A Bird’s Eye View of Researches on Good Governance: Navigating through the Changing Environment

Prima Naomi
Universitas Paramadina, Faculty of Business & Economics, Jakarta, Indonesia.
E-mail: prima.naomi@paramadina.ac.id

Iqbal Akbar
Technische Universität Berlin, Chair of Innovation Economics, Berlin Germany.

Firmanzah
Universitas Indonesia, Faculty of Business & Economics, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Received May 28, 2020; Accepted July 30, 2020
ISSN: 1735-188X
DOI: 10.14704/WEB/V17I2/WEB17022

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to understand the development of good governance research worldwide covering the practices by the public and private institutions.

Design/methodology/approach – A bibliometric study on 3,375 scientific papers from 1990 to 2018 was conducted, and the data was analyzed to examine the trends and challenges in the worldwide scientific productions for good governance.

Findings – Most research comes from scholars in the high-income countries (70%) and has moved from classical socio-economic topics of good public governance to sustainable environmental development. Post-colonial politics and economy remain unending discussion on good governance in Africa and Asia. Exporting the implementation of good governance from wealthier countries attracts critics and arguments from the third countries.

Practical implications – 3,375 scientific papers used in this research was collected from Scopus database. While it was not the only existing scientific research database, the collection could not guarantee the sample adequacy of the worldwide scientific knowledge on good governance. There are papers that are not Open Access (OA), written in other languages, published in regional/national journals, nor have significant academic impact.

Originality/value – The authors recognize that this study is the first evaluation ever. The result provides the first scientific reference for probing the worldwide practices of good governance for public and private sectors. Under the changing world environment in the form of digital transformation, the rise of intangible economy, and the worldwide trend of co-existence between nationalism and globalism; this paper can provoke the policymakers to rethink good governance both for public and private institutions.
Introduction

The role of good governance for the public and private institutions is deemed important in achieving the intended interests by taking into account the complex and intertwined interests of the different stakeholders. Scholars worldwide have spent their time to examine, discuss, and debate the reality of the good governance dimensions from different corner stones. For example, there are evident research interests on the geographical focus and cross-country differences in setting up the good governance structures for the private and public institutions. Good governance for public institutions reveals a dependence on macro-social, political, and economic set-up such as democracy, desentralisation, and inequality (Grindle, 2009; Jindra & Vaz, 2019; Mawere & Mwanaka, 2015; Zhenglai & Guo, 2011). Meanwhile, good governance in corporations demonstrates a broad topics of corporate configuration and mechanism such as ownership, capital structure, cultural stimulus, and innovation system (Calderini, Garrone, & Sobrero, 2003; Chew and Gillan, 2009; Styhre, 2015).

Navigating through the changing global environment, the implementation of good governance requires a decent understanding on the multidimensional aspects of economics, politics, and socio-cultures. This paper hosts a scientometrics study to identify the dynamics of research field in good governance worldwide. The approach used in this study is by analyzing the scientific publications to deduct the conceptual and practical trends on good governance. This study enriches the existing scientific literatures to understand the complex relations in setting good governance around the world. Moreover, the result of this study can be used to probe the focus of past, present, or future research topics on good governance.

To the best of authors’ knowledge, there is no yet intensive study using scientometrics method to analyze good governance in general – rather specific topics on good governance. Rostam, Ansari, & Mahdavinejad (2018) examine the trends of research in Citizen Participation (CP) in the light of the good governance setting. Muñoz & Sánchez (2015) study the progress of e-Government implementation in the periods of economic crisis using scientometrics method. With the similar interest on the technological government setting; Chugunov, Cronemberger, &Kabanov (2018) examine the pool of scientific knowledge on smart cities and governance worldwide.
The structure of this study will consist of five sections. Section 1 describes theoretical background and hypothesis development. Section 2 presents literature review. Section 3 explains the research design and methodology. Section 4 presents the results and discussions. Section 5 delivers the study conclusions, limitations, and the directions for the future research.

Literature review

The term good governance can be associated with different and multilateral contexts. The complex nature of governance exhibits a variety of interpretation by scholars, researchers and practitioners. In this discussion, good governance is associated with the conceptual and intellectual approach in public and private (corporation) context.

Public Institutions

Good governance, in the public context, can be interpreted as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels (UNDP, 1997). The practices have been widely implemented since the beginning of the 19th century with the first model knowns as Weberian Public Administration. Then it evolved to New Public Management and Neo-Weberian State before the term of good governance is widely used in the modern world (Katsamunska, 2016). In the quest to ground definition of good governance in the public context, Gisselquist (2012) concludes that good governance highlights seven interdisciplinary key elements; democracy and representation, human rights, the rule of law, efficient and effective public management, transparency and accountability, development a list objectives, and a variety of particular economic and political institutions.

Starting in 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has incorporated good public governance in their measures with the emphasis to develop a healthier, safer, increasing welfare, and inclusive world. Jindra & Guo (2019) conclude that better good public governance is associated with less multidimensional poverty in middle-income countries. This implies that the agenda of good governance in low-income countries might be overwhelming if they are still stuck in the poverty traps. Entangled problems and challenges of economic, politic, and socio-cultural in low-income countries demonstrate a need for global partnership.

Even though so, exporting good governance practices from wealthier to poorer countries require a rethinking framework of good governance considering local political and institutional contexts (Unsworth, 2007). Good governance in Mexico, for example, has
been challenged with the necessity of decentralization for fiscal, administrative, and political responsibilities (Grindle, 2009). Yu and Wang (2011) suggest governance in the Chinese context is marked with the interaction between government and citizens using the so-called strategic-relation approach. This mechanism provides the greater public space for citizens to express their interests and voices under the authoritarian government. The effort to disseminating democracy and develop good governance in Africa brings skeptical views due to the historical Western colonization and slavery in the continent (Fossungu, 2015). However, an empirical study on Africa observes a positive correlation on the effect of globalization on good governance. The effect is stronger in the countries with lower level of governance (Asongu, 2017).

Private Institutions

Corporations use the principle of good governance to navigate business realms. The role of corporate governance has drifted away from neoclassical firms view into the broader role in shaping the economy.

Abdullah & Valentine (2009) describe good governance in the corporation context as a set of processes and structures controlling and directing an organization. They find that the terrain of good corporate governance can be approached by different fundamental theories starting from agency theory, stewardship theory, stakeholder theory, transaction theory, to political theory. In stakeholder theory, corporations consider the stakeholders to influencing the mechanism and institutions of corporate governance. Alucha & Idowu (2017) argue that the new paradigm of responsible corporate governance has been used as the avenues to remain competitive, agile, and innovative in preparing for future market developments.

The rise of the intangible economy where the firm performance is heavily reliant on the management of intangible investment and assets have put a more significant push to understand the role of corporate governance. Poor corporate governance would lead to mal investment and rent seeking in the intangible economy as such, the government would push the governance mechanism to reconcile different interests between public and private sectors (Haskel & Westlake, 2018).

Under the changing environment, understanding the challenges in establishing effective and good corporate governance requires convergent approach from a variety of theories and practices beyond the contemporary view towards corporate governance (Abdullah & Valentine, 2009).
Research Question & Methodology

In this study, we examine the contributions of the researches worldwide to the studies on good governance by analyzing the scientific knowledge productions using scientometrics. Scopus database is used to extract the scientific papers related to good governance based on the predefining keywords. Our predefining keywords are “good governance”. Scopus database is selected over the Web of Science database because the percentage of citations in Scopus is better than Web of Science for Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanity (Martín-Martín et al., 2018). Mongeon & Paul-Hus (2016), however, conclude that there may be bias introduced in the collection of Natural Sciences and Engineering to Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanity. When there is a requirement to analyze particular terms, an open-source natural Language Processing (NLP) software will be used. This study will use Ant Conc and Prot Ant developed by Ant Lab of Waseda University Japan (Anthony, 2019).

First, the study analyzes the past worldwide scientific knowledge productions published from 1990 to 2018 to reveal the most frequent research topics and the interaction among the cluster of the research topics. The selected temporal world events will be used to explain the significant decline of scientific knowledge productions. The aim is to identify the footprint of the world event to the framework of good governance worldwide. We analyze the research paper samples with the period time from the starting of the world event to the end of the third year after the starting of the world event. Furthermore, the classification of the research papers based on the gross national income per capita (GNI per capita) reveals the focus of the research topics in countries with different income level. It attempts to demonstrate the cross-country difference in setting up good governance. This study uses the important terms from the keywords, title, or abstract for visualizing the label mapping on VOS viewer. Additionally, this step utilizes AntConc and ProtAnt to develop conclusions.

Second, the disciplinary subjects used in this step is based on Scopus Indexing. The result shows the distribution of the research topics on good governance based on the disciplinary subjects, such as social sciences; business, management, and accounting; economics, econometrics, and finance; environmental sciences; etc. Furthermore, we identify the publishing journals with the most research papers on good governance. The indicator of a high-quality journal is used to probe the high-quality journals. High-quality Index (HQI) journal is simply calculated by dividing the total number of citations for a publication in a journal by the total number of publications in the corresponding journal,
\[ \text{HQI} = \frac{\sum \text{cit}}{\sum \text{pub}} \]  

(1)

Whereas cit is the number of citations of the publication in the journal and pub is the number of publications in the journal. We, however, use the data for twenty-eight (28) years, from 1991 to 2018. We select the most-cited journal for each disciplinary subject and develop the density mapping using VOS viewer to show the most-occurred terms in each journal.

Third, we discuss and conclude the findings from the scientometrics study to reveal the trends, patterns, and outliers of the research on good governance worldwide.

Data and Tools

The study utilizes the core collection of the Scopus database covering scientific publications on social science and humanities. The collected data includes the wide-range thematic research on good governance for public and private institutions as well as any overarching thematic research related to the research interest of this study – for example, health sciences or physical science.

The most-occurred terms will be mapped using the open-source VOSviewer (CWTS, 2019) to give the impression of which terms are the most important. Among other bibliometric mapping software i.e. Bibexcel, CiteSpace, or CoPalRed, VOSviewer uses the association strength to display bibliometric network (Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Hererra, 2011). The visualization is presented through label mapping and density mapping. There is no difference in the back-end algorithm to associate the terms into the network.

In label mapping, the font size represents the occurrence of a particular term. The bigger the size is, the more frequent the occurrence is. The map illustrates a network of clusters. The terms are located in the same cluster and connected to each other, given their proximity from one publication to another. It provides the impression of the most-occurred terms for a particular cluster. In Fig. 4, for example, the most frequent term is “governance approach” (in red). It has a strong connection with “sustainable development” (in blue) but a weak connection with “health care” (in green). It implies that “governance approach” is frequently discussed with “sustainable development”, but rarely discussed with “health care”. The same cluster is displayed in the same color. “Human”, “public health”, “health service”, and “health care” in Fig.4 are categorized as one cluster in blue.
In density mapping, the label is represented by the size of the bubble (density). Connection line, likewise, in the label view, is not illustrated here. This study produces density mapping to analyze data with smaller numbers of publication. For example, we use density mapping to display the network of clusters in the second step because there are less scientific publications.

Results and Discussions

Trends of Worldwide Scientific Publications

We observe that there are 3,375 scientific papers from 1990 to 2018 (see Fig. 1). Most scientific publications are contributed by the high-income countries (i.e. the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, etc.). The worldwide good governance publication trend seems to raise exponentially starting 2000. The average rate of publication before the exponential growth in the early 2000 is 14 publications per year. The growth drives the scientific publications on good governance from 47 publications in 2000 to 288 publications in 2018 with a peak of 314 publications in 2016.

We identify two world-events that were assumed to influence the interest of the worldwide scientific knowledge production on good governance. They are the year 2002 when the US and coalition invaded Iraq to disarm the alleged nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; and the year 2008 when the financial crisis hit the world due to the US subprime mortgage case. We expect that the trace of these two events can be seen from the worldwide research topics because of the negative outcomes from the war conflict and financial crisis can influence the framework of good governance for both public and private institutions. Selected terms related to these events are also counted to see whether there is a shift of the research topics due to these two world’s events. Those selected terms are conflict, war, recession, military, leadership, economic growth, democracy, and crisis. The sets of scientific publications are examined using NLP software. The first set is between 2002 to 2004, and the second set is between 2008 to 2010. Fig. 2 shows the distribution of the selected terms above post 2002 and post 2008. It seems that there is no difference in the presence of the most occurred terms between these two world events. The increase of the selected terms is suspected due to the increase of the scientific publications from post 2002 to post 2008.
Figure 1 The increasing trend of worldwide good governance publications from 1990 to 2018

Figure 2 Take-away from the selected terms for the publication post 2002 and post 2008
Aggregated Research Topics in Countries with Different Level of Incomes

Gross National Income per capita (GNI per capita), a macroeconomic indicator developed by the World Bank, is used to understand the research topics of good governance in different economy sizes. As per 2018’s calculation, high-income countries are those with a GNI per capita above $12,056; upper-middle-income countries are those with a GNI per capita between $3,896 and $12,055; lower-middle-income countries are those with a GNI per capita between $996 and $3,896; and lower-income countries are those with a GNI per capita below $996 (World Bank, 2018). Even though the indicator does not entirely reflect to the magnitude of the economy development, many researches have used this indicator to comprehend the socioeconomic dimensions of the country (i.e. Boos & Holm-Müller, 2012; Capelli&Vaggi, 2013; Dinsa, Goryakin, Fumagalli, &Suhrcke, 2012; Jindra& Guo, 2019; Mehta et al., 2006). We observe that scholars from high-income countries (70%) dominate the scientific productions on good governance, followed by upper-middle-income (15%), lower-middle-income-countries (12%) and lower-income countries (3%). The result should not be misinterpreted in term of proportion because there might be collaboration between scholars from different country group in one paper and their contribution is counted separately. We, however, suggest that the more countries contribute in the research, the more diverse the research topics will be.

Figure 3 Distribution of the scientific contributors based on GNI classification
Data mining using VOS viewer reveals that there are three main clusters of research topics for the contributors from high-income countries (see Fig. 4). We conclude that sustainable environmental development has been taken into account in setting up good governance structure for this country group - regardless in which country the study focus was. It can be seen from the presence of specific environmental terms such as “climate change”, “environmental policy”, “forest management”, “water management”, or “protected area”. In fact, a deeper look to the most-occurred term, “sustainable development”, indicates that the term is closely connected to the environmental jargons. For example, Galera (2016), Mavragani, Nikolaou, &Tsagarakis (2016), and Vanderhaegen & Muro (2005) examine the use of environmental instruments and indicators to support the building blocks towards sustainable good governance. On the other hand – not related to sustainable environmental development, scholars from this country group is also interested on how good governance can be implemented in countries with other income classification. De Jong, Stout, & Sun (2017) investigate, for example, how the diverging sociocultural dimensions drag away the China and EU collaboration in Sino-European program from its initial commitments to learn the good governance
practices in the EU countries. Mirroring the EU, African Union (AU) is regarded to have a soft power to set good governance practices promoting greater cooperation and collaboration between African countries and nations (Chingudu, 2018; Tella, 2018).

In contrast to high-income countries, low-income countries seem to display the condition of postcolonial economies, especially in Africa. Even though the postcolonialism is still regarded as a conundrum in the neoclassical economics, the terrain is best described by the rejection of cultural domination, reclaiming subaltern agency and understanding postcolonial as a hybrid contemporary condition (Pollard, McEwan, & Hughes, 2011). There is a presence of specific terms related to postcolonial economies such as “decentralization”, “power”, and “corruption”. It implies that in this country group, such socioeconomic conditions, for example in the presence of power transition, appear and potentially hamper the setting of good governance in the low-income countries. Mezgabe (2015) study how political domination in a region in Ethiopia halts the ability to deliver on promises of decentralization. Tambulasi & Chasukwa (2014) examine how a substitute institution in Malawi is restricted to carry out local-level democracy to achieve an ideal good governance in light of power decentralization.

Figure 5 The clusters of research topics by the contributors in the low-income countries
Scientific Publications Based on Disciplines and Publishing Journals

Using the Scopus Indexing, we observe that most scientific publications on good governance are categorized as social sciences followed by business, management & accounting; economics, econometrics, & finance; environmental science; and arts & humanities (see Table 1). As seen from the trends on research topics in Section 3.2, environmental and health dimensions have progressively been considered for institutional sets-up of good governance, especially in the high-income countries. We see that there are 798 scientific publications related to environmental dimension and 297 scientific publication related to health dimension. The most-occurred terms related to these dimensions are, among the others, “environmental policy”, “climate change”, “water management”, “protected area”, “forest management”, “conservation”, “public health”, “health care”, and “health services” (see Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).

It should be noted that one publication can be categorized more to one discipline as such that the aggregated number of scientific publications can be more than 3,375. Mehta et al. (2006) publish a good governance paper in the journal of Energy for Sustainable Development. Their paper is categorized as environmental science and social sciences, based on Scopus Indexing. Therefore, the paper is counted two times and appears both in social sciences and environmental science.

| Table 1 Top ten disciplines of scientific publications on good governance |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Discipline | Numbers of publication |
| Social sciences | 2,238 |
| Business, management & accounting | 675 |
| Economics, econometrics & finance | 673 |
| Environmental science | 508 |
| Arts & humanities | 280 |
| Agricultural & biological science | 195 |
| Medicine | 194 |
| Engineering | 115 |
| Computer science | 109 |
| Earth & planetary sciences | 95 |

The journal of “Corporate Ownership and Control” hosts the most publications on good governance summing up to 39 scientific papers. It is the followed by “International Review of Administrative Sciences” (36 scientific papers), “Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences” (32 scientific papers), “World Development” (28 scientific papers), and “Marine Policy” (25 scientific papers). It is difficult, however, to separate the journal hosting the research good governance for public and private institutions. Table 2 gives top
ten journal with scientific papers on good governance. From the top list; the journal of “Corporate Ownership and Control” and “Corporate Governance: An International Review” cater the scholars’ interests on good governance in the corporations. And the remaining journals discuss a broader spectrum of good governance and the crossroad between public and private institutions. “Mediterranean Journal of Social Science” is the only journal in the top ten list that presents research with regional narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Numbers of publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Ownership and Control</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Review of Administrative Sciences</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Development</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Policy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy and Administration</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration and Development</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Governance: An International Review</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third World Quarterly</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Table</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using high-quality index (see Eq. 1) to probe the most cited scientific papers, this study observes that the scientific collection in journal of “Corporate Finance” is cited at the average of 62 times per paper. “Development and Change” sees 60 citations per paper, “World Development” sees 47 citations per paper, “Corporate Governance: An International Review” sees 46 citations per paper, and “Governance” sees 38 citations per paper. “European Journal of Development Research” is the most-cited journal consisting of research with European narratives.

**Disciplinary Trends from the Most-cited Journals**

The measure of high-quality index leads our study to focus on the selected top-notch most-cited published papers to reveals the deeper trends on the disciplinary good governance research. We choose six (6) disciplinary discipline based on Scopus Indexing. They are finance, sociology, business management, public administration, politics, and economics. These categories are chosen to cover the interdisciplinary practices of good governance both in the setting of public and private institutions. Table 3 lists the most-cited journal for each category. Identical to “Mediterranean Journal of Social Science” and “European Journal of Development Research” in Section 4.3, scholars are more interested to examine the narrative of good public governance in African political context.
“Review of African Political Economy” is the only journal in the top six list presenting the research with regional narratives.

![Figure 6 Top ten high-quality journals on good governance](image)

**Table 3 Top six journals on good governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>HQI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Finance</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Change</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Governance: An International Review</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of African Political Economy</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Social Economics</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most discussion in “Corporate Finance” is related to the common question on how to understand the financial setting of good governance in corporation (see Fig. 7). The term of “corporate governance” becomes the center of the cluster. Scholars also use different angles from the firm performance to the Islamic finance labelling. The most cited scientific paper is written by Bhagat & Bolton (2008) who grounded the endogenous relation of better governed firms to corporate performance (such as governance, capital, or ownership). The paper is cited 457 times. Terms such as “Islamic finance”, “ownership
status”, or “mutual funds” appear also in the cluster. In regard to local context, there is also research on the corporate governance in Russia, China, and Korea.

![Figure 7 The clusters of research topics in “Corporate Finance”](image1)

![Figure 8 The clusters of research topics in “Development and Change”](image2)
From the scientific papers in “Development and Change”, the research themes are around the use of the tools and aids to promote good governance (see Fig. 8). Scientific terms such as “governance approach”, “strategic approach”, and “development aid” appear in the cluster. The Western aid that is widely assumed to be more effective and politically-correct to be implemented in third countries is often criticized in academic sphere (Leftwich, 1994; Lewis, 2002; Tan-Mullins, Mohan, & Power, 2010). Scholars also use the study cases in Asia and Africa to understand the role of good governance for economic development, reducing poverty, and power decentralization.

**Figure 9** The clusters of research topics in “Corporate Governance: An International Review”

**Figure 10** The clusters of research topics in “Governance”
We observe that there are many empirical studies presented in “Corporate Governance: An International Review” (see Fig. 9). Most research attempts to contextualize the relationship between good corporate governance and economics or financial factors such as the firm values, rule of law, agency theory, ownership structure, etc. Black et al. (2017) assess empirically the validity of country-specific indices to measure the aspects of corporate governance by using data from four major emerging markets (Brazil, India, Korea, and Turkey). McNulty, Zattoni, & Douglas (2013); Renders & Gaermynck (2012); Vanacker, Heughebaert & Manigrat (2014); and Van Essen, Engelen & Carney (2013) use European data panel set to test empirically their hypotheses on various topics of corporate governance.

In the journal of “Governance”, most research is related to the public administrative reforms – either structurally or technologically-innovatively (see Fig. 10). Scholars seek how to develop better and accountable public governance. Public financial management does not necessarily mean a better effective public governance – different implications in different countries (Andrews, 2010). Likewise, other endogenous variables affecting public governance are the access to public information (Stapenhurst & Pelizzo, 2012) and the rate of inflation (Shockley, Ewers, Nardis & Gengler, 2018). While, exogenous variables such as political priorities (Wengle, 2018) and technology development (Torres, Pina & Acerete, 2006) are identified essential also in delivering the reformation in public governance.

Figure 11 The clusters of research topics in “Review of African Political Economy”
The most frequent terms in the journal of “Review of African Political Economy” are, among the others, “political economy”, “governance approach”, “post-war”, and “development aid” (See Fig. 11). Scholars are interested in the structural political transformation to develop strong good governance and civil society in Africa with the assistance of international donors. However, the economic, political, and socio-cultural challenges due to post-war (Clapham, 2009; Moore, 2000) and post-colonial (Gabay, 2014; Szeftel, 1998) are prominent for setting good public governance in Africa.

![Figure 12 The clusters of research topics in “International Journal of Social Economics”](image)

While the economics research in “International Journal of Social Economics” covers the wide range of topics in the pursuit of the accountable governance to create the best socio-economic setting (Fig. 12). Empirical evidence is drawn to explain the macro socio-economic aspects of good governance. For example, the lower corruption level (Habibullah, Din & Hamid, 2016) and the presence of corruption control (Asongu&Kodila-Tedika, 2016; Azam&Emirullah, 2014) contribute empirically to the good governance for public institutions.

Conclusions

We have illustrated that there is a growing worldwide interest in the scientific publication on good governance. Starting from the 2000s, we observe an exponential growth with several downfalls along the way. While we pick two world events that might attract the
interest of the scientific community, it is evident that there is a time lag before the world events become the scientific battlefield of scholars. Our study shows that economic crisis in 2008 is picked up as the research topics starting from 2009. Additionally, 1997 economics turmoil in Asia is still a subject of research interest ten years after its presence. Scientific community from high-income countries have started to consider the environmental dimension as the avenue for good governance. We observe the absence of this dimension for scientific community from low-income countries. They tend to focus more on the departure of the economy from the post-colonialism. It supports the presence of cross-country difference in grounding the good governance like what other scholars observed in their specific country-level researches.

The study shows that there is equal distribution of the research papers on good governance among different spectrum scholarships; from social sciences to environmental science. The presence of sustainable environmental management for paving the way for good governance is evident as there are scientific papers published in journals themed in the environmental science and earth & planetary sciences. Journals with regional context such as “Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences and Review of African Political Economy” are attractive for the scholars to publish their thematic spatial research. Endogenous and exogenous variables are the research interests for the scholars in navigating the avenue for good governance. Economic growth, poverty, political set-up, power decentralization, and corruption are among the terms included in the current research on good governance for the public institutions. In the area of good corporate governance, the changing perception of firm performance to contribute for a higher economic growth remains the main interests of the scholar.

In general, the presence of digital technology and intangible economy may become the new research avenue on good governance for public and private institutions. Scholars struggle to understand the mechanism of exporting good governance from wealthier to poorer countries. Terms like post-war and post-colonial repeatedly emerge in the discussion of good governance in Africa. Rethinking good governance by embedding local contexts without neglecting globalism remains an endless discussion on good governance in the future.

We recognize that there is a limitation concerning the database used for this scientometrics study. There are currently two most widely used scientific publication database: Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). The collections are mostly written in English and are sometimes not Open Access (OA). Therefore, the results under represent the scientific publications that are written in other languages, in the regional/ national
This research provides provoking ideas for future studies on good governance. Worldwide Governance Indicator, Competitive Index, or Transparency Index can be used to probe the structure of scientific knowledge on good governance at the country level. The result of this study can provide inputs for the policymakers to make a better and efficient good governance using the evidence-based policy. There is a growing interest to understand the role of good public and corporate governance in the various industry sectors. The study can shed light of the sectoral trends to implement good governance.

References


