

# A METHODOLOGY PROPOSAL TO EVALUATE THE GOVERNANCE ACHIEVEMENT IN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT OF ECUADOR

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## Abstract

The public university in Ecuador has different alternatives to manage its goals accomplishment. The majority of them resort to an Annual Operate Plan, because of the budget control from the government. In fact, this administrative tool is useful; it controls not only the money resources but also goals achievement. Nonetheless, these evaluation criteria need a complement to generate added value, for all the stakeholders.

Although several theoretical models exist. They have not been tested in the Ecuadorian context. Therefore, this article describes a specific proposal methodology for two public universities in Ecuador. It considers dissimilar authors contributions for this field. Beginning with Đỗ Thị Ngọc Quyên (2014), who defined five dimensions to evaluate the governance in public universities. Whereas Evaristo Martín Fernández (2010) specified a methodology to evaluate the management of intelligent educational institutions. While Jose Joaquin Brunner (2010) identified four quadrants for governance in the Latin American context, the third quadrant considers a stakeholder participation. Finally, United Nations established the principles for good governance, which need to be present in the proposed methodology. As a result, it is a mixed model to evaluate governance in the public university management, its validity and applicability has the support of the Delphi method.

Keywords: Governance, mixed methodology, stakeholders, added value.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The University was created formally in 1088 [1], 11<sup>th</sup> century, in Bologna – Italy by the Catholic Church, at present it conserves an immense relevance and importance for society. In contrast, the first University in Latin America was founded in 1538, 16<sup>th</sup> century, its name was “*Santo Tomás de Aquino*”.

Whereas in Ecuador the union of three Universities created in 1836 [2] the first public University: “*San Fulgencio, San Gregorio Magno and Santo Tomás de Aquino*”, it was named “*Universidad Central del Ecuador*”. Since the Public University was born in Ecuador, it developed or adapted management tools striving for excellence. Nonetheless, in 1932 [3] a new concept called governance was introduced into university management. Unfortunately, governance research has only theoretical contributions in the Latin American context. Hence, this paper proposes a mixed methodology to evaluate the public university management under a good governance approach using a Delphi method. It has the following structure:

First, it is presented the origin and evolution of the university governance. Second, it is explained the importance of university governance in Latin America. Third, they are explained different models or typologies to evaluate governance in the university management. Fourth, it is described the methodology to validate the proposal. Fifth, it is presented the results and the mixed model. Finally, it is mentioned the respective conclusions.

## 2 UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

### 2.1 Origin and evolution of governance

The word governance comes from the old French *gouvernance*, *gouverne* and *gouvernement*, which are synonym of government [4]. *Gouvernance* appeared in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and represented society

management. Around the 18th century, *gouvernance* was used to refer to "chamber and police sciences". In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this term arrived to Great Britain and after to United States, there it took other interpretation due to the Modern State; the word *gouvernance* was related with a centralized and hierarchical state, while *gouvernement* is involved in public affairs (away from the government). After this reinterpretation, governance was associated with management rather than political power.

However, the word governance appeared for first time in the World Development Report of 1989 [5] by the World Bank. However, it was not until 1990 the term governance started to have its actual interpretation related with corporate governance [6].

After a review about the origin and evolution of governance, it is presented some definitions. Mayntz considers it: "is now often used to indicate a new way of governing, different from the model of hierarchical control, a more cooperative way in which state and non-state actors participate in mixed public-private networks" [7]. The Royal Spanish Academy defines it: "art or way of governing that aims to achieve a lasting economic, social and institutional development, promoting a healthy balance between the State, civil society and the market economy" [8]. Although, there are more definitions, most of the authors agree that governance is a new directive process, due to the pluralism in the decision making (less hierarchical). In addition, it is necessary to remark that governance is included in governability (it is necessary a capable government to achieve the goals).

The Latin American and Caribbean Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS, Spanish acronym) made other important contribution in 2017, defining the good governance: "it is understood as a parameter of evaluation of the governmental exercise. In other words, it is considered a precondition for the effective and efficient performance of institutions" [9]. In order to measure the good governance accomplishment, it is necessary to adhere its principles. For this paper they are considered the principles proposed by the United Nations [10]: Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus orientation, Equity, Effectiveness and efficiency, Accountability, and, Strategic vision.

## **2.2 What is university governance?**

The definition of governance had many modifications through the years. In despite of this, it was not always associated with public organizations until Berle and Means made their contributions in 1932 [3]. Consequently, researchers started to adapt this definition for the public University. One of them are Meléndez, Solís and Gomez, they defined it: "decision-making, distribution of authority, consensus building, conflict resolution and gaining legitimacy, through its basic purposes and mission" [11]. For Kezar y Eckel:

"University governance is defined as the concept of shared and participatory government at a macro-level where decision making must involve the community, business and industry to solve social problems, taking into account that institutions face a competitiveness" [12]. Whereas Kehm considers "university governance is related to decision-making structures, their processes and their objectives. Regulation and coordination processes are essential elements in solving social problems" [13]. University governance has numerous definitions; it was presented some of them. Nevertheless, why do researches investigate about it? The next section explains it.

## **3 WHY IS IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA?**

This question could generate several answers. Nonetheless, the Regional Conference of Higher Education for Latin America [14] (2018) provides a remarkable argument. Its thematic areas explained:

- Higher education has a strategic role in sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. It helps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Higher education as part of the educational system in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many people aspire to have access to this level. This growing demand causes modifications in the offer (programs, teaching-learning modalities and strategies).
- Higher education, internationalization and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean. It guarantees an inclusive, equitable and quality education. This is one of the foundations for the necessary social and economic change.
- Higher education, cultural diversity and interculturality. Its policies have to eliminate racism, sexism and xenophobia. Eradicating all the forms of intolerance and discrimination.

- The role of Higher Education in facing social challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a co-creator of knowledge and innovation. The region must be a promoter of science for everyone, have critical citizenship and genuine, democratic and transparent governance.
- Scientific and technological research and innovation as drivers of human, social and economic development for Latin America and the Caribbean. There will be no freedom of thought if Latin American countries do not create knowledge adapted to their realities. It will transform their primary export and secondary import productive matrix. Knowledge is the product of humanity's intellectual and experimental heritage, and is therefore a common good.

Each thematic area is associated with a university governance approach. As a result, there is a vast relevance about it. This importance generates a need of evaluation. This is reviewed below.

## 4 HOW TO EVALUATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA?

### 4.1 Proposal models for other regions

University governance is more than a definition, it's a management tool. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate it. For this purpose, diverse investigators have contributed with new models or typologies in order to measure university governance. Đỗ Thị Ngọc Quyên developed indicators for five dimensions; each one evaluates important features of university governance [15]:

1. **Management and Administration:** Management of resources to achieve the mission and organization goals.
2. **Participation:** Level of participation of stakeholders in the governance structure and in the decision-making process.
3. **Accountability:** Level of accountability to stakeholders.
4. **Autonomy:** At the Academy level, Human Talent Management level, in addition, financial and organizational autonomy level.
5. **Transparency:** Level at which the institution makes its operations visible and understandable to stakeholders.

Jesús Flórez, María López and Antonio López [3] use the Global Reporting Initiative indicators, some proposed by Ho in 2005, also parameters of universities in the United Kingdom and Australia that measure Corporate Governance in their annual reports, in order to evaluate four sections within the top 100 universities in the Shanghai Ranking. The sections are Institutional information on Corporate Governance, Financial information related to Corporate Governance, Information about transparency and leadership in Corporate Governance, and, Information about the structure and organization of Corporate Governance mechanisms.

While Marek Kwiek [16], developed his own indicators in order to identify patterns that recognize some model of governance. He also evaluated the compliance in Poland and at the European level. The considered models were The Collegial, Bureaucratic, Political and Anarchic Model, Collegium, Bureaucracy, Corporation and Enterprise, Stylized Visions, Community of Scholars Governed by Rules, Instrument to Change National Political Agendas, and Integrated Service Company in Competitive Markets. Most of the full-time staff were investigated on the following aspects: proportion of teachers by group of academic fields, influence on aid to shape key academic policies, Index of Influence on Government, Index of Academic Entrepreneurship, Collegiality Index and Opinions on the management and governance of institutions.

María de la Cruz Pulido [10] used two tools, case study and Delphi method. She developed indicators to measure the principles of good governance accomplishment. As a result, she proposed the implementation of governance as a tool for managing tourist destinations. Although this last methodology is not related to the university, it should be noted that there are few quantitative models. Furthermore, this methodology is applicable to different fields as public university.

### 4.2 Typologies for Latin America

The mentioned models have not been adapted to the Latin American context. Fortunately, José Joaquín Brunner [17] established theoretical parameters to compare the current state of a university. He took various contributions from many investigators in the field and classified four quadrants.

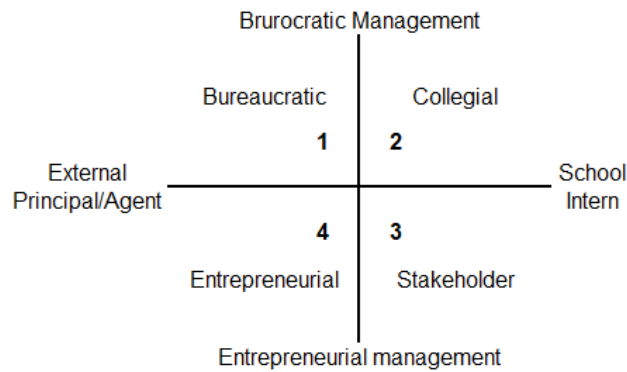


Figure 1. Governance regimes shaped on the axes of legitimacy and effectiveness.  
 Source: José Joaquin Brunner (2010).

First it is explained the horizontal or government axis (the principle of legitimacy governs). On the left side appears the most common model of modernity, the External Principal/Agent (present in the Humboldtiana and Napoleonic conception), this model has an external principal (delegated by the state) that directly or indirectly makes the strategic decisions that must be applied by the university executive. At the other extreme is the oldest model proposed by the academy, the School Intern, also known as the model of shared internal governance among professors.

Second it is explicated the vertical or management axis (guided by the principle of effectiveness). On the upper part, there is a Bureaucratic Management model, which has formal hierarchies, rules for behavior, positions assumed impersonally, training to exercise the position and specialization of functions. At the bottom is the Entrepreneurial model, which is related to promoting the university in market conditions (exchange and competition to survive the changes), in other words, considering the university as a company that must be innovative and take risks.

The crossing of the axes results in different typologies for university governance. They are located in four quadrants. This methodology proposal focusses on the third quadrant: Stakeholders. It combines entrepreneurship with collegiality resulting in the stakeholder regime. This perspective is concerned with both internal stakeholders, as well as external, who have a direct or indirect interest in institutional performance. The roles and responsibilities of the public university is broader and more complex, it manages its traditions of collegiality and self-government, seeking to combine these with the various demands from external stakeholders. The model involves the public university being completely open to the participation of civil society and its relevant actors. There is a total redefinition of the state-university contract, which seeks to stimulate competitiveness, it means, public university responses to the changes in the environment, demands of the stakeholders, and, being able to participate in the external context.

Some authors think that under this perspective, the university would become a "service company", focusing on generating profits. In contrast, others consider that a public university governed and managed with a stakeholder regime would benefit the public good. For the reason that being part of managed markets (designed by governments to provoke competition among public institutions) stimulates their capacity to obtain income from different sources (not only the public treasury), develop their internal and external efficiency, reduce costs (or keep them under control), and, generate usable surpluses (depending on institutional policies and development plans).

Public institutions in this context, separate the strategic direction (board or council of government), which is made up of internal and external members, from the administration of academic affairs, which is kept in the hands of a collegial-based body (advisory, consultative or decision-making nature). At the middle management level, there is a strong body of administrators (which tends to be managerial in nature). While, government agencies and national policies seek to maintain their distance from universities and agree to give them greater autonomy. As a result, they use incentives, information and evaluation mechanisms, performance indicators, and various market-type mechanisms in areas such as the financing of institutions and their students.

While management is guided by "The New Public Management". It focuses on results and impact; it uses standards to implement performance indicators. It exists a focus on having lighter, specialized, flatter and more autonomous organizations. The contracts replace hierarchical relationships. There is

a quality of service and customer orientation. It also demands to joint public-private and third sector work. Finally, efficiency and individualism are priority values.

In order to evaluate this stakeholder quadrant, it is necessary a complementary tool, which is explained below.

### **4.3 Complementary tools for analysing university governance**

This complementary model is the European Foundation for Quality Management – EFQM. This management model was developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management in order to evaluate some important points for a public university: self-evaluation, external evaluation, perform their activities under the premise of total quality and constant motivation to innovation. This model is an organizational guide that seeks to detect the strong elements to enhance them and the weak ones with a view to improving them.

This model evaluates nine fundamental criteria. The first five are facilitating agents: Leadership (100 points - represents 10% of the total evaluation), Planning and strategy (80 points - represents 8% of the total evaluation), Staff management (90 points - represents 9% of the total evaluation), Partnerships and resources (90 points – represents 9% of the total evaluation), and, Processes, products and services (140 points - represents 14% of the evaluation). The remaining four are results: Customer results – satisfaction (200 points - represents 20% of the total evaluation), Results in staffs (90 points - represents 9% of the total evaluation), Results in society (60 points - represents 6% of the total evaluation), and, Key results (150 points - represents 15% of the total evaluation). Each criteria has sub – criteria, which are evaluated applying questionnaires.

Other important tool is how to evaluate the stakeholders´ incidence and relevance. Peralta, Morquecho and Briozzo proposed the methodology to identify and measure this incidence in the ICERI 2019 [18]. The theory about how to evaluate university governance is explained, however, it needs to have academic support. Hence, the next section explains the methodology process for this paper.

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

A new proposal to evaluate university governance needs a mixed methodology. It does not exist a quantitative model for public university in Ecuador. Consequently, the most appropriate instrument to validate the proposed model is the Delphi method. It is considered “an information-gathering technique, based on consultation with experts in an area, because of obtain the most reliable consensus opinion from the consulted group” [19].

### **5.1 Delphi Method process**

The complete process is divided in two rounds (stages). The following steps explain it:

1. Design of the round one questionnaire.
2. Selection of the expert group. The recommended sample for an expert group is from 6 to 30 participants [19], the amount varies depending on the subject investigated, in this case 10 experts participated. The only condition to include them in the sample was that they had experience in the Latin American context.
3. Apply a Pilot test.
4. Sending the invitations to the selected experts.
5. Sending the stage 1 questionnaire (first round) to the experts.
6. Analysis of the answers to the questionnaire of stage 1. This step validates the methodology proposal.
7. Design of the round two questionnaire.
8. Validation pilot test.
9. Sending the stage 2 questionnaire (second round).
10. Analysis of the answers of stage 2. This step validates the indicators for each dimension.
11. Present the proposal methodology to evaluate the good governance in public university of Ecuador.

### **5.2 Data Analysis**

All the information is analysed using Microsoft Excel. It allows to present graphs and statistic data, which support the proposal model. For closed questions, it is established the next criteria, if the

affirmative answers are greater than 80%, the question is validated; the negative answers ask the question: why, in order to have a feedback (it was not considered for the final analysis). The questions with a Likert scale follow the coefficient of variation criteria. If the coefficient of variation is less than 0.30 [15], the answer is validated, nevertheless, if it is greater than 0.30 the answer is validated using a frequency analysis.

## 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 Delphi method results

The first round validated the methodological process to propose the good governance model for public university in Ecuador. It contains two blocks. The first block is conformed for questions one, two, three and four. While, the second block contains the questions five and six. It obtained the next results:

From the first to the fifth question obtain 100% of acceptance level, which are higher than the 80% established for validation. The experts consider it necessary to adopt a shared and participatory government, in order to implement a process of good governance. The public university needs a clear and effective leadership that integrates the stakeholders in their management. The governance evaluation in public university management considers the following dimensions: management and administration, participation, accountability, autonomy, and transparency. In addition, the participation of experts in the two stages is necessary for validation; the most important characteristics that the experts must possess are impartiality – 85%, having an exhaustive knowledge of the reality in which the governance process is applied – 83%, having knowledge about university management – 83% and the capacity for teamwork – 83%. Furthermore, a quality that was recommended to be considered is to have research in the area of university governance. Moreover, it is necessary to identify the stakeholders with their respective characteristics in order to implement university management under a good governance approach.

Finally, the sixth question (Figure 2) considered the models for identifying stakeholders and establishing their level of incidence. The Savage's model reached 100% considering the levels of agreement and very much agreement, while the Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (MAW) model obtained 83%; however, the latter obtained a higher percentage at the very much agreement level.

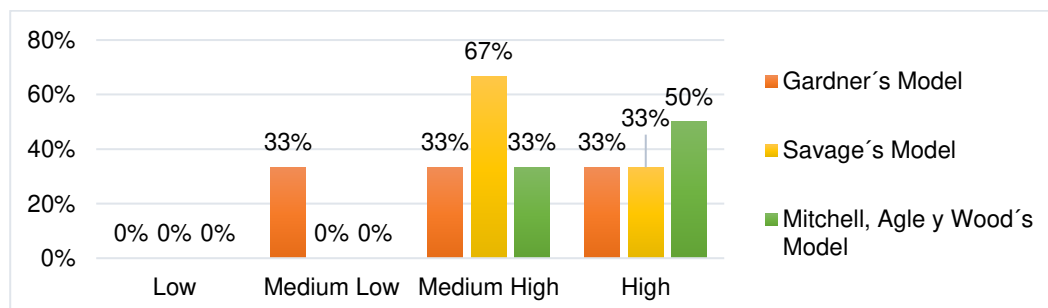


Figure 2. Stakeholders model to evaluate their incidence level.

Source: Own research.

It is necessary to calculate the coefficient of variation for both models. The coefficient of variation is 0.14 for the two models, it is less than or equal than 0.30. It shows an acceptable level of consensus. These results indicate the possibility to select one model. For this reason, it is considered a combined methodology of the two models.

The second round contains three blocks. The questions one, two and three are part of the third block. On the other hand, from the question four to twelve conform the fourth block (from four to seven are closed questions, the other are Likert scale questions). In contrast, the fifth and last block contains the questions thirteen and fourteen.

In the block three, the first question obtains 100% of acceptance level, it is higher than the 80% established for validation; intellectual capital is a way of creating intellectual value for public university in Ecuador. The second question attains 83% of acceptance level, it is higher than the 80% established for its validation; it is relevant to survey the Rector of each public university where the model is applied about intellectual capital. The third question has 100% of acceptance level, which is higher than the

80% established for its validation; the Rectors of each public university in Ecuador where the model is applied should be surveyed about the employability of students at the end of their professional training.

The fourth question has 83% of acceptance level, it is higher than the 80% established for validation; the EFQM criteria are suitable for measuring the Management and Administration dimension: Leadership, planning and strategy, personnel management, alliances and resources, processes, products and services, results in customers, results in people, results in society, and key results. The fifth question obtains 67% of acceptance level, it is no higher than the 80% established for validation; the non-probabilistic sampling for convenience in evaluating the EFQM model is inadequate since it takes away from the objectivity of the measurement, therefore, the information should be collected randomly among the directors of the public university.

The sixth question reaches 50% of acceptance level, which is not higher than the 80% established for its validation. Not only collect relevant information from the directors, but also from intermediate levels, since they are the ones in charge of implementing the policies. The seventh question has 83% of acceptance level, it is higher than the 80% established for validation. The survey proposed by Andrea Bueno and Paúl Montero [20] should be applied without adding an additional contribution to evaluate dimension one, therefore, the methodology is respected, but the measurement of the EFQM model is integrated to the general methodology proposed for the university governance model.

*Table 1. Statistic information*

Dimension	Validity				Importance			
	Mean	Median	Mode	Coefficient of variation	Mean	Median	Mode	Coefficient of variation
Management and Administration	5.22	5	5	0.14	5.26	5	5	0.14
Participation	4.58	4	5	0.27	4.58	4	5	0.27
Accountability	5.03	5	5	0.19	4.95	5	6	0.22
Autonomy	4.99	5	5	0.20	4.95	5	6	0.22
Transparency	4.72	4	6	0.27	5.10	5	6	0.23

*Source: Own research*

Table 1 indicates the statistical information of the five dimensions (question 9-12). There is no coefficient of variation greater than 0.30. Therefore, all the dimensions with their respective indicators are validated.

*Table 2. Principles accomplishment in each dimension*

PRINCIPLES	Management and Administration		Participation		Accountability		Autonomy		Transparency	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Participation	80%	20%	100%	0%	83%	17%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Rule of Law	83%	17%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Transparency	80%	20%	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%
Responsiveness	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%	100%	0%
Consensus orientation	80%	20%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Equity	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Effectiveness and Efficiency	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%	100%	0%
Accountability	100%	0%	83%	17%	100%	0%	83%	17%	83%	17%
Strategic Vision	83%	17%	100%	0%	83%	17%	83%	17%	100%	0%

*Source: Own research*

The nine principles are equal or higher than 80% into each dimension, results of question 13 (Table 2). The experts suggested what level is appropriate in Table 3 (question 14). Hence, the principles are valued in all the dimensions with their indicators.

*Table 3. Principles accomplishment in each dimension*

Principles	Low	Medium Low	Medium High	High
	0% - 25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76%-100%
Participation	0%	17%	0%	83%
Rule of Law	0%	0%	33%	67%
Transparency	0%	0%	0%	100%
Responsiveness	0%	0%	83%	17%
Consensus orientation	0%	17%	17%	67%
Equity	0%	17%	17%	67%
Effectiveness and Efficiency	0%	17%	17%	67%
Accountability	0%	0%	33%	67%
Strategic Vision	0%	0%	33%	67%

Source: Own research

## 6.2 Good governance model

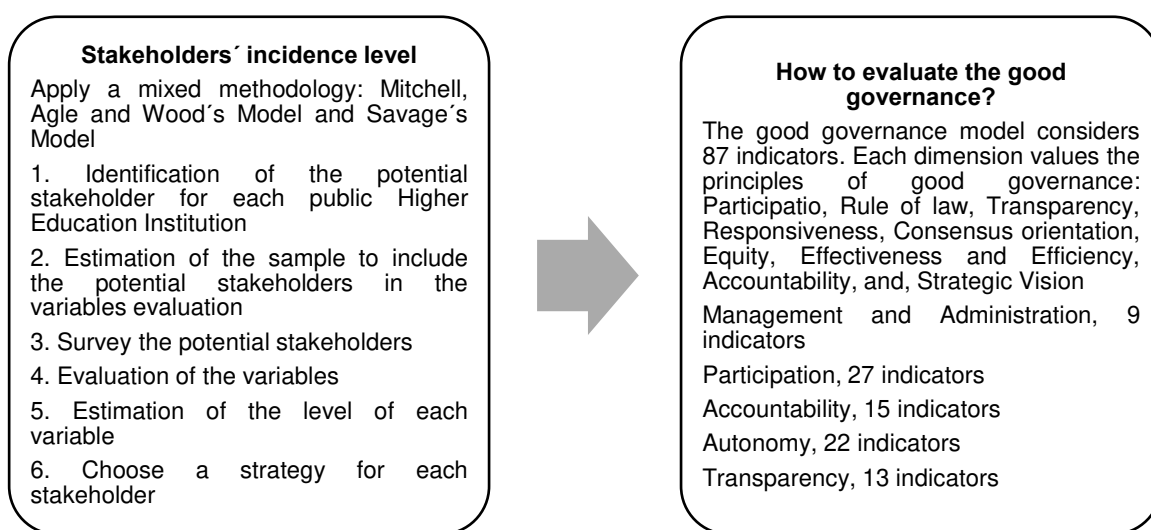


Figure 1. Good governance Model.

Source: Own research

As a result, it is presented the good governance model. It starts evaluating the stakeholders' incidence, because some indicators consider the most relevant ones. After, the model proposes 87 indicators, they can have sub – indicators, each public university can adapt them to their contexts.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The Delphi method has validated the methodology process to propose the good governance model in the round one. The complementary strategy, the indicators and the achievement of principles of good governance are validated in the round two.

The presented model possess flexibility to evaluate the accomplishment of good governance in each public university in Ecuador. The number of indicators and sub – indicators can increase or decrease, however, the five dimensions always have to be evaluated.

As future line of investigation, it is the application of this model in the public university in Ecuador, with the intention of evaluating its effectiveness and utility.

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