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## Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences

journal homepage: [www.journals.elsevier.com/pacific-science-review-b-humanities-and-social-sciences/](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/pacific-science-review-b-humanities-and-social-sciences/)



# Quality guidelines for good governance in higher education across the globe



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### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Available online 5 February 2016

Jel classification code:  
C23  
I23

Keywords:  
Higher education  
Good governance  
Internationalization of universities  
Panel fixed effect  
World's region

### ABSTRACT

Globally, the rules and regulations of higher education are for the betterment of economies and social uplift. The objective of this study is to develop a link between governance indicators and educational outcomes, particularly in relation to the internationalization of our universities. The current study proposes a framework for the internationalization of universities using three broad categories of governance indicators, i.e., political governance, economic governance and an institutional dimension of governance; these three categories are accompanied by six educational factors: higher education expenditures, higher education enrolment, higher education expenditures per student, literacy rate, research & development expenditures and economic growth during the period of 1996–2012. The panel fixed effect model is employed for estimating the possible links between governance indicators and educational outcomes. The results reveal that governance indicators act as a strong contributor for increasing educational effects, which further assist in formulating the policies towards the internationalization of universities. It is concluded that greater Voice and Accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption enhance educational outcomes, which ultimately benefit the major regions of the world that have internationalized their universities.

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## 1. Introduction

Good governance is a major factor in improving the quality of higher education. To bring about a balance between autonomy and accountability, the role of quality in education has stepped to the foreground, increasing its presence in recent times (Hénard and Mitterle, 2009). The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI, 2012) cover three groups of governance indicators, which include six different aspects of governance:

- i. Political Governance:
  - a) Voice and Accountability and b) Political Stability & Absence of Violence.

Voice and accountability include the assumptions that citizens are able to have a say in making their government, to have freedom

of expression, to have freedom of association and to have a free open media. Stable political government and absence of violence/terrorism measures the perceptions that a government might be destabilized or dethroned illegally by violent means, including politically motivated violence and terrorism (WGI, 2012).

- ii. Economic Governance:
  - a) Government Effectiveness and b) Regulatory Quality

Government effectiveness includes the sense of the quality of public and civil services, as well as the extent to which they are insulated from political interference. It also consists of the government's ability for developing quality policies, their capacity to implement them and how much an individual government values such policies. Regulatory quality takes into account the government's capability to develop and execute good policies and rules that allow and promote private sector development (WGI, 2012).

- iii. Institutional Dimensions of Governance:
  - a) Rule of Law (ROL) and b) Control of Corruption (CoC)

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Peer review under responsibility of Far Eastern Federal University, Kangnam University, Dalian University of Technology, Kokushikan University.

ROL measures the confidence of citizens that an agent will follow the norms and rules of society, particularly ones related to contract enforcement, property rights, the police, the courts and the possibility of crime and violence. By contrast, the CoC evaluates the interference of a country's bureaucracy— i.e., red-tapism, which has been defined as corrupt office bearers and other parties interfering with the implementation of policy (WGI, 2012). Higher educational bodies have focused on strategies and setting priorities instead of day-to-day work activities. In a handful of countries, different ad-hoc bodies have been established to check the quality of teaching and research within institutions of higher learning (OECD, 2003). In Europe, high acclaim is given to long-term planning and strategies development for higher education. One policy cannot be made for different countries, but some objectives are common to all.

These include:

- More public funding for the higher educational system;
- Granting more autonomy to institutions regarding financial matters;
- Creating direct links between results and the public funding allocated;
- Diversifying funding sources to prove education is not only a public good but a positive step towards growth and social solidarity, i.e., the creation of partnerships with research institutes, businesses and regional authorities (EUROPA, 2008).

The future plans for an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community 2009–2015 demands institutions of higher learning establish an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) through which awareness, mutual understanding and respect for the different cultures, languages and religions can be nurtured (ASEAN 2009). The ASCC also envisions economic integration as an ultimate goal; that is, it aims to create a single market and production base to make ASEAN countries more dynamic and competitive (ADB, 2012).

Higher education is very important for sustaining growth in low and middle income East Asia. Higher education increases production and competitiveness in struggling East Asian countries by:

- Providing high quality skills to the labour market, i.e., technical, behavioural and thinking skills.
- Bestowing research for innovation and growth.

The number of people associated with higher education has increased greatly in the last thirty years; this is because societies have recognized the need to be more competitive, learn precise skillsets and utilize research. For all this, higher education must work as a well-connected system of institutes, firms, research bodies and educational establishments (inclusive of all levels of education) (World Bank, 2012a). Enders (2004) found that the “globalization” concept questions the theory of social dynamics where less attention has been given, which is to the prerequisites of theory building and empirical evidence. According to Marginson and Rhoades:

Globalization processes in higher education are under-studied and under-theorized. Although there is comparative research, the dominant analytical framework for higher education scholars concentrates attention on governmental policies of the nation-state and on national systems of higher education (2002, p. 2814).

Mok (2008) studied the transnational educational system developed by Singapore to diversify their institutions of higher education. The governments in East Asia give more importance to

setting up regulations, social laws and welfare, and they are considered a complement to the markets. Kretek et al. (2013) studied the possible prototypes of behaviour of key decision makers at the central university level, i.e., the roles of governing bodies, the set of factors that create hurdles for governance, the diversification of roles played by new board members and the analysis of the governing body itself. These studies show that board members with varying roles develop conflicts of interest; therefore, role ambiguity ensues. Magalhaes et al. (2013) concentrate on the EU's policies and their interaction on the national higher education sectors in the countries involved in the TRUE project (England, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland), making the case for European governance over the constituent bodies' educational systems. The study reveals that the efforts of the European governments and their practices are helping their educational systems to develop. Middlehurst (2013) studied the internal changes of educational institutions in the UK during the last ten years, describing the similarity and differences in the policy and political conditions over time.

Enders et al. (2013) examined the area of university performance through the study of organizational autonomy and the control of higher education reform. The study was on the principal-agent model as a normative theory for policy reform; they also examined institutions' approaches to and designs of public policy and reforms. Cho and Palmer (2013) studied stakeholders' perceptions South Korea's higher education internationalization policy. According to the findings, the stakeholders have positive perceptions of the Korean universities' internationalization policy instituted by the government, and stakeholders believe it has increased the competitiveness of the country in a quantitative manner. Additionally, stakeholders believe the government should take into account the quality and identity of higher education in Korea. Berger et al. (2013) investigated educational management models used in postsecondary institutions in the five provinces of China. These findings helped to reverse the existing imbalances of information necessary for research on higher education. Furthermore, these results are of great importance for the ongoing rapid expansion and development of higher education around the globe. Jons and Hoyler (2013) studied two major international ranking schemes that have had a tremendous public impact regarding the neoliberalization of higher education. The ranking schemes have brought a shift in the geopolitics and geo-economics of higher education to the international level for particular fields of study. Abramo et al. (2013) showed an empirical analysis of the recruitment system of associate professors in the Italian university system. The study further highlighted the research output of a university and its potential relationship with the indexes of concentration, which compare the productivity researchers across all Italian universities active in the hard sciences. The bibliometric method was used to study research performance, using publications indexed on the Web of Science for the period between 2004 and 2008. The results showed the impact of top performers was more than that of non-productive researchers.

Our study confirms the strong connection between governance indicators and higher educational reforms in the developed and developing world. In the subsequent section, an empirical illustration has been made on the relationship between educational and governance indicators in the world's seven largest regions by using the panel fixed regression method. The study is divided into the following sections: Section 1, the introduction (see above); Section 2, the data source and methodological framework; Section 3, results; and finally, Section 4, our conclusion.

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