Research Article

University Governance: Paradigmatic Approaches and Empirical Evidence

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The study of stakeholders occupies a prominent place in management theories due to its usefulness and applicability in the field of social and behavioral sciences. Successful experiences in the management of these stakeholders show the importance of their proper management. In the current context, characterized by high volatility and the need for effective crisis management, this approach acquires special relevance for modern management. The objective of this work is to analyze and adapt Mendelow's stakeholder model for its application at the Central University of Ecuador, located in Quito. As part of the methodological triangulation, the study also included two additional public universities in the Ecuadorian capital. The methodology used includes a documentary analysis based on primary sources (experts from the universities studied) and secondary sources (official documentation of the institutions). Based on the analysis of results, strategies designed to optimize the management systems in these higher education institutions are presented. These strategies facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the actors involved and their needs, which contributes to the strengthening of effective, results-oriented management aligned with contemporary demands of institutional governance. **Keywords:** Stakeholders, Mendelow Model, Stakeholders, Interest Group

INTRODUCTION

The Central University of Ecuador (UCE), recognized as the largest and most prestigious institution of higher education in Quito, has a rich history and an important position in the national academic field. However, it faces a complex and dynamic environment where it interacts with multiple actors, including students, teachers, administrative staff, local communities, government entities and companies. In addition, the university faces the challenge of strengthening its institutional image and competing with other similar institutions for state funding, which depends on key indicators such as academic performance, quality, reputation and international impact.

In this context, it is essential to make an accurate diagnosis of the needs, expectations and demands of the stakeholders who interact with the university. This analysis will serve as a basis for strategic decision-making aimed at promoting the sustainable development and institutional strengthening of the UCE.

To address this challenge, this study adopts Mendelow's stakeholder model, which organizes stakeholders into a four-quadrant matrix according to their level of power and interest in the organization. This approach makes it possible to identify the most influential stakeholders and determine the most appropriate management strategies to strengthen relationships with them. Likewise, successful experiences of application of this model in other educational institutions will be examined, which will serve as a reference to adapt the approach to the specific context of the Central University of Ecuador.

The article analyzes how the application of the stakeholder approach can contribute to a more comprehensive, efficient and results-focused institutional management. To achieve this purpose, a mixed methodology will be implemented, combining documentary analysis, stakeholder consultations and the practical application of the Mendelow model. This will provide a comprehensive overview of the internal and external dynamics affecting the university and will allow concrete recommendations to be made to optimise the management of its strategic relationships.

The main objective of this research work is to analyze and adapt Mendelow's stakeholder model to the environment of the Central University of Ecuador. This tool, widely recognized for its ability to classify and identify stakeholders based on their power and influence, will be key to understanding the relational dynamics between the institution and its strategic actors. In addition, the study offers an analytical framework that will contribute to strengthening strategic management in educational institutions and provide a solid basis for informed decision-making in the context of UCE.

Finally, it is expected that the results obtained will serve as a relevant contribution to research in university management, promoting the development of effective strategies for institutional linkage and sustainability, while consolidating the role of the university as a key actor in the social and academic field.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Los Stakeholders

Stakeholders or interest groups are the result of a series of activities and human relationships built around a main organization, whether it is a company or institution. These concepts have evolved over time, adopting broad or narrow definitions depending on the role they play in the organization's destiny [1]. Zárate highlights the importance of identifying stakeholders by considering their social response and the impact they generate, factors that directly influence organizational reputation [2]. This identification is also related to fundamental aspects such as corporate social responsibility. Fernández and Bajo summarize this perspective by defining stakeholders as "any individual or interest group that, explicitly or implicitly, voluntarily or involuntarily, has made a bet (to stake, put something at stake) in the development of the company" [3].

The present study aims to apply Mendelow's model to a public higher education institution in Quito, Ecuador: the Central University of Ecuador (UCE). The purpose is to identify the potential influence of stakeholders on this institution and to develop strategies that contribute to its growth and sustainable development. The identification of the links between these actors and the university is crucial to assess their capacity for interaction and determine their level of influence in strategic decision-making. This paper concludes with a proposal of strategies aimed at strengthening relations between the institution and its stakeholders.

Stakeholder Mapping Systems

Stakeholder mapping systems are not uniform or rigid. According to Krick and other authors, they cannot be unified by industry, type of organization or sector, since they vary over time [4]. In addition, factors such as geographical location, competitive advantages and dynamics of the macro and micro environment influence its configuration. New paradigms, such as competition and blue oceans, can redefine or generate new categories of stakeholders [5].

The identification of stakeholders can be approached from various perspectives, including: responsibility, influence, proximity, dependence and representation. Schmeer describes stakeholders as actors (individuals or organizations) with a particular interest in the policy or decisions being promoted [6]. Gonzales reinforces this idea by defining stakeholder theory as a tool to analyze business management and integrate the different interests generated around an organization from normative, instrumental, and descriptive approaches [7].

Peñaloza complements this view by mentioning that Savage's criterion contributes to decision theory by prioritizing options that minimize losses for the decision-maker [8]. Palma and other authors agree that this approach allows us to evaluate the opportunity cost associated with erroneous decisions, which is relevant to adapt strategies in the university context analyzed [9].

Importance of Stakeholders in University Management

Stakeholders can be individuals, groups, or organizations that are affected by the institution's actions, decisions, and results, or that, in turn, can influence its operation and performance. Their identification and analysis are essential to achieve effective and sustainable management [10].

It is recognized that integrating stakeholders into institutional strategies generates valuable synergies, overcoming passive approaches and allowing informed decisions. In this way, organizations can establish concrete relationships with those actors who directly influence or are affected by their success. According to Aldeanueva Fernández, these links not only depend on organizational performance, but also on the transmission of values, principles, and institutional culture over time [11].

For this reason, this paper highlights the importance of promoting participation, transparency and accountability as the basis for building sustainable relationships with stakeholders. Argadoña, Alzate, and Armijos agree that such relationships facilitate organizational learning, drive innovation, and improve financial, social, and environmental outcomes [12, 13, 14, 4].

Finally, involving stakeholders in decision-making processes strengthens institutional capacity to face challenges and promote sustainable development. Aldeanueva Fernández stresses that proper management of these relationships not only contributes to innovation processes, but also adds value to the organization through selfless contributions and diverse perspectives [11].

The model proposed by Mendelow seeks to determine the needs and expectations of stakeholders according to their disposition, in a system studied [15]. Most authors agree that the name of stakeholders can be applied to any group or individual, who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the company's objectives; This causality analysis is important to understand those involved and the cause and effect that it can have on benefit or harm within the company.

Stakeholder management involves identifying, analyzing, and managing relationships with these actors to ensure more informed and well-being-oriented decision-making for all parties involved. Therefore, to the extent that stakeholders are able to identify which stakeholders to identify with, they will choose those that are legitimate, and their organizational identification presupposes attributions of organizational legitimacy [16].

While Mendelow's model is widely used, it also has its limitations; For example, some authors argue that the model oversimplifies the complexity of stakeholder relationships. However, its practical usefulness is not in doubt. The use that has been given to it has allowed companies to determine the people or groups, for which they must be responsible, and on which they must base their sustainability. These are and will be its stakeholders [17].

According to Phillips, there is a principle of equity among stakeholders, which recognizes the existence of mutual obligations between the parties involved. But it stresses that the content and scope of these obligations must be defined and completed according to the particular contexts of the organizational interaction. This perspective highlights the importance of identifying and examining the specific circumstances of each situation to determine the responsibilities and commitments of the stakeholders involved [18].

Higher education institutions, and especially those of a public nature, face enormous challenges, in their daily work and projection into the medium and long term; likewise, they must operate in a complex environment, with a very heterogeneous conglomerate of stakeholders. It is for this reason that various authors have tried to identify the interest groups of universities from different perspectives. This wide and diverse network of stakeholders makes identifying and managing university stakeholders a significant challenge.

According to Aldeanueva Fernández "it is more complicated to determine the interest groups of the university than those of other types of organizations, since the universal nature of the university means that the vast majority of interest groups have a relationship, directly or indirectly, with that institution." This statement highlights the inherent complexity of identifying and managing stakeholders in the university environment, which implies the need for a strategic approach and constant communication to understand and meet the diverse demands and expectations of university-related groups [11].

For Fernández and Bajo, any interest group, whether external or internal, has the purpose of winning, or at least seeks not to be negatively affected. This denotes that each stakeholder has a purpose in the operation of the company; From this we can deduce the attention that stakeholders pay to the organization, and the importance that it should assign to the management model with them [3].

According to Mitchell and other authors, the basic types of interest presented in the various groups. They can be classified as follows:

- Material interests: Anything specific that is sought or endangered or questioned by the very nature of the commercial endeavor.
- Political interests: The distribution of power and influence, in the same way, refers to the attempt to convince authorities, public administrations and regulatory bodies to take favourable measures.
- Affiliation interests: They state that we all feel a desire to belong at some point, which drives us to seek to be part of a social network to find location and meaning.
- Information-related interests: These focus on data, recent news, and research results.
- Metaphysical and spiritual interests: These refer to religious or philosophical principles, as well as beliefs about the divine, the human and nature [19].

As can be seen, there are different groups of stakeholders with respect to each case that may arise; therefore, depending on the environment in which each person involved is located, they will react in a different way and take preventive measures if the case warrants it, so it is considered critical factors to make any decision.   On the other hand, according to Fernández y Bajo "the common denominator of any interest group is made up of the fact that each of them has, precisely, something at stake; there is something they hope to gain or that they seek not to lose", that is, each person involved with a certain degree of interest seeks to satisfy their established goals and to do so they work effectively [3].
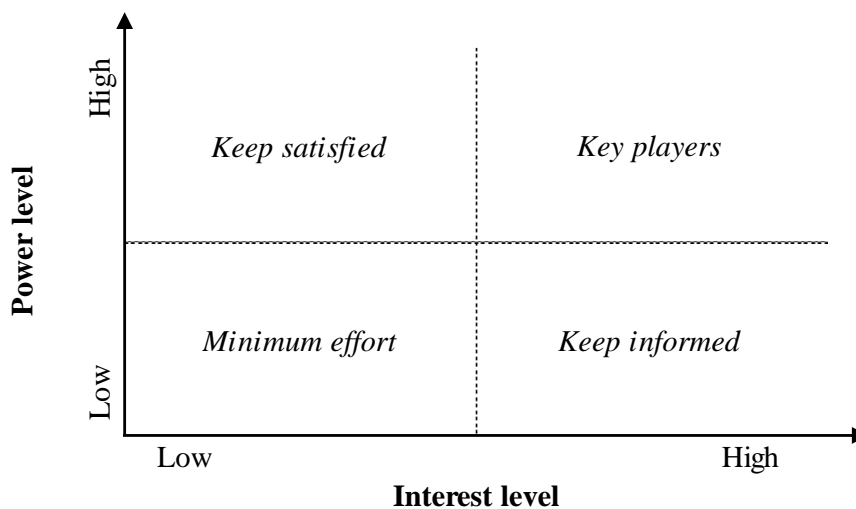
Mendelow Model

The Mendelow Model of Stakeholders is a theoretical tool, which provides a structure for analyzing and classifying an organization's stakeholders based on their power and interest. This model is widely used in stakeholder management and helps to identify the right strategies to engage and manage relationships with different stakeholder groups. Carzola states that this model allows them to be classified in reference to the power they possess and the degree to which they potentially show interest in the organization's strategies [20, 27].

Fig 1. Power-Interest Matrix
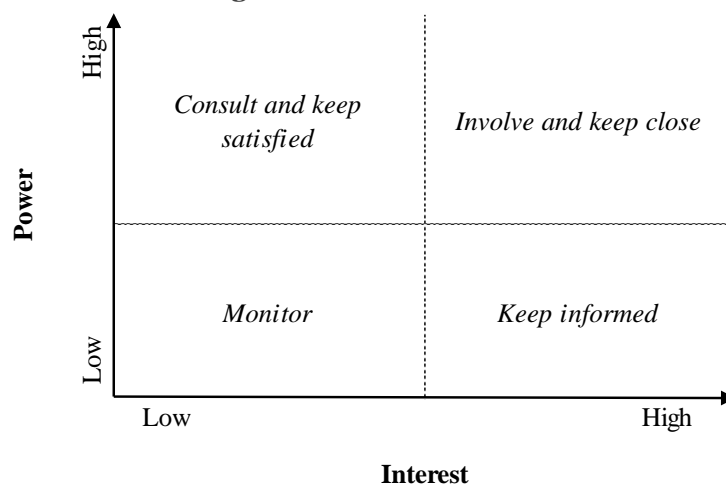
Source: Corporate Governance and Complexity Theory [21]

Fig. 2 Power-Interest Matrix

Source: Elaborated by the authors base on the Matrix of López [22]

Mendelow's stakeholder model is based on the classification of stakeholders according to their power and interest in the organization. The organization's stakeholders are identified, where the level of interest and the level of power of these over the organization are equally denoted [15]. Mendelow's model reflects the level of power and interest in stakeholders; According to Edivaldo and Chaves, "Stakeholders are likely to inhibit the success of the strategy and which policies can facilitate the acceptance of the strategy." Therefore, this model is based on prioritizing the stakeholders that contribute to the success of the business strategies adopted [23].

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the criterion of Bernal and Rivas was taken into account, who affirm that the Stakeholder theory is aligned with neo-institutional thinking: whose main assumption is that human groups create institutions (rules of the game) to reduce the degree of uncertainty of their interactions [24]. Likewise, the authors agree with the criterion of Wagner and other authors that stakeholder theory is based on four of the social sciences: sociology, economics, politics and ethics [25].

The postulate of Fernández and Bajo is also useful, who recognize that individuals or interest groups have certain interests and aspirations with respect to the company and these interests at stake can be individual or collective [2]. Also relevant is Duque's recommendation, who argues that the approach to the issue of stakeholders can be from an administrative or legal perspective [26].

The methodology corresponds to a mixed research. The review of the state of the art was done through high-impact articles in recent years. The application of the Mendelow model to the university under study was carried out, following the methodological recommendations that include the following steps:

- Step 1: Identification of Stakeholders: In this stage, the aim is to identify all relevant stakeholders that may be affected by the activities, decisions or results of the project or organization in question.
- Step 2: Stakeholders and their interests: Once the identification of stakeholders in the previous step has been completed, the next step is to determine and reflect the interests and concerns of each of the identified groups.
- Step 3: Assess stakeholder power or influence: The third step involves assessing the level of power or influence that each stakeholder group has over the project, organization, or decision in question.
- Step 4: Assess stakeholder interests: The fourth step focuses on the more detailed assessment of stakeholder interests identified in the previous steps. This process involves taking an in-depth look at the specific goals, needs, and concerns of each stakeholder group to understand how they align with the goals of the project, organization, or decision at hand.
- Step 5: Mapping stakeholders into a matrix: In Mendelow's model, the fifth step involves mapping stakeholders into a matrix that considers both their power or influence and their interest in the project, the organization. This ranking matrix is a visual tool that helps identify and prioritize stakeholders based on their relative position, which in turn guides management and communication strategies.
- Step 6: Analysis of results: Once the stakeholders have been identified, understood and classified, as well as their interests and power have been evaluated, all this information is analyzed to make strategic decisions and plan concrete actions.
- Step 7: Determination of intensity and frequency by quadrants: It is based on the determination of the intensity and frequency of interactions and communication with stakeholders, according to the classification in the quadrants of the power and interest matrix. This stage is essential to plan how the relationships with each stakeholder group will be managed and how their needs and expectations will be met.
- Step 8: Stakeholder matrix: This involves creating a stakeholder matrix, which is a visual tool that synthesizes the information obtained throughout the previous steps. This matrix provides an overview of how different stakeholder groups position themselves in terms of power, interest, influence, and expectations.
- Step 9: Analysis of results when applying the Mendelow model: It involves analyzing the results and implications of applying the model in the specific context of the project, the organization. After having followed the previous steps and applied the model to concrete reality, it is important to reflect on how stakeholder management has impacted and what lessons can be drawn for future decisions and projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Step 1: Identify stakeholders

Identifying stakeholders (the people and stakeholders who are affected by an organization and in turn can influence it) is a crucial step in the stakeholder management process. The following table presents the internal and external stakeholders of the Central University of Ecuador that directly or indirectly interact with it; It is about determining and understanding who these stakeholders are and how they may affect or be affected by the university's activities. In addition, in the following sections, the institution's stakeholders are explored, according to the Mendelow model.

Table 1. Stakeholders Central University of Ecuador

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
Authorities	National Government of Ecuador
Managers	Public Companies
Support Staff	Ministry of Education
Teachers	Society
Students	SENESCITE
Staff Administrative	Suppliers
Student Council	Schools
Academic Staff	Universities National
Syndicate	Municipality DMQ
Association of Teachers	Universities International
	Media and communications
	Office of the Comptroller General of the State
	Ministry of Economy and Finance

Source: Own elaboration, based on field information obtained by the researchers. Adapted to the Mendelow model.

Step 2: Stakeholders and their interests

Table 2 shows the identification of stakeholders of the Central University of Ecuador according to Mendelow's stakeholder model. They have been classified into different categories according to their level of power and interest. The characteristics have been highlighted and strategies have been proposed for each stakeholder group.

Table 2. Stakeholders and their interests

Stakeholders	Characteristics	Strategies
MINIMAL EFFORT STAKEHOLDERS		
Suppliers	Low power and interest	Maintain fluid communication and establish cooperative relationships to ensure product supply.
Schools	Moderate interest	Establish alliances or agreements to facilitate the student admission process.
International Universities	Variable power and interest	Encourage academic collaboration and promote joint research or training programs.
Media and Communications	Moderate interest	Maintain transparent communication and build strong relationships to ensure adequate coverage.
STAKEHOLDERS TO KEEP INFORMED		

National Government	High power and interest	Maintain constant and transparent communication, reporting on university policies and achievements.
Ministry of Education	High power and interest	Maintain a close relationship and provide information on quality standards and academic programs.
Society	Variable power and interest	Promote participation and dialogue through events, outreach, and social responsibility projects.
SENESCITE	High power and interest	Maintain effective communication and highlight academic advances and contributions to scientific development.
Municipality DMQ	Moderate power and interest	Establish alliances and collaborations in local development projects, integrating the university with the environment.
Comptroller General	High power and interest	Ensure transparency and accountability, facilitate audits and resource tracking.
Ministry of Economy and Finance	High power and interest	Report transparently on economic management and demonstrate efficient use of resources.
STAKEHOLDERS TO KEEP SATISFIED		
Public Companies	Moderate power and interest	Establish collaborative relationships in joint research projects and training programs.
Student Council	High interest	Encourage student participation and attend to their needs and demands in decision making.
Teachers	High interest	To offer opportunities for professional development and recognition of academic excellence.
Administrative Staff	Moderate interest	Guarantee good working conditions, training, and recognition for their contribution.
Syndicate	Moderate power and interest	Maintain an open and constant dialogue with the union to address labor and union issues.
Teachers Association	Moderate power and interest	Establish communication channels to meet their requirements and promote teacher welfare.
KEY PLAYERS		
Authorities	High power and interest	Establish fluid communication, involve them in decision making and promote their leadership.
Managers	High interest	Promote their participation in strategic planning and ensure a favorable environment and growth.

Students	High interest	Attend to their academic and extracurricular needs, promote their active participation in university life.
Academic staff	High interest	Encourage their professional development, promote research, and recognize their work in the training of students.

Source: Own elaboration. Adapted to the Mendelow Model

Step 3: Assessing Stakeholder Power or Influence

The following table evaluates the power and importance of the internal and external stakeholders of the Central University of Ecuador:

Table 3. Assess the power or influence of stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER	POWER OR INFLUENCE
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Executives	They are an integral part of the organization and are directly involved in its daily operations, managers often have high power and influence. Their inside knowledge and decision-making skills give them a great deal of power.
Authorities	Authorities, such as senior management and the board of directors, have great power to make strategic decisions and direct the entity. Because of their position of leadership and responsibility, their influence is high.
Support Staff	Support staff are essential to the efficient operation of the organization, even though they may have less power compared to other groups. It is crucial that they can assist and maintain day-to-day operations.
Teachers	Teachers have great power over the quality of education and the academic development of students. Their experience and knowledge give them significant power to make decisions about teaching methods and educational programs.
Students	Students have influence on the educational institution, although individually they may have less power than other stakeholders. Their opinions and concerns can influence decision-making about the quality of education and student services.
Administrative Staff	Administrative personnel are crucial to managing an educational institution. Their contribution to efficient operation and internal coordination gives them some influence, although their individual power may be limited.
Student Council	The student council represents the interests of students and can have a considerable influence on institutional policies and student life issues.
Academic Staff	Academic staff, such as researchers and experts in their fields, can have influence on curriculum development, research, and the academic direction of an institution.
Union	The union may have significant power because of its ability to influence working conditions and represent the interests of workers. Its ability to negotiate agreements and defend the rights of staff gives it influence in decisions related to labor welfare.

Faculty Association	The teachers' association can also have considerable power. As a representative of teachers, it can influence educational policies and practices. Their knowledge and experience in teaching give them influence in decisions affecting educational quality and teachers' working conditions.
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
National Government of Ecuador	The National Government of Ecuador has great power and influence over the educational institution due to its role as the regulator and funder of higher education. Institutions can be directly affected by its policies, regulations, and distribution of resources.
Ministry of Education	The Ministry of Education is essential for regulating and supervising education. Educational policies, quality standards and accreditation of institutions are under its influence.
Society	Public opinion, the demand for high quality education and the expectations of graduates has an impact on the overall educational institution. Its ability to influence the reputation and prestige of the institution is what gives it power.
SENESCITE	The Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (SENESCYT), as the entity in charge of planning and regulating higher education in Ecuador, has great power and influence over the educational institution. Its responsibility is to regulate academic degrees and evaluate the institution.
Providers	Suppliers of goods and services to the educational institution may have power and influence based on their ability to provide high quality supplies, timely services, and competitive prices.
Schools	Schools can have an impact on the selection and admission of students, as well as on academic collaboration and the articulation of educational programs.
National Universities	National universities can influence the development of educational policies, research collaboration and the sharing of academic resources.
DMQ Municipality	The municipality of Quito (DMQ) can exercise authority and influence on issues related to city growth, infrastructure construction and public services.
International Universities	International educational institutions can have an impact through collaboration agreements, student exchange programs and joint research projects.
Media	Through coverage and public opinion, the media can exert power and influence. Their ability to inform and change the way people view the institution can be especially important.
General Comptroller's Office	The Comptroller General's Office can influence audits, compliance and good economic management practices as a control and oversight entity.
Ministry of Economy and Finance	The Ministry of Economy and Finance has authority and influence in the distribution of resources, budget, and financing of educational institutions.

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

### Step 4: Assessing stakeholder interests

Table 4. Assess stakeholder interests

STAKEHOLDER	IMPORTANCE
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:	
Executives	High Importance
Authorities	High Importance
Support Staff	Medium Importance
Teachers	High Importance
Students	High Importance
Administrative Staff	Medium Importance
Student Council	Medium Importance
Academic Staff	High Importance
Union	Medium Importance
Faculty Association	Medium Importance
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
National Government of Ecuador	High Importance
Ministry of Education	Medium Importance
Society	High Importance
SENESCITE	High Importance
Providers	Medium Importance
Schools	Medium Importance
National Universities	Medium Importance
DMQ Municipality	Medium Importance
International Universities	Medium Importance
Media	Medium Importance
General Comptroller's Office	High Importance
Ministry of Economy and Finance	High Importance

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

Step 5: Mapping stakeholders into a matrix

The following figure presents the distribution of interest groups within through the analysis of the Mendelow matrix.
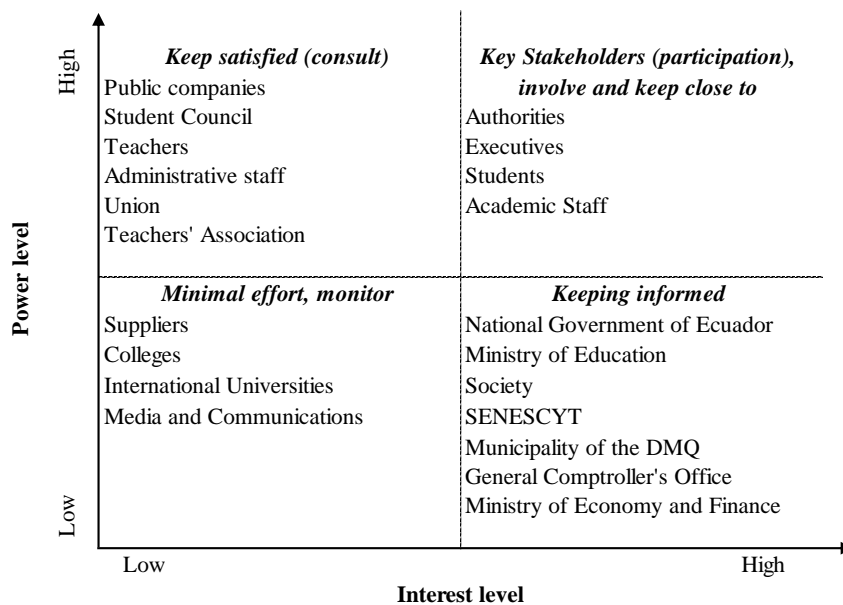
Fig. 3. Stakeholder mapping in a matrix
Source: Own elaboration.

Step 6: Analysis of results

According to the results obtained in the matrix, it is possible to identify the most important stakeholders due to their degree of high influence and interest within the University, it is worth mentioning that the stakeholders of low interest between quadrants 3 and 4 are the least important and those in quadrant 1 and 2 are considered the most relevant where more work should be done and possible strategies implemented.

Step 7: Determination of intensity and frequency by quadrants

The Mendelow matrix defines four quadrants relative to their axes of influence and interest. Depending on the quadrant where each stakeholder is located, the organization must adopt different behaviors, relationships, and communications with them. Stakeholders with great interest, but little influence: At the Central University of Ecuador, they are the parties with great interest because they can influence the stakeholders who have a lot of power.

Table 5. Stakeholders with great interest, but little influence

STAKEHOLDERS WITH GREAT INTEREST, BUT LITTLE INFLUENCE
Suppliers
Schools
International Universities
Media and Communications

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

Stakeholders with little interest, but great influence: These are generally passive groups, but they can, due to specific events, move to the quadrant of great interest and great influence.

Table 6. Stakeholders with little interest, but profound influence

STAKEHOLDERS WITH LITTLE INTEREST, BUT GREAT INFLUENCE
Authorities
Managers
Students
Academic Staff
Syndicate
Teachers Association

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

Stakeholders with great influence and great interest: They are key to our organization. They constitute threats or opportunities.

Table 7. Stakeholders with profound influence and interest

STAKEHOLDERS WITH GREAT INFLUENCE AND INTEREST
National Government of Ecuador
Ministry of Education
Society
Senescite
DMQ Municipality
General Comptroller's Office
Ministry of Economy and Finance

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

Stakeholders with little influence: Little interest require occasional or no monitoring and, in order not to waste resources.

Table 8. Stakeholders with little influence

STAKEHOLDERS WITH LITTLE INFLUENCE
Public Companies
Student Council
Faculty
Administrative Staff

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

Step 8: Stakeholder Matrix

The following table shares the relevant needs and expectations as well as the requirements for the integrated management system based on the Mendelow model.

Table 9. Stakeholder matrix

STAKEHOLDER	EXPECTATIONS AND/OR NEEDS	IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES	IMPACT (1-10)	INFLUENCE (1-10)
Authorities	Smooth communication and leadership	Involvement in decision making	9	9
Office of the Comptroller General of the State	Transparency and accountability	Open communication and audits	9	8
Ministry of Economy and Finance	Economic management and economic performance	Transparent information on resources	9	8
Teachers	Development opportunities and recognition	Favorable work environment	9	7
Academic Staff	Professional development and recognition	Encourage research and academic excellence	9	7
Students	Addressing academic needs	Offering quality services	9	6
Union	Fair working conditions and representation of interests	Consultation and collaboration on labor policies	9	8
Teachers' Association	Improving working conditions and educational quality	Participation in educational and labor decisions	8	7
National Government of Ecuador	University policies and achievements	Constant and transparent communication	8	9
Ministry of Education	Compliance with standards and programs	Close and collaborative relationship	8	7
Student Council	Participation in decision-making	Listening and attention to needs	8	7

Executives	Participation and work environment	Promoting professional growth	8	7
SENESCITE	Academic progress and research projects	Effective communication	7	8
International Universities	Academic collaboration and exchanges	Promotion of joint programs	7	5
Society	Participation and dialogue	Outreach and accountability programs	6	5
Public Companies	Collaboration in projects	Collaborative relationships	6	5
Administrative Staff	Good working conditions	Recognition for your contribution	6	5
Communication Media	Adequate coverage of activities	Maintaining transparent communication	6	4
Schools	Student admission process	Partnerships to facilitate admissions	6	3
Municipality DMQ	Partnerships and project collaborations	Integration with the environment	5	6
Suppliers	Provision of products and services	Compliance with contracts and payments	5	4

Source: Own elaboration, based on the Mendelow Model.

The table shows the stakeholder matrix according to Mendelow's stakeholder model applied to the Central University of Ecuador. The stakeholders, their expectations and/or needs, the improvement strategies, as well as their impact and influence on the university have been identified.

Based on the Mendelow matrix, the stakeholders within the organization can be determined by considering four important groups:

- 1 and 2. High power/low interest: the strategy to employ is to keep them satisfied.
- 3. Low Power/Low Interest: This group is supervised with minimal effort.
- 4. High Power/High Interest: in this group are the opportunities and threats, therefore, it is one of the most attention and care.

Step 9: Analysis of results of the application of the Mendelow model at the Central University of Ecuador

- **Priority Identification of Interests and Needs**: Mendelow's model classifies stakeholders according to their level of influence and their level of interest in the university. This helps the institution identify the groups that have a significant impact on its operations and which are most involved in its activities. By prioritizing key stakeholders, the university can focus its efforts on addressing their interests and needs more effectively.
- **Improved Communication and Relationships**: By better understanding the expectations and demands of different groups, the university can develop more targeted and effective communication strategies. This makes it easier to build and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders, which is essential for fostering collaboration, gaining support, and generating positive perception in the community.
- **Informed Decision-Making**: By considering the influence and interest of different stakeholders in strategic decisions, the university can make more informed and balanced decisions. This ensures that

institutional actions take into account both internal needs and external expectations, which can increase the likelihood of success and buy-in.

- **Participation and Engagement Strategies**: Identifying and classifying stakeholders in Mendelow's model also allows the university to develop specific strategies for engaging and engaging these groups. For example, with a greater understanding of student expectations, the university can improve the student experience, which in turn can influence retention and academic success.
- **Risk and Conflict Management**: By being aware of stakeholders that have the potential to exert a negative influence or generate conflicts, the university can better anticipate and manage risks. This helps to prevent adverse situations and to maintain a more harmonious environment in the university community.

CONCLUSIONS

The Mendelow Stakeholder Model has established itself as a fundamental strategic tool for identifying, analyzing, and managing relationships with key stakeholders within an organization. Its application at the Central University of Ecuador (UCE) has provided valuable insights into how the institution can understand and address the expectations, needs, and concerns of its various stakeholders.

The analysis carried out has shown that the UCE operates in a highly diversified environment, characterized by a wide range of stakeholders that include students, teachers, administrative staff, local governments, state agencies and the community in general. This complex ecosystem, where varied and sometimes contradictory interests converge, demands differentiated management strategies.

The implementation of the Mendelow Model has made it possible to effectively classify these actors according to their level of power and interest. This categorization has facilitated the prioritization of engagement strategies and the efficient allocation of resources. In particular, those groups with a high level of power and interest have been identified as strategic partners, which has led to strengthening constant communication and active collaboration with them. These actions not only mitigate potential conflicts, but also favor the construction of a solid institutional reputation and the generation of shared value.

For the Mendelow Stakeholder Model to be applied effectively, it requires continuous commitment from senior management and integration from all levels of the organization. Regularly gathering information, constantly updating stakeholder profiles, and flexibly adapting strategies are critical practices to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the model.

This study has highlighted the need to consider stakeholders not only as observers or passive beneficiaries, but as strategic partners in the design and fulfillment of institutional objectives. By adopting this collaborative approach, the Central University of Ecuador can drive innovation, promote sustainability, and foster comprehensive growth in an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment.

The implementation of the Mendelow Model offers significant benefits in terms of institutional management. These include: Improved Reputation: Strengthening the institutional image through closer relationships with stakeholders; Operational Efficiency: Optimization of internal processes through the precise identification of strategic priorities; Alignment of Values: Greater coherence between institutional actions and the expectations of the academic and social community e; Sustainable Innovation: Promotion of innovative ideas by actively involving stakeholders in the formulation of strategies.

Mendelow's Stakeholder Model stands as an essential strategic tool for the Central University of Ecuador to successfully navigate in a complex and highly competitive environment. Its diligent and sustained application allows for the establishment of solid and collaborative relationships with stakeholders, thus guaranteeing more effective institutional management and aligned with the values and demands of the academic and social community. Ultimately, this approach strengthens the university's ability to respond proactively to contemporary challenges, while driving sustainable development and academic excellence in the long term.

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