



Nexus of superior councils with governance in Higher Education Institutions

Nexo dos conselhos superiores com a governança em Instituições de Ensino Superior

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HOW TO CITE: RODRIGUES, R. C.; OLIVEIRA, O. V. Nexus of superior councils with governance in Higher Education Institutions. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação*, Araraquara, v. 19, e18780, 2024. e-ISSN: 1982-5587. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v19i00.1878002>

Abstract

Aware of the impact of management and governance structures on the quality of services in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), this essay aims to present a theoretical proposition of the link between the characteristics of boards of directors at different levels of governance in HEIs. The research is based on articles accessible in the SPELL and Scopus databases and the CAPES Periodicals Portal and aims to fill an important gap by focusing on the specific nuances of boards in the governance structure. It identified attributes such as the number of boards, the processes involved in the election, training and receipt of benefits by members, the composition and diversity of senior management, as well as the existence of governance committees and governance bodies. Reviewing and deepening the theoretical proposition presented can generate new insights and contribute to improving the quality of educational services in Brazil.

Keywords: higher councils; Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); university governance.

Resumo

Ciente do impacto das estruturas de gestão e governança sobre a qualidade dos serviços nas Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES), este ensaio objetiva apresentar uma proposição teórica de nexo entre as características dos conselhos superiores nos diferentes níveis de governança nas IES. A pesquisa é baseada em artigos acessíveis nas bases de dados SPELL, Scopus e no Portal de Periódicos CAPES e se propõe a preencher uma lacuna importante ao concentrar-se nas nuances específicas dos conselhos superiores na estrutura de governança. Identificou-se atributos como a quantidade de conselhos, os processos envolvidos na eleição, capacitação e recebimento de vantagens pelos membros, a composição e diversidade da gestão superior, bem como a existência de comitê de governança, oriundos de imposição normativa, e órgãos de governança. A revisão e o aprofundamento da proposição teórica apresentada podem gerar novos insights e contribuir para a melhoria da qualidade dos serviços educacionais no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: conselhos superiores; Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES); governança universitária.

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Submitted: December 08, 2023

Reviewed: February 06, 2024

Approved: May 10, 2024

Financial support: nothing to declare.

Conflicts of interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

Ethics committee approval: It was not necessary to go through any ethics committee, although it sought to be developed in accordance with the ethical principles of scientific research.

Data availability: The data used were reported in the references.

Study conducted at Universidade de Fortaleza (UNIFOR), Fortaleza, CE, Brasil.



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INTRODUCTION

Governance in the public sphere is conceptualized as the fusion of procedures and configurations established by senior management with the purpose of informing, guiding, managing and supervising the entity's operations, aiming to achieve the objectives (Brasil, 2020) and assist in the systemic vision of the institution (Gesser et al., 2022). This allows senior management to adopt strategic practices, necessary for the advancement and consolidation of the entity in its operating context (Martins; Rodrigues, 2005), complying with legal requirements and delivering better public value to society (Rodrigues; Machado, 2021).

The creation of governance structures and mechanisms in the public sector is still an emerging topic, requiring institutions to familiarize themselves with the topic and current legislation so as to plan actions and activities that contribute to any development within their structures (Lugoboni; Marques, 2022). There is a need to define characteristics and methodologies to be adopted by entities to meet their demands, considering that governance is broad and absorbs all processes of the institution (Castro et al., 2022).

Problems in governance structures in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) negatively affect the quality of services provided, which can lead to problems in planning and resource allocation, poor management practices, poor communication and corrupt practices (Balbachevsky, 2022). To improve governance, it is necessary to strengthen administrative and academic autonomy, streamline the decision-making process, train leaders and administrators, and decentralize power (Monyoncho, 2015).

Other factors must be considered when constructing a university governance policy. These include: a) support and commitment from Superior Councils (Souza Filho et al., 2021); b) definition of an organizational structure that has superior bodies and a governance committee (collegiate decisions) (Pinheiro; Oliva, 2020); c) objective definition of the HEI's mission, principles and values, as well as the institution's strategic objectives (Silva Junior et al., 2021); and d) construction of a value chain and definition of academic policies (Lugoboni et al., 2021) that allow for the achievement of results for interested parties - students, teachers, technical employees, outsourced workers, suppliers and the community in general (Teixeira; Castro, 2015).

Therefore, the strong characteristics of the council can impact adherence to regulations and governance codes, ensuring legal compliance and the application of best governance practices, as well as the quality and effectiveness of the organization's strategic decisions (Brasil, 2020).

Given the relevance of the characteristics inherent to the superior councils of HEIs in the context of implementing governance practices, together with the governance structures already established in the entity, it becomes clear that such elements have the potential to trigger different impacts at different levels of governance. In view of the above, the following question emerges: How are the characteristics of superior councils and the different levels of governance related in HEIs? To answer this question, this research aims to develop a theoretical proposition of the link between the characteristics of superior councils and the different levels of governance in HEIs.

The results obtained can provide support for the development of theoretical models, strengthening the field of study, exploring interactions, and also proposing causal relationships and correlations that can strengthen theories on how these elements influence each other. This involves the suggestion of guidelines, public policies or specific approaches that promote the optimization of governance, contributing to more efficient and transparent management, and as a basis for future studies, paving the way for comparative or longitudinal investigations on governance in HEIs that integrate the public field.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was used to explore articles available in the academic databases of SPELL, Scopus and the CAPES Journal Portal, with a focus on finding studies that addressed the topic of administration councils and governance, covering both private and public contexts. To prepare this SLR, the

methodological procedures proposed by Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) were adopted for conducting systematic reviews, comprising the stages of planning, conducting, reporting and dissemination, which were followed with the aim of ensuring the robustness and consistency of this research.

To select the articles, the following keywords were used: "governance", "higher education" and "university". The choice of these keywords was due to their relevance of the topic and to research on governance in HEIs, as verified in previous studies. The research resulted in the selection of articles that are used in the construction of this article and address governance in HEIs. The articles were analyzed in depth, focusing on the following aspects: structures, practices and governance models.

Despite the large number of studies on councils of directors and governance in other organizational spheres, such as private companies, a pattern emerged: the scarcity of research that investigated the relationship between university councils and governance, demonstrating a scenario in which research in this field is still at its initial stages and, therefore, there is an opportunity to fill this gap and contribute to the advancement of knowledge regarding governance in HEIs, notably those related to the public sphere.

COUNCIL OF DIRECTORS

The council of directors play a strategic role in the corporate governance structure of organizations, whether companies, public institutions or non-profit entities (Pineiro et al., 2023), as they play a critical role in supervising and guiding the organization's activities, aiming to ensure appropriate strategic decision-making, accountability and alignment with the interests of stakeholders (Gaur; Bathula; Singh, 2015).

Diversity of gender, ethnicity and expertise is also valued to ensure better informed and balanced decision-making (Fernandes; Machado, 2023). In the context of HEIs, councils of directors play a similar role, as they supervise academic, financial and administrative activities, ensuring that the institution follows its educational mission and achieves its objectives. Furthermore, they participate in the formulation of policies, long-term strategies and resource allocation (Castro, 2023).

Governance and control activities in HEIs are ensured by collegial management bodies (Pineiro; Oliva, 2020), composed of representatives of the university community (Buta; Teixeira, 2020), which analyze and regularize any identified problems, and address improprieties pointed out by the relevant sectors so that new control procedures are implemented (Rodrigues; Machado, 2021).

The HEI statute must establish the decision-making governance bodies within the institution, in this case, the superior councils act as bodies that are: a) designated for analysis and deliberation on administrative and disciplinary issues, as well as being the final instance of appeal; b) oriented towards the analysis and deliberation of didactic-scientific, cultural and artistic subjects; and c) intended to address issues related to asset, financial and economic control and supervision (Pineiro; Oliva, 2020).

These collegial bodies can be formed by heads of administrative and academic management units and representatives of teaching staff, administrative technicians and students, as well as individuals from organized civil society. Each council regulates the mandate of its members in its own collegiate regulations (Brasil, 1966). The number of members that make up the council of directors is called council size. Larger councils tend to encompass a greater variety of perspectives, helping to make decisions that consider diverse points of view and allowing for better representation of minority stakeholders (Pineiro et al., 2023).

Governance levels

Governance levels constitute a strategic and organizational approach that enables the clear definition of responsibilities, decision-making and direction of activities in an institution (Silva; Nunes, 2019). In the context of complex and diverse organizations, such as HEIs,

understanding the different levels of governance is essential to ensure efficient functioning and the achievement of institutional goals (Junior Santos; Souza, 2022).

The theoretical model developed by TCU to assess governance maturity is represented in Figure 1.

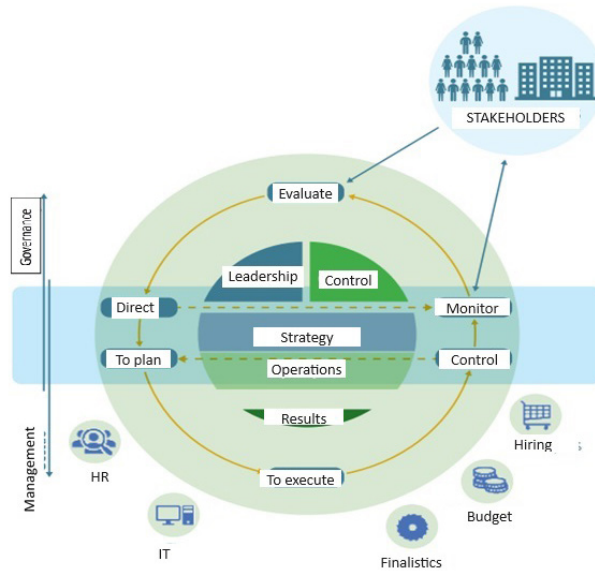


Figure 1. Governance and management model prepared by TCU.
Source: Brasil (2020).

The model focuses on the distinction between governance and management, but recognizes that there is a zone where these two functions interact and occasionally overlap. The guidelines for organizational planning originate from the function of governance, performed by internal and external governance entities (Machado; Quiraque, 2023).

Management supervision produces information that supports the monitoring carried out by governance entities, aiming to guarantee service to interested parties and determine the necessary corrective actions. The upper part of Figure 1 highlights governance activities and structures, the lower part addresses management (Machado; Quiraque, 2023).

Governance comprises the following mechanisms: leadership, strategy and control, while “management” involves the dimensions of operations and results. The trio of evaluate-direct-monitor encapsulates the vital activities of governance. The highest management levels evaluate the organization itself, its position and the direction to follow. Subsequently, they issue management guidelines. Compliance with these guidelines is supervised by higher administrative bodies, feeding the next cycle of governance assessment (Marques et al., 2020). In the Brazilian territory, as of 2014, the Federal Audit Court (TCU) began implementing the Integrated Organizational Governance Survey, which encompasses bodies linked to the Federal Government, and is based on the Governance Framework established by the TCU. Its primary purpose is to obtain information regarding the capacity of federal public bodies in guiding and supervising the resources under their responsibility, contributing to the improvement of both governance and public administration (Machado; Quiraque, 2023).

Governance committee

The governance committee is a group responsible for supervising and evaluating governance activities in an organization (Ismail et al., 2019), being formed by members of senior management, advisors and governance experts, and aims to ensure that policies, governance practices and procedures are effective and appropriate to achieve the organization’s strategic objectives (Morás; Klann, 2020).

The role of the governance committee is fundamental in ensuring the effectiveness of an organization's governance system, as it acts as a supervisory mechanism, responsible for ensuring that the interests of all stakeholders are met and protected (Pineiro; Oliva, 2020). Its main objective is to evaluate and monitor the organization's governance process and practices, in order to guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency of the decision-making process and the maximization of results (Brasil, 2016).

It is important to highlight that the governance committee must be formed by members with technical knowledge and experience in governance, in order to guarantee the quality of supervision and evaluation (Brasil, 2020). Furthermore, its independence in relation to the organization's management is necessary to guarantee objectivity in the evaluation and monitoring of governance activities (Mac Lennan; Semensato; Oliva, 2015).

The imposition of the implementation of a governance committee within the scope of public organizations in Brazil was formalized through Joint Normative Instruction MP/CGU nº 1, published on May 10, 2016, considered a significant point of reference in the search for a public administration characterized by transparency, efficiency and responsibility.

Governance body

The implementation of governance practices represents not only a regulatory requirement, but an important strategy for HEIs to achieve their goals and fulfill their mission and value, because to establish an effective university governance structure, measures are necessary that involve modifications and restructuring, seeking not only to comply with regulatory requirements, but also promote an organizational culture that values transparency, accountability and operational efficiency (Trakman, 2008).

In the HEI scenario, the concept of a "governance body" gains prominence in management and decision-making structures. It is a technical and executive component that plays an important role in formulating guidelines, policies and strategies that guide the institution's performance as a whole to regulatory requirements (Soares et al., 2021).

The role of the governance body is to supervise strategic administration, assess the risks inherent to the HEI's operations and ensure that decisions are made in a transparent manner and in line with the interests of the academic community and society (Siqueira; Bialoskorski Neto, 2014).

Furthermore, the governance body also plays an important role in accountability, contributing to transparency in management and communication with stakeholders. Through its leadership structure, the governance body plays a crucial role in guiding the activities of the HEI and ensuring that institutional goals are consistently achieved (Pinho; Brasil, 2021).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Each institution has its own characteristics and particularities that prevent the immediate adoption of a "standard model" of governance by all HEIs (Silva Junior et al., 2021). The practice of defining such a standard comprises the stipulation of a set of processes, structures, as well as guidelines and values, which are necessary so that the activities of evaluating, directing and monitoring management are carried out effectively, enabling HEIs to adapt their purposes for the common good, manage their own risks and deliver the intended results in a responsible, transparent and integral manner (Teixeira; Castro, 2015).

The number, composition and diversity of superior councils play an important role in governance in HEIs, given that qualified and diverse members, acting in a coordinated and cooperative manner, promote transparency, responsibility and academic excellence (Forte; Silva; Abreu, 2020). The search for inclusive and collaborative governance results in more informed decisions, comprehensive policies and a solid and sustainable institutional culture (Ihlenfeldt; Colauto, 2017). Such aspects are relevant for the development and continuous improvement of HEIs as agents that transform society and promote knowledge (Santos; Rodrigues Júnior, 2024).

The processes of superior councils can be established by analyzing the organization's choice of its participants (Castro, 2023), training (Fragoso; Valadas; Paulos, 2019) and remuneration or benefits received by councilors to participate in the councils (Marquezan et al., 2023). The electoral process for participants in higher councils must be transparent, democratic and representative of the diversity of the academic community and civil society, ensuring that councilors are chosen legitimately and that they represent the interests of all segments of the community (Castro, 2023).

In managerial functions at Brazilian universities, the phenomenon known as the "glass ceiling" is always present, being an invisible barrier that makes it difficult for women to rise to leadership positions, indicating persistent challenges in achieving equitable representation in the upper echelons of public and academic management. This phenomenon reveals a widespread underrepresentation of women in positions of power in the public sphere, notably in senior management positions (Ambrosini, 2017).

Improving the performance of public employees is important for the effective development of their activities in the public sphere. Obtaining technical knowledge and professional capacity occurs through participation in courses, training, forums and seminars, which are aimed at refining the techniques and methods used by employees. Given the continuous dynamics of transformation of the State, it is of interest to the State that public employees receive continuous training to requalify themselves and efficiently meet new emerging demands (Rodrigues, 2023). The training of councilors is an important aspect so that they can perform their duties effectively. To do this, they must receive training on the council's rules and procedures, as well as on the relevant issues that will be discussed at meetings (Negrão; Rodrigues Júnior, 2022).

The remuneration or benefits received by directors for participating in councils can be a way of encouraging the participation and dedication of directors. However, it is important that this remuneration or benefit is fair and does not compromise the independence of the directors (Cavalcanti et al., 2018).

The composition of the Council of Directors is one of the determining factors of its effectiveness, being fundamental to the development of beneficial interactions for the entity, as it enables the combination of different perspectives and experiences, which can lead to better informed decisions and reduced risks (Pearce; Zahra, 1992). There are three classes of directors: internal (those who perform functions in the corporation, generally having a connection with the entity. As they have interests that can be influenced by the corporation, their independence can be questioned); external (those who do not have a current link with the entity, but who have interests that can be influenced by it); and independent (those who do not have any links with the corporation, and without any interests that may be affected by it) (Instituto Brasileiro de Governança Corporativa, 2015).

The presence of external members on superior councils is important, as they can offer an external and independent perspective, which is useful for decision-making, as well as representing the interests of society and university stakeholders and contributing to the development of partnerships and collaborations with other institutions (Flausino; Corrêa, 2023).

The governance model to be adopted by the HEI must be centered on sharing responsibilities between all sectors involved, whether in the provision of a final service or in carrying out a middle process (Junior Santos; Souza, 2022), justifying itself by recognizing the importance of collaboration between all sectors and stakeholders of the university in the pursuit of excellence in service provision. Therefore, the actions, structures, guidelines, processes, and any other elements and constructs to be developed must aim for the public interest, in balance with other stakeholders (government, control bodies, strategic partners, etc.) (Brasil, 2020).

The discussion of governance models requires a prior analysis of the purposes that are sought by higher education systems, given that a model has not yet been established for the construction of a model for the public educational sphere (Wandercil; Calderón; Ganga-

Contreras, 2021). In Brazil, there are several regulations aiming to directly or indirectly institutionalize governance structures in the public sector (Caldeira; Secchi; Firmino, 2023).

Other characteristics, such as the number of students, number of employees and campuses, as well as tax revenues, help to better measure the size of the HEI (Thiengo; Bianchetti; Mari, 2018) whose collegiate structure can work properly, covering the different areas and locations of activity, and whose focus must be the clear and public representation of how governance works or should work in the organization (Gesser et al., 2021).

The legalistic perspective in the analysis of superior councils highlights the importance of four attributes: composition, characteristics, structure and process, considering how they determine the modeling of council performance. From this perspective, it is clear that councils perform two significant functions: institutional or service provision, and control (Martins; Rodrigues, 2005). The institutional role involves contributing to the strategic development of the institution and fulfilling its mission and objectives (Ihlenfeldt; Colauto, 2017). While on the other hand, the control role involves the supervision, monitoring and inspection of activities to ensure compliance, integrity and management effectiveness (Costa et al., 2021).

The interaction between these roles and council attributes draws on a complex network of influences that shape overall governance performance (Helfaya; Moussa, 2017). A diverse council not only monitors effectively but also makes more strategic decisions for long-term wealth creation. Heterogeneity in top management brings a wide variety of perspectives, resulting in a better decision-making process (Fernandes; Machado, 2023). Therefore, based on the characteristics of superior councils, the following theoretical propositions are presented:

Proposition 1: The characteristics of superior councils influence the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Proposition 1a: The number of superior councils influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Proposition 1b: The presence of external members on superior councils influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Proposition 1c: The diversity of senior management influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Proposition 1d: The training of councilors influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Proposition 1e: Remunerative or compensatory benefits received by councilors influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

The relationship between governance committees and superior councils in HEIs can be one of cooperation and complementarity, as both bodies have distinct, but interconnected, roles in the entity's governance.

Superior councils are responsible for making high-level strategic decisions that affect the entire institution, establishing general policies, approving budgets and discussing fundamental issues for the entity (Tiron-Tudor et al., 2020). They comprise a broader and more representative character, and consider different perspectives and interests of the academic community and society (Gesser et al., 2021). In contrast, governance committees have a more specific focus, supervising the institution's management, assessing risks, monitoring performance and ensuring compliance with policies and regulations (Caldeira; Secchi; Firmino, 2023).

The complementarity of functions between these two bodies is relevant for the good implementation of governance, considering that governance committees provide technical information and detailed analyzes that support superior councils in their strategic decisions (Pinho; Brasil, 2021). Moreover, councils provide long-term direction and guidance (Pineiro et al., 2023) to committees, ensuring that their activities are aligned with the university's mission and values.

Thus, based on these arguments we offer theoretical proposition 2:

Proposition 2: The Governance Committee moderates the relationship between superior councils and levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

If the governance body is distinct from the governance committee in an HEI, this configuration may reflect a specific division of responsibilities and functions related to the institution's governance (Pinho; Brasil, 2021). This structure can be found in some public HEIs that seek a more comprehensive and specialized approach to the management and supervision of the governmental aspects of the institution.

The obligation of a governance committee is normatively established for all bodies and entities linked to the federal executive branch (Brasil, 2016; Caldeira; Secchi; Firmino, 2023), while the creation of a governance body distinct from the governance committee may represent a strategy to improve university governance, increase specialization, strengthen accountability and optimize the management of risks and challenges specific to the institution (Soares et al., 2021). Each HEI can choose the approach that best meets its needs and objectives, aiming for more solid and efficient governance to achieve its academic and institutional purposes (Rodrigues, 2019).

The existence of a specific body serves to formulate strategies and implement governance practices within the institution, as well as providing the means and instruments necessary for their effective application (Pinho; Brasil, 2021). In this context, the third theoretical proposition is presented:

Proposition 3: The governance body moderates the relationship between superior councils and levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

The theoretical propositions in this research are shown in Figure 2.

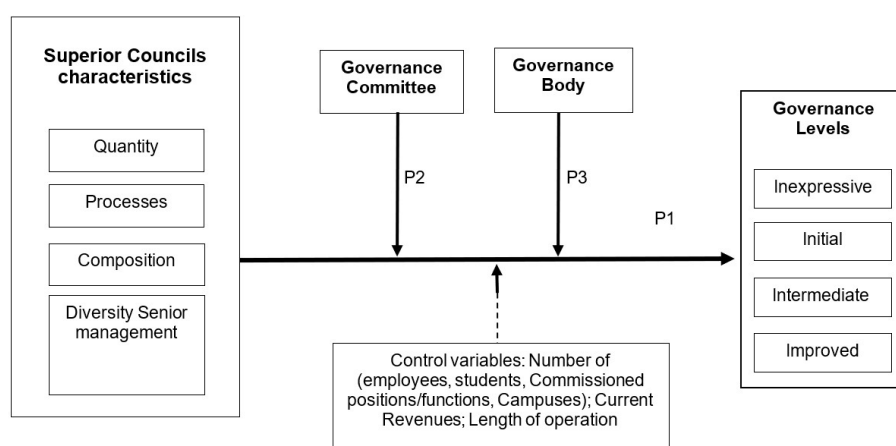


Figure 2. Theoretical Model. Note: Proposition 1: The characteristics of superior councils influence the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 1a: The number of superior councils influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 1b: The presence of external members on superior councils influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 1c: The diversity of superior management influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 1d: The training of councilors influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 1e: Remunerative or compensatory benefits received by councilors influences the levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 2: The Governance Committee moderates the relationship between superior councils and levels of governance adoption in HEIs. Proposition 3: The governance body moderates the relationship between superior councils and levels of governance adoption in HEIs.

Source: Prepared by the author (2023).

To empirically analyze the assumptions outlined, Chart 1 presents the constructs of the model, its specifications and indicates where this data can be collected. This serves as a guide for researchers, pointing out not only what should be measured, but also providing guidance on where data related to each construct can be obtained, aspiring to not only ensure methodological consistency but also promote the validity and reliability of the results of future empirical analysis.

Chart 1. List of variables and indicators for data collection.

Superior Councils			
Variable	Construct	Objective	Source of data collection
Independent	Quantity	Official number of councils established by the entity; Total number of members on the organization's council of directors	HEI Statute
Independent	Processes	Analysis of the electoral process of its participants	
		Training received by councilors	
		Remuneration or benefits received by directors for participating in councils.	
Independent	Composition	Specifies who the representatives on the council are	
Independent	Diversity Senior management	Information regarding Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Pro-Rectors	HEI websites
Entity characteristics			
Control	Current Revenues	Consisting of tax, contributions, property, agricultural, industrial, service and other revenues	Accounting statements
Control	Commissioned positions/functions	Autonomous functional structures that can be occupied by an individual without ties to the body. Its nature is trust and personal commitment.	
Control	Length of operation	Longevity of the university from its foundation or date of establishment to the present	Management report
Control	Campuses	Number of campuses the entity has	
Control	Number of students	Number of students enrolled	
Control	Number of employees	Number of teaching staff and administrative technicians	
Moderator	Governance Committee	Existence or not of a governance committee. 1 = the university has a committee; 0 = no committee	
Moderator	Governance Body	Body created by the entity to assist governance and without regulatory imposition. 1 = the university has a body; 0 = no body	
Governance Index			
Dependent	Governance Levels	Inexpressive: Does not adopt; there is a formal decision or approved plan to adopt (0% to 14.99%)	TCU Governance Survey or Index to be developed
		Initial: Adopts to a lesser extent (15% to 39.99%)	
		Intermediate: Partially adopts (40% to 70%)	
		Improved: Adopts completely or to a large extent; adopts (70.01% to 100%)	

Source: Prepared by the author (2023).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The use of governance to achieve institutional improvement, adopting the instruments resulting from the exercise of leadership, strategy and internal controls can generate incremental improvements in the countless processes that involve management. These are always indicated by strategic bodies, such as superior councils or support, and bodies that develop actions that disseminate the principles of good governance, such as the governance committee and the governance body.

Governance in HEIs is a multifaceted challenge that demands the consideration of specific characteristics of each institution, diversity in superior councils, and the training of those involved. The relationship between councils and committees, as well as the presence of a governance body, represent important aspects in the effective implementation of governance models in HEIs. The need to adopt governance-oriented strategies emerges as an important consideration, given that the effective implementation of these practices must not only reflect the institution's tactics, but also be in harmony with the organization's wider objectives, aiming to achieve competitive advantages in the educational scenario.

The study highlights six attributes that can influence the effectiveness of governance in HEIs: Number of councils (a greater number of councils may indicate a more specialized division of responsibilities and functions, positively impacting governance); Election processes (transparency and representation of different segments of the academic community in the

election of council members are fundamental to guarantee the legitimacy and commitment to the objectives of the HEI); Training of councilors (so that they are able to perform their duties efficiently and effectively, with knowledge of the council's rules and procedures and issues relevant to the HEI); Composition and diversity of senior management (different perspectives and experiences contribute to a more enriched and effective decision-making process); Governance Committee (assists in monitoring the institution's management, evaluating risks, performance and compliance); and Governance Bodies (allow for a more comprehensive and specialized approach to governance, focusing on formulating strategies and implementing their practices).

Based on this initial study, it is suggested to carry out research that explores such attributes, in different contexts, topics and levels of analysis.

- a) Empirical analysis of attributes: Investigate how each attribute influences the effectiveness of governance in HEIs, using different research methods, such as interviews, questionnaires and data analysis.
- b) Comparison between different types of HEIs: Analyze the differences in governance between public and private HEIs, of different sizes and regions, and with different missions and objectives.
- c) Case studies: Carry out in-depth case studies in HEIs with different governance models to identify good practices and specific challenges.
- d) Review and deepening of the theoretical proposition: Refine the initial theoretical proposition considering the different variables that can influence the relationship between the characteristics of superior councils and the levels of governance in HEIs.

The importance of carrying out empirical and theoretical research in this context is highlighted, as it not only provides a more holistic understanding of the influence of superior councils on governance levels, but also allows for the identification of new variables and specific strategies. This approach would not only refine the effectiveness of these councils in promoting educational governance, but would also contribute to the development of more precise and targeted strategies by being aligned with the individual missions and objectives of each HEI.

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RCR: Project and initial draft, Methodology development, Data collection and analysis, Bibliographic survey, Bibliographic review, Writing, Active participation in discussions of results. OVO: Project and initial sketch, Methodology development, Approval of the final version.

Editor: Prof. Dr. José Luís Bizelli