

An Exploration on the Value Appeal and Practice Path of University Governance Under the Context of Good Governance

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Abstract

Good governance is a crucial concept in the field of economic and social management. In recent years, it has been increasingly used in the country's public organization governance, and according to it to explore the governance path of the public sector. University is a knowledge-based public organization. The proposal of university good governance derived from social good governance and state good governance. This article holds that under the context of good governance, the university governance takes justice and efficiency as its value choice. Its legitimacy, rule of law, transparency and other practical features will help to promote running a school fairly. At the same time, its accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness is also important to ensure the generation of efficiency. Based on this understanding, the article further proposes the path to achieve university good governance. That is to build modern university system, strengthen information disclosure, set up dialogue platform, and improve the corporate governance structure and so on.

Key words: Good governance; University governance; Value appeal; Practice path

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INTRODUCTION

The modern university has been far from the medieval guild and premises. And it's difficult for traditional management ways to adapt to the management needs of the modern university. From the perspective of the diachronic character, university management experiences sharing mode, bureaucratic mode and legal mode, and in different management forms, its internal value-oriented has been gradually changed. But overall it follows the two-dimensional evolution form of efficiency and fairness. With the modernization of national university's governance capacity proposed, in order to realize justice and efficiency of university governance better and effectively, we believe the introduction of university good governance is a possible path. Under the concept of good governance, university governance is more emphasis on legitimacy, rule of law, also emphasizing consultation, inclusiveness, transparency and participation. Good governance is a new governance pattern, which regards justice and efficiency as value appeal.

1. WHAT IS THE "UNIVERSITY GOOD GOVERNANCE"?

Dong Zhongshu, an ancient politician of China wrote that "if there were no change when the state needs, the wisest politician can not govern the state well" in his book. This concept of good governance in China derived from ancient political lexicon, which has the implication of good governance. In the contemporary Western World, good governance is understood as "a sound legal system and law-abiding concept, and has a good administrative system to execute public spending properly and fairly, as well as a highly responsible government, transparency policy (World Bank)" (Ding, 2009). Professor Yu (2000)

believes that “when Chinese scholars use the concept of ‘good governance’, it does not only express the traditional meaning of China, but also use of the meaning of ‘good governance’ in contemporary western.” Specifically, on the governance body, good governance is no longer confined to the government and public institution, which can be either the political state or civil society. The civil society has a governance body position. As to power operation, good governance distinct from traditional top-down management mode, but it’s an interactive process, through consultation, cooperation, and partnership to establish identity, so as to implement the management of public affairs. As for the governance efficiency, good governance can make up for the risks brought by the failure of market and government, and with functions of efficient governance. In short, good governance is the social management process, which can maximize the public interest, and its essential characteristic is that the cooperation between the government and citizen in the management of public life, the new relations between political state and civil society, and the best condition with the features of legitimacy, transparency, accountability, rule of law, responsiveness and inclusiveness and so on (Shi, 2012).

University good governance is the ideal state for university governance. Under the concept of good governance, within the constraint of the contract and the law, stakeholders should govern higher education organization freely and equally, and also multiple subjects should participate in it. Its essential feature is that the government and citizen manage the university cooperatively. Compared with previous university management mode, good governance puts more emphasis on coordination, rather than the control, and not only focus on results, also attaches great importance to the process. We put forward university good governance mainly based on three reasons. First of all, the inherent logic requirements of university governance mode change. Throughout the history of the evolution of university, it has roughly gone through classical autonomy guild mode, bureaucratic mode and legal person mode and so on. Efficiency and justice are the main reason and internal logic of change. Good governance is proposed in order to better improve the efficiency of university education and at the same time to realize educational justice. Secondly, the rise of civil society. Civil society is the foundation of good governance, with the typical features of pluralistic, open, public and autonomous. It regards the protection of civil rights and participation in politics as its gist, and exists in the middle field between the state and university. University governance is not only the responsibility of the state and university organizers, but also the stakeholders’ responsibility and obligation. When citizens participate in it, it’s beneficial to prevent abusing the public power and to promote the

public policy more scientific and democratic. Thirdly, it based on the requirements of modernization of university governance capacity. It’s not only restricted to school self-management, but also the comprehensive governance of government, market and society. The advantages of good governance are that give play to social and market forces, and use co-governance instead of traditional single subject governance, promoting form a “run a school by laws, self-management, democratic supervision and social participation” governance structure.

2. THE VALUE APPEALS OF UNIVERSITY GOOD GOVERNANCE

The basic elements of good governance have legitimacy, rule of law, transparency, accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness, etc.. From the perspective of value choice, legitimacy, rule of law and transparency reflects significant justice demands, and accountability, responsiveness as well as inclusiveness embodies the guiding role of efficiency. University good governance is the use of the good governance theory in the field of higher education, and in the context of good governance, university governance also manifest the same practice characteristics and value appeal.

2.1 University Good Governance Has a Sense of Justice

“Only under the condition of democracy, good governance can be truly realized, and if there were no democracy, good governance would not exist.” (Yu, 2007, January 1) When Rawls discusses the justice value of national good governance, he believes that good governance is good for the state to realize justice in ethics. What’s more, he holds that justice is not only an important premise for the design of good governance, but also an important result of good governance practices. Good governance is a process, which makes state, society, universities’ teachers and students use justice way to realize the value of justice. Under the context of good governance, the sense of justice of university governance shows the attention of the legitimacy and the fear of legal system as well as the transparency of the process.

2.1.1 Take “Legitimacy” as a Basis

The legitimacy of university good governance is not fully equivalent to the legality, but rather refers to conscious recognition and obedience of citizens to authority and order. It respects and meets the subject demands, and with the value basis of justice. In Habermas’s view, legitimacy is a gist in accordance of which some demands can be regarded as correct and just existence, and we admit the fact that the stability of the ruling order depends on itself (at least) (Habermas, 1989). Therefore, only on the premise of consensus and recognition, university governance behavior may have legitimacy. If legitimacy

is higher, the possibility and degree of good governance are greater and the higher. In a university school-running practice, the legitimacy of university good governance requires that public service agencies do its best to coordinate the conflict of interest between university and government and university and society. Thus, it makes the management behavior of higher education obtain the greatest degree of recognition and consent of the university internal and external citizens.

2.1.2 Take “Rule of Law” as the Guarantee

With the development of democracy, rule of law has been become an important way of social governance. Practical requirements of rule of law demands that university governance take law as the criterion, running school in accordance with law, and any management activities should based on legal framework, using rule of law replace rule of man, and regarding spirit of contract as the core concept of modern university governance. The direct target of rule of law is to regulate stakeholders’ behavior, to manage university affairs effectively and to ensure teaching order. However, fundamentally, the direct target is to guarantee people’s freedom, right of equality and to realize their dominant position, when they participate in university governance. “Rule of law is a basic requirement of good governance. If there were no sound legal system, no full respect for the law, and no social procedure established on the law, there would be no good governance.” (Liu, 2011) The rule of law requires government and university to establish a sound system of rules, and strengthen the contract to regulate and constraint behavior subjects and take the system to promote justice.

2.1.3 Take “Transparency” as a Request

The transparency of university governance requires that university should public information in time. That means in addition to the special situation, all information should be informed to university stakeholders and accept the supervision which comes from the external forces, especially can’t hide the information about agency by mandate. More participation and transparency can effectively reduce the hidden risk of information between agency main body and delegation main body, such as school financial revenues, professional title evaluation and academic evaluation, etc. Under the concept of good governance, the university also has authority to manage itself, and the government is no longer the only subject. Therefore, the crux is to obtain information about other subjects. Fully information disclosure will contribute to social forces and internal democratic forces to participate in university public-decision process and implement effective supervision. Information disclosure is the key to achieve justice.

2.2 University Good Governance Is Efficient Governance

Efficiency is a concept in the field of economics, meaning the ratio of input and output. It is the state

of resources allocation and use, which can effectively reflect the subject’s enthusiasm, the spirit of innovation and productivity. As a kind of “good governance”, good governance not only guards conscience, but also pursues efficiency. University good governance on the efficiency requirements reflects in two aspects: validity of form and validity of essence. Validity of form demands that university should meet the requirements of stakeholders when arrange for subject and programming in the governance process, and with the form of legitimacy, which has already discussed above. Validity of essence mainly investigates the degree of realization about university mission and function and the situation of promoting the public interest, etc. Under the context of good governance, university governance attaches important to responsibility, responsiveness and inclusiveness, which benefits for promoting the generation of efficiency.

2.2.1 Take “Responsibility” as a Way to Promote Efficiency

The sense of responsibility is the important virtue requirement for university’s managers. Good governance takes the maximization of public interest as its goal. It requires that stakeholders should regard the development of public interest as their own obligation, abandoning their private interest and desire. Only in this way, can we indeed accomplish our goal of university’s development. Responsibility is the basic element of efficiency. In the process of university governance, every organization and individuals who involved in the university governance are a union. Therefore, they must make clear about their own responsibility, carry out their functions, to get over the lazy and negative behaviors, strengthen the organization’s reformation and examination, and take the sense of responsibility as the basic requirements in university main body’s running.

2.2.2 Take “Responsiveness” to Promote Efficiency

In the macro sense, the social responsiveness to university governance mainly shows on personnel training specifications and quality requirements. The university not only explores the truth and pursues the true, but also according to the market develops education. It fulfills the social service functions by responding to the social concerns about the personnel training. Therefore, the university can publish report on quality of personnel training and of employment regularly, etc. At the same time, society can be accountability for universities. In the micro sense, managers must make timely and responsible reaction in response to the requirement of stakeholders in the process of university governance, and it can not be delayed. Hence, university can explain school policies and answer questions as well as respond effectively to internal demands through the initiative to consult the society, teachers and students regularly.

2.2.3 Take “Inclusiveness” to Promote Efficiency

Under the value-oriented, university governance reflects the process of inclusion and consultation. The biggest

advantage of this inclusive development that can reduce the negative impact which is caught by the rigidity of the school system and management, avoiding the governance risk caught by “rational cage”, as Weber described. And then the better balance and flexible governance are beneficial to release running schools blocking force slowly, and establish the problem-solving mechanisms on the basis of consultations to seek efficient development of higher education organizations with the cooperation. Under the concept of good governance, the inclusive development of university is to recognize the existence of different interests and its differences, and then by negotiating and establishing a common goal to enhance intrinsic motivation of university development

Of course, the elements which can promote the efficiency are not limited to the responsibility, responsiveness and inclusiveness in the practice of good governance. The concept of good governance in pursuing the efficiency and its possibility also comes from its own justice. What’s more, “justice”, the connotation of good governance, will also be able to promote governance effect.

3. THE PRACTICE APPROACH OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE UNDER THE CONTEXT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

University governance is an ideal status. Based on the logic of institutional change, good governance is not only an external choice but also the need of university internal change, as well as a new form of the two-dimensional evolution of efficiency and justice value. The realization of good governance means that the realization of university governance justice and efficiency.

3.1 Shaping Contract Spirit, Establish and Improve Institutional System

The social order is not by nature, and it’s established on the basis of negotiation and free will, and also the result of balance between interest subjects. Shaping contract spirit is to maintain the authority of the contract and give play to its positive value in university governance. Besides, it means that we should have regulations and law in university management and operation, and replace the identity governance and administrative governance with contract governance. From the point of internal governance, university should establish and improve institutional system, which takes university charter as the main body. University charter is the general contract framework about university internal and external relations, so other internal university rules and regulations should abide by it. University charter is righteous, because that university charter is enacted by the multiple subjects and experts, and it established on legal procedure. From the point of external governance, good governance requires

that government should improve the relevant laws and regulations, clear the relations among “state-society-university”, clarify their respective power boundaries, and use administrative power to promote the construction of university internal system. In fact, good governance is the national rights to return to the society. Good governance is a process of power to the people, and it’s also a positive and effective cooperation between government and citizens (Zhang, 2005). Therefore, when we design the system, we should locate the government as one of the university governance subject, rather than absolute and only power subject. University institutions themselves, society and enterprises have corresponding interest appeals. If there were no perfect system as a guarantee, the interest of marginal groups has the potential to digestion. All in all, the realization of university justice relies on the perfection and implementation of contract. What’s more, we should make institutional culture and contract spirit spill over into all aspects of university management, and change the alienation phenomenon that individuals overtop regulations.

3.2 Intensify Information Disclosure, and Enhance the Transparency of Governance

The modern university organization is becoming more sophisticated and complex, so the transparency becomes to be the inherent requirement to govern university effectively. On the one hand, presently in China’s university, the academic power, executive power, political power and even democratic power are implemented by agency and it takes representative democracy as the path. And the biggest risk for this design is that information asymmetry, and under the circumstance of absence of external supervision, there are possibilities for the information hiding and the maximization of basic interest. On the other hand, under the concept of good governance, university governance is decentralized pluralistic governance, and it has numerous subject elements. The premise of ensuring governance justice is to implement information disclosure and to enhance transparency, as well as to make stakeholders obtain objective information about university running, so that it can respond to social need and concerns. Based on this, It is necessary and urgent to strengthen information disclosure and enhance the transparency of governance. Information disclosure not only reflects justice but also enhances governance efficiency. We believe that establishing the university hearing system and playing network media functions are alternative paths to implement information disclosure and enhance the transparency of governance. By the view of “hearing system” which starts from western judicial system. With the widespread use and development of the judicial hearing system, this system spread to legislative system and then it is accepted by the social management department. In recent years, China’s universities also have introduced the system design, so it has much improved

the governance efficiency and enriches the connotation of modern university system. For example, Zhejiang University and Zhejiang Gongshang University implement hearing system and intramural dispute ruling system in the internal management. That means they let the staffs deal with dispute matters by themselves and students who has received punishments have the chance to defend for his right through hearing system.

3.3 Relying on New Media Technology, Build Deliberative and Inclusive Dialogue Platform

With the development of information technology and the wide application of new media, virtual community becomes an effective platform for university governance. Virtual community is “ignore the authority, don’t accept inferior, and hierarchy and heroism doesn’t work here” (He, 2012), all stakeholders and non stakeholders can enjoy equal membership in the community. Equality and justice of good governance are consistent with deceneration of virtual society. In the virtual community, to build a dialogue platform is the possible path to realize good governance for modern university. At the same time, the development of modern information technology also provides the technical foundation for the construction of platform, especially for the appearance and application of micro-blog, people could chat through campus BBS, and it makes effective negotiation and tolerance a possibility. In the present, micro-blog has become a way to govern public affairs into government management field, and “use of micro-blog for the people”, effectively close the distance between the government and the masse. Government affairs micro-blog has played a positive role in social management innovation, listen to the voice of the people, and the masses participation in political affairs. “The rise of micro power” to promote the national dialogue with civil society and inclusiveness, is an important driving force for social good governance. University governance is also public affairs. From the functional point of view, university is society oriented, market oriented, which is the source of the vitality of university. Listen to the external sounds, to establish a dialogue mechanism between society and other subjects, and in virtual communities, upper and lower interaction or parallel interaction, is not only to mobilize the universities’ enthusiasm to participate in governance, but also reflects the ideas of running school.

3.4 Establishing and Improving Corporate Governance Structure, Strengthen Governance Accountability

Under the current system context, the essential attribute of China’s universities is still the extension of administrative organizations. In terms of status, universities are affiliated with the government, and on the function, they carry out the government plan. Therefore, the government also

becomes an only main body to govern the university, which makes social and market forces not possible to participate in university affairs. At the same time, the state is a fantasy community, and it’s difficult for university governance main body to realize personification. That means as a university funder its identity is uncertain, with ambiguity, and thus delegation main body also has uncertainty or vagueness. Consequently, no one is responsible for the operation of the University, resulting in inefficient governance (Shi, 2006). Therefore, we hold that the establishment and improvement of the corporate governance structure are a vital way to overcome the inefficient governance. Corporation is the personification of social organization in the law, with qualification of civil subject, and has ability to bear civil liabilities and enjoy rights. According to the “General Principles of the Civil Law”, corporation of university affiliated with institutional person. Besides “Higher Education Law” article 30 also stipulates that from the date of approval of the University, it obtains legal personality. In that sense, the legal status of university is undoubted.

However, at present universities’ corporate governance exists several problems in different degrees, such as, legal institution is not perfect, the legal authority is not clear, legal responsibility is not clear, as well as the problem of operation of specific rights, democratic management and supervision, governance information disclosure and so on. (Guan, 2011)

Thus, it’s an important task for realizing university good governance to improve the corporate governance structure. In the construction of the corporate governance structure, we should allocate rights rationally, make clear the legal authority and responsibility, establish legal organization and corresponding constraint accountability mechanisms, and achieve the separation and mutual supervision of policy-making, implementation and monitoring power, thus play the corporation’s governance functions and improve governance efficiency.

In summary, good governance is a process which maximizes the university public interest. It emphasizes that the university should cooperate with citizens and also emphasizes the authority of civil autonomy and non-government, reflecting the democratic requirements under the background of globalization, with the age characteristics. To a certain extent, the realization of legitimate, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, and accountability, etc. depends on the process of national good governance and the development of civil society. University good governance is a governance form under the higher democratic environment. In this article, under the context of good governance, we analyze that the connotation of university governance and the practice path of good governance should be based on the current social context. We can image, with the development of civil society and democracy, the form of university good governance path should adjust and improve constantly.

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