

A Bibliometric Review on Sound Governance in Education: Research Trend and Policy Impact

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the application of sound governance principles in education by analyzing research publications and identifying the limited number of studies on the topic. The research used a two-stage method: first, a bibliometric analysis of 128 documents from 106 sources in the Scopus database (1996-2024) using RStudio and VOSviewer, and second, a systematic review of literature directly connecting "sound governance" and "education." The results show a significant increase in publications, with a 22.83% annual growth rate and an average of 14.13 citations per document. Thematic analysis revealed topics focused on sustainable development, health policy, and public administration. Critically, "education" was not a primary topic in these publications, showing it is not a central part of the existing research. The systematic literature review confirmed this gap, identifying only six relevant articles that directly investigate sound governance in an educational context. The conclusion is that while effective governance is required to improve educational quality, efficiency, and equity, the subject is not adequately researched. Therefore, more direct studies are necessary to create and implement functional governance models that will improve educational institutions.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, education governance, sound governance, transparency, international collaboration

Contribution/Originality

This study is original because it systematically shows the lack of connection between the increasing number of studies on "sound governance" and the education sector. Using a two-stage bibliometric and systematic review, the study finds that "education" is not a common keyword or theme in the main published research on governance. This lack of research was confirmed when a targeted database search found only six articles directly connecting the two subjects. Additionally, the research shows that while studies on sound governance are increasing in other public sectors, the same is not true for education. This investigation identifies this specific lack of research and states the need to apply governance models to educational policy to improve its quality, efficiency, and equity, providing new, factual information for the field of educational administration.

INTRODUCTION

The development of an increasingly complex and problematic era and times, full of various changes that occur, has played an essential role in the issue of sound governance in multiple sectors, especially government, business, and education. (Li et al., 2012). Through a concept of sound governance, it produces several scopes in applying basic principles, in the form of several aspects of value, namely transparency, accountability, efficiency,

participation and sustainability. This follows the concept of administration, organization, and an institution. (Albareda et al., 2008)

Through a more specific concept of sound governance, this can be offered through approaches that can be more holistic and systematically aligned with the application of these principles. (Farazmand, 2013). Following this, sound governance will include some things that can be effective in the operational context. Still, it can be resilient in the face of changes and challenges at the institutional and policy levels. (Setyadiharja et al., 2017).

Through the critical education sector, this can create an inclusive, knowledgeable and competitive society. Effective education not only serves to support economic progress but also encourages innovation and the improvement of quality and human capital.. Nevertheless, the realization of quality education is contingent upon the presence of robust and transparent governance structures (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022).

Through sound governance in education, the value of implementing policies and programmes that facilitate resources efficiently, as well as equitable, fair access, and by formulating decision-making processes aligned with the interests and implementation of performance is carried out continuously and consistently. This approach provides significant results for each educational institution in helping it efficiently respond to global changes and the changing needs of an ever-evolving society. (Saguin, 2019).

As an educator and in the management of human resources, it is seen that the need for an educational drive, with a hope to establish a clear role, so that each member and staff will be able to approach both the ability of each special member, human resources, and also the museum education (Henry, 2006). This has yet to result in the potential outcomes of the strategy compared to the level of risk seen. However, the conclusions show that sound governance has been recognised in education. However, the research examines explicitly how this effective governance can be applied more efficiently in the education sector, which is still relatively rare. (Burns & Köster, 2016). Through previous results, it was found that there are still many problems that occur in governance, both at a macro level, namely related to government and business, as well as the lack of attention given to governance in education (Marouli, 2021)

According to the literature, this systematic review of methods is a valuable asset for researchers, especially for organisers and analysts, who want to build on published works. This study aims to develop a robust theoretical framework by examining relevant literature within the context of educational governance for the benefit of all. The findings will offer practical and theoretical insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to enhance educational governance.

Moreover, it is anticipated that this study will contribute significantly to the advancement of the education system by introducing document management that is reliable and adaptive to emerging challenges. By aligning effective governance with established educational objectives, educational systems can become more responsive to global dynamics, ensuring quality and inclusive education delivery to all citizens.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the trends and patterns in developing research on implementing sound governance principles in education?
- 2) To what extent can sound governance in education improve quality, efficiency, and equity?
- 3) What are the main obstacles to implementing sound governance concepts in education?
- 4) How can future research agendas contribute to advancing education governance?

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in two principal stages. A bibliometric analysis and literature review were conducted. These two steps were undertaken to ascertain research trends and examine the theoretical underpinnings of journals pertinent to the research topic. The first method for analyzing scientific knowledge and literature is bibliometric analysis, which combines traditional statistical techniques with text annotation and network analysis methods. (Gaviria-Marin et al., 2019). Applications such as VOSviewer and RStudio were used for bibliometric analysis. The approach consists of four main steps (Herrera-Franco, Montalván-Burbano, Mora-Frank, & Bravo-Montero, 2021).

- 1) Definition of terms and search equation;
- 2) Selection of databases, initial search, and inclusion or exclusion of documents;
- 3) Data download;
- 4) Analysis of results.

This method identifies the most influential works, authors, and scholarly institutions within specific subject areas. (Trabskaia et al., 2023). Documents are methodically gathered and assessed with research studies conducted over an extended period using databases of abstracts and citations from academic literature, such as Scopus. Using

a more illustrative representation of the descriptive data, the initial analyses undertaken in this descriptive manner can be directly viewed using the biblioshiny software in the RStudio application. The second data analysis was continued with a VOSViewer program that can be used as a more comprehensive form of network visualisation development to facilitate a better understanding of the interrelationships between several other study components. Thus, data was searched using the key strings 'TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sound governance") AND LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")'. Furthermore, the search was limited to English-language sources. Moreover, the search was limited to studies with source type 'j' (journal articles). 128 documents were identified based on a predefined set of keywords.

The findings from this bibliometric analysis formed the basis for identifying more comprehensive and relevant literature for the next stage. In the second stage of this research, a literature review was conducted using the keywords 'sound governance' and 'education'. In this case, six journals relevant to the subject matter were identified, although they were not included in the list of most-cited or prolific journals.

Each journal identified through the keyword search was thoroughly evaluated to ensure its relevance to the study of sound governance and education. The content of these journals included an examination of the methodologies utilized, a delineation of the key findings, and an investigation of the practical applications of sound governance in the education industry. While only a limited number of journals were identified, their content proved invaluable in developing the theoretical framework of this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of the bibliographic research, 'sound governance' was covered in 128 documents from 106 sources, which covered the period from 1996 to 2024. Since 1996, the annual growth rate of sound governance in education has always been higher than the cut-off of 22.83%, which means that the field has gained interest. The study results showed that most publications had more than one author (2.34 co-authors per document), with 22.83% of the published research being co-published with other countries. There is a general need for sound governance in education in many different countries, compensating for some odd methods and research areas published in the literature.

Descriptive Analysis

Bibliometrix is an R tool for bibliometric analysis that can be used to perform descriptive analysis. Biblioshiny is a shiny application that provides a web interface for bibliometrix and supports researchers in the use of key bibliometrix features such as data collection, data filters, analysis and plots for four different level metrics, as well as clustering analysis and knowledge structure analysis.



Figure 1 Overview of analysis results from RStudio biblioshiny
Source: Processed Data in RStudio (2025)

The bibliometric data indicate that the concept of sound governance was discussed in 128 documents from 106 sources between 1996 and 2024. The study demonstrates that the annual growth rate has been consistently above 22.83%, suggesting considerable research on the subject under investigation. This further proves that mechanics are integral to sophisticated technological systems within a civilised framework. The initial appearance of this fundamental orientation can be observed in documents dating back 7,692 years, which is understandable given the desire to examine recent research outcomes. Notably, there are 370 additional keywords (Keywords Plus) in addition to 450 author keywords, which indicate the extent of variation in subjects and methods warranted by

the literature. A total of 280 authors were affiliated with the writing of the documents, with 40 of them acting as sole authors, which illustrates the extent of interactivity in terms of academic contributions. In the context of author collaboration, 44 documents were authored by a single individual, with an average of 2.34 contributors per document, indicating a moderate level of cooperation in this endeavor. A noteworthy 22.83% of the authors engaged in international collaborations, reinforcing this investigation's objective. Concerning document type, most of the documents were articles (126 in total), with one being a joint article. The mean number of citations per document was 14.13, which may indicate the esteem in which subject scientists held this research.

The bibliometric data provides sufficient evidence to indicate the level of development of research on the topic during the period under investigation. The fundamental axes of the discussion on sound governance involve a range of sources and international collaboration. The rate at which the discipline is expanding and the average number of citations per document above 34 demonstrate that these contributions to the academic environment are highly relevant within the existing literature.

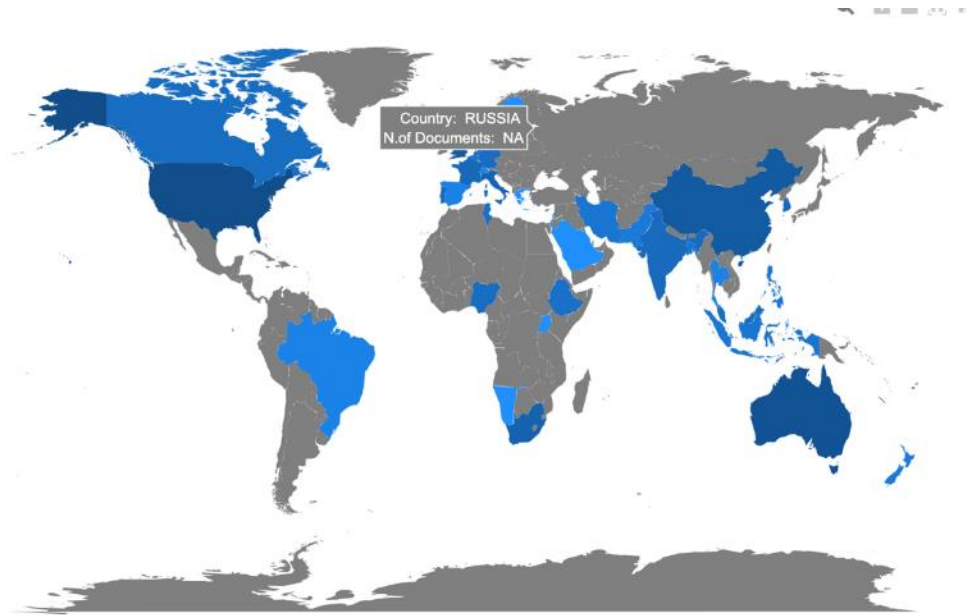


Figure 2 Article Production by Country
Source: Processed Data in RStudio (2025)

As the bibliometric data (Figure 2) indicates, the keyword "sound governance" encompasses the discussion on the sound governance theme from 1996 to 2024, with 128 documents from 106 sources. The annual compounded growth rate remains at 22.83%, which indicates a considerable amount of energetic research activity concerning the studies undertaken. The documents' age is an average of 7.69 years, indicating the active incorporation of contemporary studies within the specific research domain. The research outcomes include 370 additional keywords (Keywords Plus) and 450 author keywords, which confirm the numerous themes and approaches included in the literature that have been explored. Several authors contributed to the preparation of the documents, 280 individuals were involved, including 40 sole authors. This evidence suggests a high degree of authorship concentration in the academic output. Concerning author collaboration, 44 documents were authored by a single individual. The mean number of co-authors per document is 2.34, indicating high teamwork in producing these documents. International collaborations constituted 22.83% of the total number of authors, which evinces the authors' proficiency in international writing. Regarding document type, most documents (126) are articles, while one document is a joint article written by the same authors. The mean number of citations per document was 14.13, which indicates the research's attention and influence within the scientific community.

The bibliometric data offers a systematic review of the growth of studies on the subject matter over the specified time frame. The discussions on effective governance illustrate this topic's multifaceted nature and significance within academic circles, underscoring the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and the importance of considering diverse perspectives in scholarly discourse. The high growth rate and exceptionally high average citations per document indicate that these scholarly inputs are effectively utilized in the relevant literature.

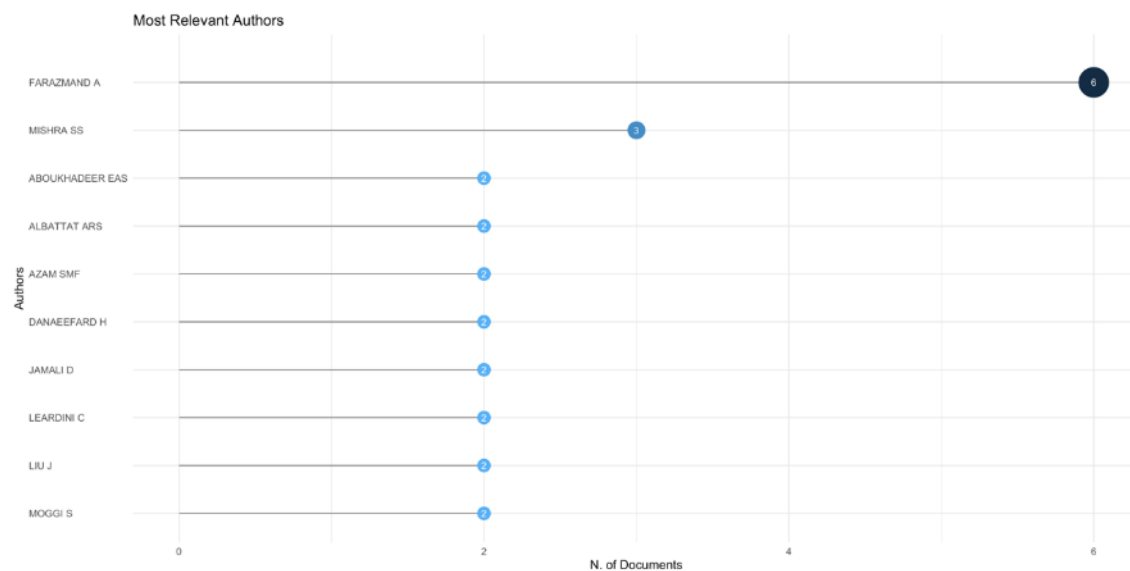


Figure 3 Publication production by author
Source: Processed Data in RStudio (2025)

Considering the data presented in Figure 3, it can be posited that author Farazman A is the most prolific contributor to the discourse on sound governance. As might be expected, most of the publications are from Farazman A, who has made a notable contribution with six publications in the field. Subsequently, Mishra SS has published three times, while Aboukhadeer, Albattat, Azam, Danaeefard, Jamali, Leardini C, Liu J, Moggi S, Rossi G, and Stewart have each published twice. Other authors have published once. In light of these findings, it becomes evident that a considerable number of scientists have made valuable contributions to research in the field of sound governance. Of particular note is the active role played by Farazman A.

This understanding reinforces the perception of sound governance as it is understood and researched by various bodies. The contributions of each scholar enhance the body of literature on governance, which is both intriguing and multifaceted. While research on sound governance remains comparatively limited, particularly in comparison to the extensive work of Farazman A, there are promising avenues for further advancement in this domain.

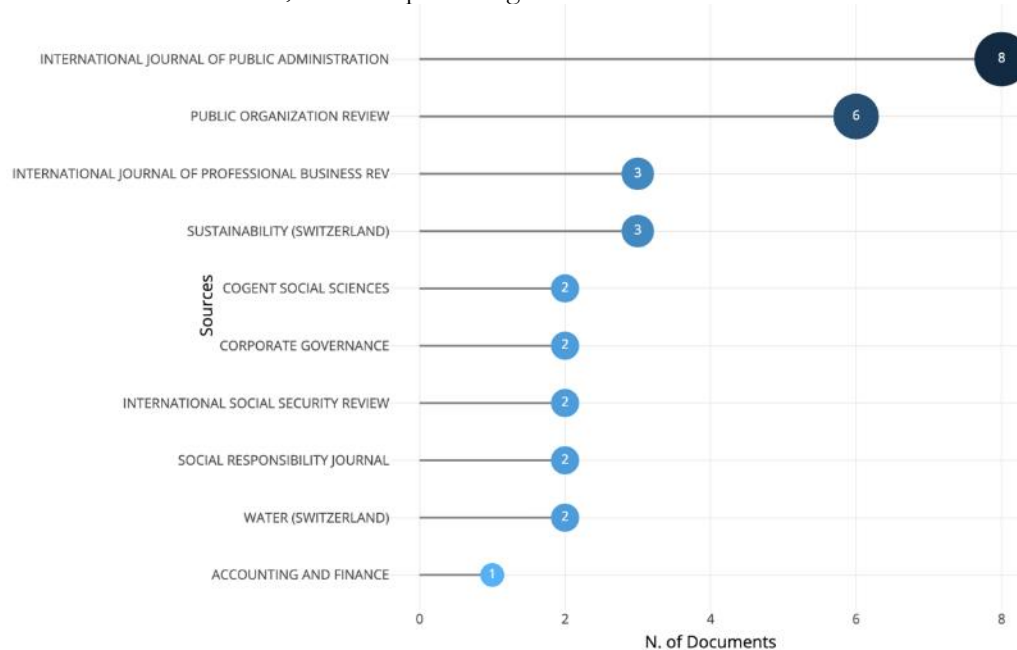


Figure 4 Publication production by author
Source: Processed Data in RStudio (2025)

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processes the company has directed and controlled. Various stakeholders are represented through ethical conduct, accountability and responsibility, emphasizing the value of transparency and fairness in decision-making.

Civil society, communities, and governments are key stakeholders in this regard, and it is essential to engage and collaborate with all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, local communities, and government agencies, to advance sustainable development initiatives. The results of the government forming these collaborations will promote development and address issues, including corruption and environmental degradation, captured by the keywords “public policy,” “role of the state,” and “local government.” It follows that progress on sustainable development will be made through effective governance mechanisms, inclusive decision-making processes, and collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders that can address economic, social, and environmental challenges.

Cluster 2

After looking at the results of the dominant keywords, a green network visualization is drawn, including benchmarking, comparative studies, compensation, cooperation, economics, ethics, financial management, health care policy, health policy, health services, people, infrastructure, leadership, organization, policy, and policy making. Some of these keywords will show various aspects related to one, forming the articulation of policy, health and health management. These terms will examine the processes in creating, implementing, and assessing policies to improve overall health outcomes and services.

Other keywords, such as economics, financial management, compensation, and infrastructure, will indicate some of the economic-like aspects of the healthcare system, including financing mechanisms, resource allocation, and infrastructure investment, to support the healthcare delivery system.

In the field of health policy and management, it can shape the outcome of decisions related to the delivery of health services. These outcomes will shape the importance of effective leadership and organizational structures in driving and managing health policy initiatives. In addition, comparative and benchmarking studies focus on evaluating and comparing different healthcare systems, policies and practices to characterize optimal practice outcomes and areas for improvement.

In general, the keywords in cluster 2 indicate a discussion of the multifaceted nature of health policy and management, encompassing aspects such as governance, economics, ethics, leadership, and organizational management, which collectively with their outcomes can drive effective health service delivery and improve public health outcomes.

Cluster 3

In a cluster 3 network visualization represented in blue, one can see the most prominent keywords, which are “autonomy,” “bureaucracy,” “citizen participation,” “Covid-19,” “democracy,” “democratic public administration,” “globalization,” “governance,” “public administration,” “public sector,” “sound governance,” and “stakeholder.” The above-mentioned keywords are rather diverse but reflect the details of the public sector and the problems various governments face today. There is a great emphasis on democracy and citizen participation. The public needs to be actively involved in governmental decision-making to build a more inclusive and people-oriented system. At the same time, sound governance shows that an appropriate, efficient, and effective administration is needed to manage public affairs. Nevertheless, the changing nature of globalization over time has given rise to the idea of bureaucracy as a hurdle that must be tackled to achieve responsiveness against far more dynamic changes brought by global forces. Indeed, crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic further illustrate the need for timely and efficient governmental responses to urgent public health threats, underlining the necessity of multi-stakeholder coordination in responding to these kinds of issues in a wholesome fashion. Consequently, the themes rendered from the keywords reflect a densely connected set of relationships between democracy, sound governance, globalization, bureaucracy and governance in response to emergencies.

In conclusion, in the three clusters that have been successfully identified, the three clusters will produce points related to the concept of sound governance. These points or themes provide results that sustainable development and effective governance practices in achieving balanced economic growth through environmental protection efforts (Cluster 1), then through several public health policies and management to improve the quality of public health services and outcomes (Cluster 2), and interactions through several complex aspects between democratic principles, sound governance, and government responses to crises, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cluster 3). The principles built on will result in sound governance in various areas, including economic development, health services, and crisis response, resulting in a strong and practical foundation.

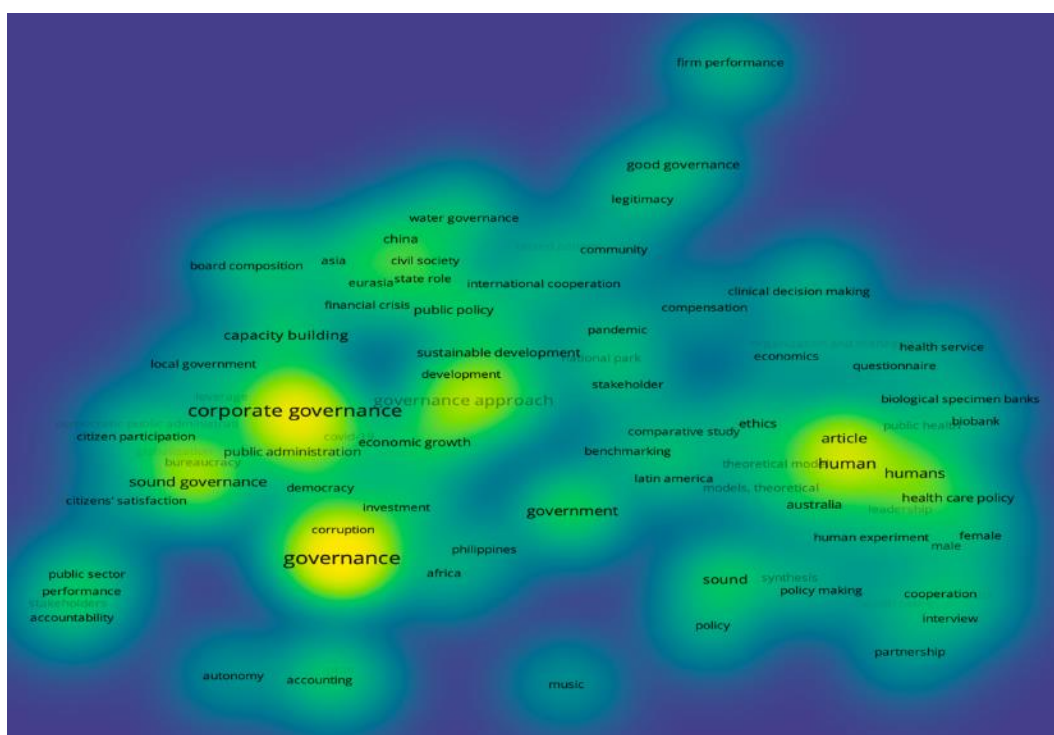


Figure 7 Density Visualization
Source: Processed Data in VOSViewer (2025)

A visualization of the density of the data can also show that the results of data analysis about sound governance are still not given enough attention in the literature. Using this method can show results that have been marked, indicating that the data received a low score at each level, so this is a concern regarding the low level of attention this topic has received. Density visualization can also show that sound governance has a low density level in the literature. Even though it has been around for a long time, literature data methods on sound governance are still limited. So, the results of this analysis method will emphasize results whose relevance will continue to develop in a sound governance context. According to the results of the Analysis with VOSViewer, it can be shown that even though "sound governance" was identified as a key phrase, this phrase would not appear among the most frequently occurring points in the frequency of occurrence chart. In contrast, "corporate governance," "governance approach," and "people" were the keywords that appeared most frequently. This finding is interesting because keywords typically have the highest frequency of appearance in VOSViewer analysis.

The findings indicate that research on "sound governance" remains predominantly focused on "corporate governance" and "governance approach." In contrast, studies that focus specifically on "sound governance" have not been subjected to the same level of rigorous investigation as other areas of governance. This suggests a novel approach to research on governance, offering an opportunity to investigate more comprehensive and detailed aspects of sound governance.

In this study, researchers investigated aspects of sound governance in education to determine whether the concept is related to sound governance in the analysis using VOSViewer. No education-related keywords were identified based on the researcher's findings in the VOSViewer analysis. Based on this finding, the researcher hypothesizes that research connecting sound governance with education represents a novel and intriguing avenue for further investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON SOUND GOVERNANCE AND EDUCATION

Subsequently, we conducted a second search using the keywords "sound governance" and "education" in the Scopus database, which yielded six relevant articles. The researcher then proceeded to analyze the articles that were still accessible. Given the limited number of articles available for this study, the researcher conducted a qualitative review of each article. It is evident that each of the six articles has been previously reported, and the findings have been summarized.

The first article, with the author (Nelson et al., 2023), has the article title is “Models, theoretical design and formal evaluation of integrated specialist community health service provision for the first 2000 days: a scoping review”. This article discusses providing integrated specialist community health services for the first 2000 days of a child's life. The relevance of this article to sound governance lies in the importance of having a clear governance

structure with shared values and philosophies generated through co-design with parents and community members for service planning, implementation, service delivery, and evaluation. Based on the researcher's analysis, the main characteristics of this article can be described as follows:

- 1) Understanding the importance of easy access for vulnerable families through social and health services.
- 2) Use qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate intervention outcomes, such as specially designed tools to measure total family connectedness to health and social services.
- 3) A focus on governance includes clear governance structures with shared values and philosophies generated through co-design with parents and community members.
- 4) Recommendation to have clear practice frameworks and program logic models that define outcomes and evaluation strategies.
- 5) Emphasis on leadership that involves a participatory approach, promoting trust and balanced power relationships among the various professions.

To see some of the characteristics in this article about how integrated specialist public health services can be designed, implemented, evaluated and managed well so that the results of this analysis can support the health and welfare of children and families.

The second article, authored by Jazuli et al. (2022), through the title "The Importance of Institutional Quality". "Review of the Relevance of Indonesia's Omnibus Law on National Competitiveness". This article conveys the importance of institutional quality in shaping national competitiveness, with special emphasis on the Indonesian Omnibus Law, because this shows the critical role played by strong and effective institutions in encouraging sound governance and sustainable economic growth.

The third article, by Mehanna et al. (2010), is entitled "Governance and Economic Development in MENA Countries." This article examines the relationship between governance and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. This article emphasizes the importance of sound governance in promoting sustainable economic growth. The main characteristics of the article are as follows:

- 1) The article explains that the importance of sound governance can improve economic performance and avoid the poverty trap.
- 2) It is explained that deficiencies in governance are regarded as the underlying cause of suboptimal economic performance and the phenomenon of the lagging trap.
- 3) It is posited that effective governance encompasses the rule of law, transparency, efficacy, accountability, and consensus orientation.
- 4) Proposes that public governance and economic development are mutually reinforcing, forming a virtuous circle.

In light of these considerations, this article offers a comprehensive examination of the significance of effective governance in facilitating sustainable economic development in the MENA region.

The fourth article, authored by Rathgeb Smith (2010) "Nonprofits and Public Administration: The American Review Reconciling Performance Management and Citizen Engagement" is the title. This article addresses the significance of integrating performance management and citizen engagement in nonprofit organizations and public administration. The article's primary relevance to sound governance is demonstrating how the absence of sound governance and citizen engagement can impede the efficacy of performance and program sustainability. Its defining feature provides a framework for government and nonprofit managers to integrate performance management and citizen engagement, emphasizing program objectives, sound governance, and ongoing support for citizen participation. With meticulous attention to community and citizenship, the article posits that innovation and performance by nonprofit organizations can be effectively realized.

The fifth article, authored by Basheka (2009), "Management and Academic Freedom in Higher Educational Institutions," is a journal article. Implications for the Quality of Education in Uganda. This article was identified through a search for articles on "sound governance" and policy. This article examines the relationship between management and academic freedom in higher education institutions in Uganda and its implications for quality education. This article is relevant to "sound governance" because it considers academic freedom a fundamental aspect of effective governance within a country's higher education system. The article's primary characteristics are as follows:

- 1) The article underscores the significance of academic freedom in enhancing the quality of education.
- 2) It elucidates how efficacious management can contribute to academic freedom and the quality of education.
- 3) It presents data and analysis regarding the relationship between management, academic freedom, and the quality of education.

4) The results of this analysis can provide recommendations for several essential improvements in higher education management to improve the quality of education.

The sixth article, written by Blunt (2003), is entitled "Government Conditions, Roles, and Capacity Building Needs in Rebel-Controlled Areas in South Sudan." This discussion will provide an overview of the conditions necessary for sustainable human development and the development of government institutions in rebel-controlled areas of South Sudan. As emphasized in the article, it is essential to highlight the critical role of effective leadership, collaborative partnerships between government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and capacity-building initiatives to encourage transparency and accountability. The main characteristics of the article are as follows:

- 1) Effective leadership is essential in the formation of strong governance institutions.
- 2) This emphasizes the importance of an institutionalized partnership between government and NGOs, increasing the capacity for transparency and accountability.
- 3) This underlines that there is a risk that government practices suitable for the management of the liberation struggle are not ideal for the peaceful civil administration of the state.

CONCLUSION

This research uses a bibliographic study to explain the importance of sound governance in the education sector by examining research trends to produce good quality, efficiency and equity research. This research shows that implementing effective governance in the education sector can improve quality, efficiency and equity. This is effective by hoping the results will have the value of a fairer distribution of educational resources and improve processes. So that through several forms of analytical methods, the results of implementing governance can be identified.

Research Implication

The study's findings, which highlight a significant gap in research connecting sound governance to the education sector, have direct implications for researchers, policymakers, and educational administrators. For researchers, the study systematically reveals that the application of sound governance in education is a critically under-researched field, which presents a clear and validated opportunity for new and impactful investigation. This shows a need for empirical studies that move beyond theory to assess the practical challenges and outcomes of implementing sound governance within schools and universities.

The implications for policymakers and educational administrators are centered on the need for evidence-based decision-making. The notable lack of research suggests that current educational policies may not be benefiting from the established principles of sound governance that are well-documented in other public sectors. Finally, for the academic field of educational governance as a whole, this research provides original, factual data that validates its relative underdevelopment compared to governance studies in other areas.

Research Limitation

However, its application is limited due to factors such as limited resources, a lack of understanding of governance principles, and institutions that are slow to adapt to change. Due to the lack of research in educational contexts, further research is needed, mainly focusing on holistic institutional governance approaches. In addition, this study proposes a future research agenda that focuses on strengthening educational governance.

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Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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