technological resources, and adaptation of curricula. University governance had to implement measures to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. This included the adoption of hygiene protocols, social distancing, and possibly implementing testing and contact tracing.

Students faced emotional and academic challenges due to the pandemic (Notteboom & Haralambides, 2020). University governance had to make decisions to provide additional support and resources to students, such as online counseling services and flexible options for completing their studies. COVID-19 created economic challenges for many universities due to declining enrollment, budget cuts, and the impact on research and commercial activities. Governance had to make difficult decisions about the institution's budget, investment, and financial sustainability.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of scientific research and collaboration between universities and other institutions (Kano & Hoon Oh, 2020). University governance had to facilitate the cooperation between academics and scientists to address COVID-19-related challenges and contribute to developing solutions. In times of uncertainty, transparent and effective communication was vital to maintaining the university community's and external stakeholders' trust. University governance had to clearly and consistently communicate the decisions, measures implemented, and updates on the situation.

Studies on university governance in the COVID-19 era consist of the establishment of a health agenda and the impact of anti-COVID-19 policies without considering the trust between the authorities and the university community regarding the pandemic and its effects on teaching-learning (Dodds et al., 2020). Once the pandemic stopped and intensified, biomedical studies demonstrated the imminent risk in closed spaces. Consequently, risk communication became the focus of the discussion. In this way, reviewing studies on the diffusion of innovations, the usefulness of technology, and the perception of risks is essential to establishing intellectual capital formation in university governance during the pandemic.

The study's objective is to establish the learning network of university governance in the COVID-19 era with respect to intellectual capital formation. If governance is a regulatory system of identities, reputations, and images, then the pandemic can be expected to increase the stigma towards authorities regarding the management of the health crisis and its effects in the classroom.

Are there significant differences between the theoretical structure of university governance versus student evaluations regarding the image, reputation, and identity of anti-COVID-19 policies?

Hypothesis. If the impact of COVID-19 on the reputation, image, and identity of the parties involved is considered, there will be significant differences between the theoretical structure of governance and empirical observations. Significant differences will exist between the theoretical structure of university governance and the evaluations of students trained in distance, asynchronous, virtual, and immersive systems. There will be significant differences between theoretical governance regarding the usefulness, innovation, or risk of students using technology, devices, and public networks.

2. Method

Design. A cross-sectional, exploratory and correlational study was carried out in a sample of 40 administrative staff ($M = 45.45$ $SD = 12.34$ age and $M = 34'672.00$ $SD = 12'856.00$ monthly income), 40 teachers ($M = 52.78$ $SD = 18.89$ age and $M = 27'893.00$ $DE = 12'643.00$ monthly income), 100 students ($M = 21.3$ $SD = 3.4$ age and

M = 5,782,00 DE = 435.00 monthly income).

Instrument. Carreon's Perceived University Governance Scale (2020) was used. It includes assertions regarding the identity, reputation, and image of anti-COVID-19 policies (Khatib & Nour, 2021). Each statement is responded to with one of five options ranging from 0 = "not at all agree" to 5 = "somewhat agree." The reported reliability of the instrument ranges between 0.789 and 0.864. However, in the study, the general scale reached alpha and omega values of 0.756 and 0.764, respectively, and values between 0.768 and 0.794 for the subscales. Validity obtained factor weights between 0.348 and 0.523.

Procedure. Respondents were contacted through institutional email (Gao & Yu, 2020). They were sent a letter explaining the study's objectives and those responsible for carrying it out and a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity not to affect their academic status. The homogenization of the concepts was established in focus groups of 10 students. The activating questions were: What instrumental policies to combat the pandemic? Are identity, reputation, and image terms that describe your opinion on anti-COVID-19 policies? Next, the Delphi technique was used to evaluate the scale. In the first phase, the judges scored the items. In the second, they compared their grades with averages. In the third, they reiterated or modified their initial qualification. The scale was applied in a Zoom session organized in groups of 20 respondents.

Analysis. The data were captured in Excel and analyzed in JASP version 16. Reliability, adequacy, sphericity, validity, fit, and residual coefficients were estimated. Values close to unity were interpreted as evidence of non-rejection of the hypotheses except for the residual, which should have tended to zero for the hypothesis test.

3. Results

The model specification delimits the relationships between the variables and indicators. In this sense, the comparison of the three-variable theoretical model with the empirical model is specified with the eigenvalues. Adequacy: KMO = 0.762; Sphericity [$\chi^2 = 23.24$ (24df) $p < 0.01$]. The eigenvalues suggest the inclusion of three variables, but the empirical test of the model, the fit, and residual values indicate that the 18 indicators should be reduced to 12 and the three variables reduced to three for identity, four for reputation, and four for image.

The adjustment and residual parameters [$\chi^2 = 829.868$ (102 df) $p < 0.001$; TLI = .412; BIC = 360,141; RMSEA = 0.026] suggest the non-rejection of the hypothesis regarding the significant differences between the theoretical and empirical model.

4. Discussion

This work corroborates the theoretical structure of university governance reported in the literature consulted. The findings show that the structure of university governance includes identity, which accounts for 34% of the variance explained, reputation, which accounts for 10% of the total variance, and image, which accounts for 3% of the variance explained. The adjustment and residual parameters indicate the non-rejection of the three hypotheses related to the significant differences between the theoretical structure and the empirical model. Furthermore, with its three-variable structure, university governance can be explained from twelve indicators. Such findings are relevant to the state of the art, as the governance structure still needs to be modified in the COVID-19 era.

Studies on university governance emphasize regulating anti-COVID-19 policies based on the epidemiological traffic light (Janssen & Van der Voort, 2020). In this way, the red color defined the distance teaching and learning policies, the use of anti-COVID-19 devices, and the management of virtual procedures. However, the green traffic light deregulated the anti-pandemic measures, which created a dilemma that limited university governance (Gelter & Puaschunder, 2020). The pandemic limited the progress towards a knowledge management system with the participation, representation, and decision of the parties involved (Rajan et al., 2020). Stigma emerged towards university authorities to reduce university governance to a minimum preventive expression of COVID-19.

University governance is the guiding axis of the health agenda, and it involves the establishment of an identity, reputation, and corporate image (Schmidt, 2020). In other words, university extension with public and private actors suggests a biosafety system that generates trust between the parties, although studies indicate institutional decoupling as a limit to governance. The present work found that the most significant amount of explained variance lies in the identity factor that measures internal trust. Meanwhile, the structure of university governance

includes reputation and image, but the explained variance needs to be higher than identity. This means university governance was reduced to identity or internal trust between authorities, teachers, and students in a health crisis.

5. Conclusion

The contrast of three hypotheses related to the differences between the theoretical structure of university governance and an empirical model suggests that the non-rejection of identity, reputation, and image is an explanatory variable of the effects of COVID-19 on the relations of trust between the parties involved. Administrators, teachers, and students were exposed to stigmas towards authorities regarding managing health crises and risk communication.

A particular limitation of the study lies in the non-generalization of the results to the university population under study. Furthermore, the inclusion of stigma in the theoretical and empirical model is recommended to be able to test the leading hypothesis. The results demonstrate that the practice of university governance was reduced to an identity factor, and therefore, its implementation in university communication of the health crisis is recommended.

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