Original Paper

Using the (University Governance Screening Modified Card) to Evaluating the Level of Governance in Iraqi Universities: A Field Study at the Basra University

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Abstract

Education in general and university education in particular play a pivotal role in educational field. Universities play a major role in societies in general, because they participate directly to generation of new knowledge, and because they educate and shape the young generation to be leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, and professionals in all fields of knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful when adopting the university governance system in Iraqi universities, in a way that helps to use all the principles and requirements of university governance in the correct way when implementing. The (university governance screening card) is the most suitable for assessing the reality of university governance, and for revealing the details required by the implementation process the purpose of the research paper is to explore the actual reality of the level of governance implementation in the Iraqi University in comparison with the five dimensions of the university governance screening modified card. The University of Basra was chosen as a field of study. The community was identified with highly qualified and experienced teachers. For data collection purposes, a checklist consisting of a three-point scale was used. To measure the level of opinions of the sample members on each clause or dimension, the evaluation revealed that Basra University needed many procedures' to build an integrated governance system.

Keywords

University governance, university screen card, university of Basra, evaluating governance

1. Introduction

Most countries in the Arab region and the Middle East seek to invest in new political changes to develop their economic and social performance, by adopting effective integration between the requirements of economic development and the value system of society. Education in general and university education in particular play a pivotal role in this field. Because it provides the appropriate competencies for new jobs on the one hand, and dominates professional values in the social value system on the other hand, pushing towards a new type of economy (the knowledge-based economy). Universities play a major role in societies in general, because they participate directly in the generation of new knowledge, and because they educate and shape the young generation to be leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, and professionals in all fields of knowledge, in today's world. Knowledge generation has replaced capital assets as an essential component of economic growth; this is the basic principle of what is known as a knowledge-based economy. A well-functioning higher education system is essential in any country in the world In order for the country to be able to keep pace with the competition requirements of the present stage. This is even more important for developing countries. A well-performing university is a prerequisite for participating in the process of knowledge generation, and knowledge exchange with leading institutions from developed and industrialized countries. Moreover, well-performing universities are instrumental in solving the problems of low-and middle-income countries. Like providing quality healthcare and education, developing agriculture to achieve maximum results, and protecting the environment, universities need creativity to provide the kind of education that will enable their graduates to compete and contribute to the economic and social growth of their countries. Creative institutions must have governance systems that encourage all constituent groups to have a way in improving the institution and advancing its mission. University governance is one of the basic elements that can lead to improvement in the targeted outcomes. The important characteristics that successful universities focus on are: leadership, government policy, funding, ability to consistently focus on a clear set of organizational goals and policies, developing a strong academic culture, and improving the quality of academic staff performance. University governance is an important driver of change. And how the institutions managing themselves, It is considered one of the most decisive factors in achieving its goals, Good governance places great emphasis on time and judgment. This requires from boards of directors to recognize when the governance model is not working, What are the reasons, and how to fix it, the main role played by the university administration in improving the quality of education, the governance screen card that include Lessons learned from the use of some of these tools, and provides a mechanism for monitoring changes introduced in governance practices and structures, In order to evaluate the performance of governance in Iraqi universities, (governance screen card) was chosen, for the purposes of evaluation, Because it is one of the tools used globally in the field of university governance assessment, Some procedural modifications were made to the original version, in order to be compatible with the environment of Iraqi universities. The research is structured on the basis of an introduction and (three parts), the first is

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methodology, the second is the theoretical framework, the third is result.

2. Methodology

Problem statement: Iraqi universities aspire to pursue methods and technologies that contribute to improving their overall performance and enhancing their effectiveness, such as quality assurance systems, and university governance system. However, the main problem lies on the limited awareness of most university leaders to ward these technologies on the one hand, and the lack of clarity in the vision about the correct beginnings of implementing these technologies, especially good university governance on the other hand, However, more studies indicate that using (university governance screening card) to evaluate the performance of university governance helps more in exploring the correct beginnings to Iraqi universities, the problem and ways to address it can be described by the following questions:

-       To what extent can it be built (university governance screening card) that is compatible with the nature and environment of Iraqi universities?

-       To what extent can university governance screening card be implemented to evaluate the performance of good governance in Iraqi universities?

-       To what extent can implementation of university governance screening card contribute to improving the overall performance of Iraqi universities?

1.2 Study Design and Method

The research relied in its study on the case study approach. it's used analysis and synthesis based on logical evidence in the theoretical aspect of the research. And quantitative analysis in the field side of it, For the purposes of organizing the methodology, the research adopted a main question that (to what extent can it be used governance screen card to evaluate the performance of governance in Iraqi universities?), The research chose the University of Basra as a field of study, because it is one of the main Iraqi universities, and it aspires to adopt a comprehensive evaluation system for its performance. An intentional sample of the teaching community at the University of Basra, with expertise and competence in the field of university governance, was selected. Prepared for the purposes of data collection a checklist, which covers the five dimensions of the university governance, also used some appropriate statistical methods for the purposes of quantitative analysis.

2. The theoretical Framework

2.1 University Governance: Presentation and Analysis

The goal of legislation in non-profit organizations, particularly universities, is to increase efficiency and transparency in the sector, reduce individual organizational costs, and improve public confidence. This makes good governance important for the effective operation of the university. Because it guarantees the success of universities in achieving their missions, providing economic benefits and improving the quality of life for society (Universities Scotland, 2011), Universities take the issue of

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governance seriously. In order to reach the good management of universities. Therefore, the review of all university activities represents an opportunity to raise awareness of current practices. And consider whether further measures should be taken to ensure the continued confidence of stakeholders in universities, the purpose of university governance is to ensure the effective management of the university, which secures the achievement of long-term strategic goals, which is consistent with the missions and objectives of the university. This includes the university's broader social contributions to the sector through teaching, research, and business engagement, As well as the benefits provided by the sector in the areas of economic growth, social welfare, cultural values, As a result of pursuing the rapid development of higher education at the global level, Deep changes are necessary at the level of Iraqi higher education, in the areas of (requirements for improving the quality of higher education at the national level, and reviews of institutional governance structures). In spite of the concepts and practices of governance are still new in the field of Iraqi higher education institutions, This requires a search for the foundations and principles that are compatible with the nature of building governance in Iraqi universities, Therefore, the principles of governance in European universities were chosen to be a basis for developing the principles of governance in Iraqi universities. It is described as follows: (Eurydice, 2008).

-      Strategic priorities on funding.
-      Increase in public funding.
-      More institutional autonomy in managing financial resources.
-      Establishing direct links between results and funding.
-      Promoting the diversification of funding.
-      Opening connections with society and creating partnerships.
     Strategic priorities on academic staff.
-      Gender balance.
-      Age balance.
-      More institutional autonomy for managing academic staff.
-      Introduction of performance criteria.

Summaries from the foregoing, The Iraqi universities need to develop university governance on solid and strong foundations, The general principles of European universities, which are explained above, were chosen as general directions that help reveal flexible and applicable principles for building good governance Universities. And it constitutes an effective tool for evaluating its performance, taking into account the nature of the work of these universities, and the environments they deal with.

Extracting from the points of view presented by (J et al., 2012) (Marwan H. Al-Dehadar, Karim B. K, & Majid. M), (Shibli & Mohsen, 2020), the principles of university governance have been summarized as follows: -

- Strategic direction (vision, mission, and goals): the extent to which Iraqi universities are able to define their future vision, and to link them through mission and goals with implementation requirements, i.e.

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(building a realistic vision).

- Response: organizing the governance structure to achieve a complete and balanced response to the goals of stakeholders (internal and external), By complying with the regulations, laws, policies and procedures under which universities operate.

- Autonomy: The University has complete freedom to make strategic decisions related to its future directions and, the requirements of its operational operations, which means the ability of decision-makers at all levels to make the right decisions in the areas for which they are responsible.

- Participation: means that everyone, from his position and his area of responsibility, contribute to the strategic or operational decisions related to the university's business. Which is supposed to be its role is active in the success of the university. Participation should be an important means in unifying opinions and forming a common vision for all.

- Accountability: Transparency, disclosure, and justice form the basis for the accountability system in universities. In which accountability is one of the universities strategic or operational decisions, in other words, everyone is accountable, in a manner that serves the higher interests of the university and stakeholders.

2.2 University Governance Screen Card: Concept and Content

University academic governance is a major component of the contemporary focus on reform trends in higher education around the world (Clark, 1983) established one of the first models of university governance that deals with how universities and the higher education system define and implement their goals. Manage its institutions and monitor its achievements. A wide range of governance models have been developed; Most of them depend on a balance between three main forces: the state, market forces, and academic excellence based on the ability to exercise academic freedom. When implementing academic governance, academic staff has a greater representation, a greater voice in defining the mission, and managing the university. The amalgam model expresses the integration between academic governance, corporate governance, management governance, and representative governance. One of the advantages of the (amalgam model) is the integration of the positions of strength for each model to achieve the best fit with the needs of the institution at a specific point in time, or to meet specific goals, the modern self-governance assessment card issued by the European Universities Association (EUA, 2009, 2011), which provides a tool for measuring the general frameworks of higher education in relation to autonomy, It aims to establish a correlation relationship between autonomy and performance. The University Governance Screening Card focused on universities and higher education institutions. As well as identifying the governance models that are followed by the types of institutions in different countries of the world, in spite of the higher education system in its comprehensive capacity is good content to understand governance, However, the (institution-oriented) approach used in the (Governance Scorecard at the University) is based on multiple considerations, the most important of which are: -

- Universities and higher education institutions are complex organizations. It accomplishes many and

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varied tasks, ranging from managing assets and people, to managing academic and research output, student affairs, interactions with society, and government jobs. Looking at the governance of universities, defining their different patterns, and their suitability for the purpose, is a critical step towards knowing how higher education institutions can improve their performance.

- as a measurement tool (the card) is not only intended to evaluate performance, But it is a catalyst for encouraging change and reform and ultimately directing it towards helping universities improve their performance, and adopting measures to help them meet the needs of stakeholders in a better way.

The University Governance Screening Card, in its original form, developed by the World Bank, consists of five main dimensions, each of which includes a set of indicators that are summarized in the following: -

- The first dimension: (content, mission, goals): aims to link the mission and goals through the content that describes the system that shows the interaction between the university institution and the state, In order to achieve the compatibility between the mission and objectives, or between (the theoretical framework and the operational requirements of the vision), It includes (three indicators) which are (the university's mission at the country level, the university's goals, and the legal framework)

- The second dimension (management orientation): aims to determine the extent, to which the university follows, based on management, with results that are in line with governance practices. It is based on (strong leadership and strategic planning). It includes (four indicators) which are (strategy, administrative structures, management tools to motivate and monitor employees, and job structuring).

- The third dimension (autonomy): aims to move towards increasing university autonomy and academic freedom. Which pushes the university towards complete autonomy and self-reliance, and makes it more capable of responding to its social and economic environment. It includes (three indicators). They are (academic autonomy, functional autonomy, and financial autonomy.

- The fourth dimension (Accountability): It aims to reveal the extent to which the university is subject to social and financial accountability by stakeholders and society. It includes (three indicators) which are (the quality of education and academic integrity, social responsibility, and financial integrity).

- The fifth dimension (participation): aims to reveal the extent to which different stakeholders can participate in the decision-making process). It includes (four indicators) which are (participation in councils and bodies, type of participation, participation in academic activities, student participation).

- As well as self-perception questions that include (questions) about (content, mission and goals, administrative orientation, autonomy, accountability, participation).

The summary: the University Governance Screening Card focused on universities Higher education institutions. As well as identifying the governance models that are followed by the types of institutions in different countries of the world, It is used as a tool for evaluating the overall performance of universities.

2.3 Analysising and Modifying University Governance Screen Card

University governance is a multidimensional issue, based on what the literature has presented on the guidelines and rules of good practice reviewed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European University Association, the Directory of Members of Higher Education Management Bodies in the United Kingdom (CUC, 2006), and universities of Australian, This comparative measurement tool includes five dimensions that together form the whole picture of governance in universities, which are: (comprehensive content, mission and goals, management orientation, autonomy, accountability, participation), each of these dimensions has been highlighted on the international trends related to the status of these institutions, When using these trends in building indicators and a checklist, the five dimensions of university governance will be identified. Then the weighing system (weighting) collects these indicators or dimensions, and turns the checklist into a point's tool for recording the results for each university institution. The score for each dimension is interpreted as an indicator of the university institution against each of the trends in the practice of governance in the university, and the same issue for the checklist questions, In addition, the governance Screening Card) includes a (self-perception tool) to assess the extent to which universities are aware of the governance model and the practices they follow. This was based on one question for each dimension that was assessed by respondents, on a scale of 1 to 5, Thus, every university has a self-perception report on the five dimensions of governance, The scores recorded are based on the answers provided to the questionnaire (recorded by an independent observer trained to conduct the interview and record the questions), Appropriate governance arrangements should be balanced rather than loud and distorted. The implementation of governance and measuring its performance in universities in general, including Iraqi universities, is affected by the nature of the university organizational environment and the prevailing university culture. This means the necessity of making some procedural adjustments that do not prejudice the intrinsic structure of the card on the one hand, and facilitates the university's ability to use the card to evaluate the performance of university governance On the other hand, The amendment procedures have been summarized as follows:-

- Replacing some of the terms used in the card with other similar terms such as (the main clause, and the sub- clause) because they fit with the perception of the Iraqi university community.

- Linguistically reformulating some of the items and questions of the card to be more clear to the respondents in Iraqi universities.

- Using the triangular scale (not documented and not applied, relatively documented and not applied, documented and applied), instead of the five-point scale used on the card.

Use the percentage of response rate to estimate the weights for each question, or clause. Related to the level of governance performance in universities.

3. Result

3.1 Discussion

University governance is a multidimensional issue, based on what the literature has presented on the guidelines and rules of good practice, This comparative measurement tool includes five dimensions that together form the whole picture of governance in universities, which are: (comprehensive content, mission and goals, management orientation, autonomy, accountability, participation), each of these dimensions has been highlighted on the international trends related to the status of these institutions, The use of (governance screen card) to evaluate the performance of governance in universities may differ from one university to another, due to the environment and culture of each university, and the extent to which it practices the principles of governance, Therefore, it has become necessary to modify the procedural aspects, to match the use of the card with the nature of the environment of Iraqi universities, and the use of terms and standards that are appropriate to that environment, as they shown in the tables of the field side of the study, The results of the evaluation by using the card showed the following: -

- The actual link between the university's mission and goals was not achieved through the content that describes the interaction between the university and the state. Because the vision and mission are often set in Iraqi universities including the University of Basra, through a model prepared by the Ministry of Higher Education, or the diligence of the university itself in setting a list (vision, mission and goals), which in all cases does not reflect the reality (vision, mission and goals), described in the first dimension. From the card.

- The management orientation is little aligned with the practices of university governance. Because the construction of the strategic plan of the University of Basra does not take place through the participation of actors in defining the strategic goals, and the mechanisms used to monitor the achievement, and it is at best working according to a model of a strategic plan, which was prepared in advance by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education, which makes the contents of administrative orientation less realistic.

- The university's autonomy is limited, and it needs more autonomy to be able to respond to the requirements and expectations of its. Although the University of Basra, like other Iraqi universities, has a degree of autonomy in the conduct of its daily (operational) business, it does not have sufficient independence in making most of its strategic decisions (such as updating programs or introducing new programs, admission policies and determining the number of accepted people, freedom of dealing With the university's own funds from inside or outside, the participation of faculty members in the decision-making process),

- Weakness of the university's submission for social and financial accountability by stakeholders. The University of Basra is rarely subject to social and financial accountability by stakeholders, but accountability (if any) is carried out by the Ministry of Higher Education, for example (the responsibility of the university exclusively for the implementation of the quality assurance system,

although implementation is weak at the University of Basra, units are rarely observed Officially competent to monitor the implementation of the quality assurance system, we rarely observe serious procedures for evaluating students after graduation, and the university rarely involves external stakeholders in evaluating its overall performance.

-       The participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is limited. The participation of stakeholders (students, academic bodies, alumni, industry representatives) in Basra University is generally weak, for example that most of the above did not participate (in the strategic activities of the university, such as setting goals, budget allocations, academic programs and the like).

-       The level of governance application at the University of Basra is (50**%**). Because the outcome of the evaluation revealed the weakness of the process of implementing university governance at the University of Basra, and this was confirmed from the standard evaluation level of university governance (100%), which was revealed by the dimensions of (university governance screen card).

-       The level of self-evaluation of the level of implementation of the card, from the point of view of the individual sample, is weak **.**This Corresponds with the final results of the comprehensive evaluation of the dimensions of governance that stated in (university governance screen card).

Table 1. Summary of the Results of the Dimensions of University Governance

Demission Total rate		comment
Total rate Demission 1	56% Actual = 5**%**	Result: The actual link between the university's mission and goals was not achieved through the content that describes the interaction between the university and the state.
Total rate Demission 2	49% Actual = **22**	Result: The management orientation is little aligned with the practices of university governance
Total rate Demission 3	39% Actual = **%4**	Result: The university's autonomy is limited, and it needs more autonomy to be able to respond to the requirements and expectations of its social and economic environment.
Total rate Demission 4	53% Actual = **%13**	Result : weakness of the university's submission For social and financial accountability by stakeholders
Total rate Demission 5	41% Actual = **6**	Result: The participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is limited**.**
Total rate Self-perception	48	Result: The level of self-evaluation of the level of implementation of the card, from the point of view of the individual sample, is weak.

Total rate for dimensions = 50%

Result: The level of governance application at the University of Basra is (**%50**. (Weak), This means that the results of the self-assessment match the results of the sample analysis.
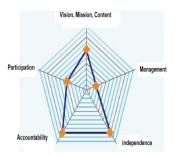

Figure 1. Hypothetical Results from the University Governance Scorecard / Adriana. J, 2012

3.2 Conclusions

- The implementation of university governance helps improve the overall performance of Iraqi universities, including the University of Basra, the subject of study.

-      Using a comprehensive survey of the reality of governance in Iraqi universities, including the University of Basra, before setting up any university governance system.

-      It is preferable to use the modified (governance screen card) to match the environment of the University of Basra, the subject of the study.

-      Take advantage of the actual results resulting from the evaluation of the governance system at the University of Basra, the subject of the study, to restructure the actual system at the university.

-      Limited work according to the university governance system at the University of Basra, the subject of the study.

-      The lack of academic and administrative bodies with full knowledge of the principles of university governance and methods of implementation.

-      The comprehensive strategic plan of the University of Basra, the subject of the study, is little in line with the principles and practice of university governance **.**

-      Rarely the university involved with stakeholders in its strategic decisions, or the university is held accountable by the main stakeholders

3.3 Recommendations

First recommendation: Spreading the concept of university governance, its principles**,** and culture among all members of the university community.

Implementation Mechanisms

-      Providing employees with comprehensive information about the university governance system through (brochures, publications and posters), and the available print and audio media.

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-        Conducting lectures, seminars and conferences that introduce members of the university community to the broader perspective of university governance, and arise their desire to work according to it.

-        Conducting field experiments to implement the university's governance system in some specialized departments or units, and benefiting from feedback information, when developing the comprehensive system of governance at the university.

Second recommendation: put in account requirements of using (governance screen card) to pre-evaluate of the performance of university governance.

Implementation Mechanisms

-        Extensive, clear and accurate knowledge of (university governance screen card) principles, objectives and implementation mechanisms.

-        Make possible procedural modifications for (university governance screen card) to suit the requirements of the university environment under study.

-        Develop appropriate standards and weights when using the card to evaluate the university governance system.

Third recommendation: Employing the results of the evaluation by (university governance screen card) to rebuild the governance system at the university.

Implementation Mechanisms

-        the strategic plans of the university include the new results resulting from evaluation (university governance screen card

-        Reconsidering the accountability and participation requirements, according to the results of the university governance card evaluation.

-        Concern for stakeholders, and the necessity of their participation in all strategic decisions of the university.

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