

Beyond the usual suspects: Leveraging the Penta Helix to strengthen anti-corruption in social enterprise



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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the Penta Helix framework, comprising academia, business, community, government, and media, contributes to the governance of corruption risk in Malaysian social enterprises. Social enterprises often operate in hybrid and under-regulated environments, making them vulnerable to governance gaps and corruption exposure. The study aims to assess how each stakeholder group influences corruption risk mitigation and to identify performance gaps that hinder effectiveness. A quantitative research design was employed, using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) along with Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA). Data were collected from 220 social enterprises with SE Basic accreditation across Malaysia. Results reveal strong, positive relationships between all five Penta Helix components and corruption risk reduction, with academia demonstrating the highest path coefficient. The IPMA highlighted that while media and community actors are considered important, their performance in practice remains suboptimal, indicating areas needing strategic improvement. These findings underscore the significance of a multi-stakeholder approach to ethical governance in mission-driven organizations. The research contributes to both theory and practice by adapting an innovation ecosystem model for corruption governance and by providing actionable insights for policymakers. Strengthening stakeholder collaboration, particularly with underperforming yet critical actors, can enhance institutional transparency and resilience in the social enterprise sector.

Contribution/ Originality: The paper's primary contribution is identifying that academia has the strongest positive influence on corruption risk mitigation, while media and community actors, although important, exhibit performance deficiencies that require targeted policy attention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains one of the most entrenched governance challenges globally, undermining institutional effectiveness, distorting resource allocation, and weakening public trust. In developing and transitional economies such as Malaysia, corruption not only affects public sector performance but also impedes social development efforts led by private and community-based actors (Klitgaard, 2017). While national-level frameworks like the National

Anti-Corruption Plan have laid foundational policies, many operational environments, especially those of hybrid and mission-driven organizations, remain highly vulnerable.

Social enterprises (SEs) in Malaysia represent an innovative third sector bridging profit and purpose, aiming to tackle societal issues through sustainable business models. According to the [British Council \(2019\)](#), more than 20,000 social enterprises are active in Malaysia, operating as MSMEs, cooperatives, and NGOs. Despite their social contributions, these enterprises often lack formal risk governance structures and institutional capacity, making them susceptible to corruption risks in areas such as fund disbursement, vendor selection, partnership agreements, and regulatory compliance.

Current anti-corruption measures in Malaysia are mostly top-down and institutional. Their main goals are to reform the public sector, enforce the law, and conduct compliance audits. They do not do much to include smaller social groups like SEs. These businesses often operate in contexts where they depend on finance or are only partially regulated, and they are often not included in full governance systems. Many of them lack access to tools for assessing risk, legal knowledge, or training on how to stop corruption, which makes them weak in terms of operations. Additionally, these disparities are not always rectified by inclusive governance initiatives that include a wider range of social stakeholders.

Conventional governance frameworks often regard corruption as an internal concern limited to the confines of an institution. However, in practice, the ecosystem around SEs, which includes academic institutions, the business sector, government agencies, civil society, and the media, often makes corruption risks worse or better. This acknowledgment necessitates a more comprehensive, systems-oriented governance framework that engages all pertinent stakeholders in fostering institutional integrity ([Anttiroiko, 2017](#); [Modesto & Pilati, 2020](#)).

The Penta Helix model, initially created for innovation ecosystems, provides a suitable framework for this difficulty. It includes five pillars that work together to produce value and solve problems in society: university, business, community, government, and media ([Carayannis, Campbell, & Grigoroudis, 2022](#); [Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000](#)). Although first utilized in areas such as urban innovation, public health, and sustainable entrepreneurship, new studies have commenced investigations into its function in public governance and anti-corruption initiatives ([Mudjijah, Meirina, & Artanta, 2025](#); [Purnamasari et al., 2022](#); [Purnamasari et al., 2023](#)).

In Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, [Purnamasari et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrated how Penta Helix collaboration through digital governance can reduce corruption by enhancing transparency, institutional trust, and responsiveness. [Mudjijah et al. \(2025\)](#) have similarly demonstrated that coaching-based multi-stakeholder initiatives enhance corporate integrity and stakeholder accountability within entrepreneurial contexts. These studies emphasize an increasing consensus that combating corruption necessitates a collaborative governance framework that transcends state authority and encompasses the wider ecosystem.

Even though these ideas are interesting, not much research has been done on how to use the Penta Helix framework to manage corruption risk in the social business sector. There is inadequate empirical information regarding the contribution of each of the five components to enhancing institutional resilience in social enterprises, or how their impact varies in strength and efficacy. This research deficiency obstructs the formulation of targeted, stakeholder-informed anti-corruption initiatives within one of the nation's most socially significant industries.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the contributions of each element of the Penta Helix model, academia, business, community, government, and media, to the enhancement of corruption risk management procedures in Malaysia's social enterprises. It advocates for a redefinition of anti-corruption frameworks, viewing them not as standalone legal tools, but as collaborative governance systems that leverage the distinct capabilities of many societal stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Corruption Risk

Corruption is broadly defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2023). It manifests in both public and private sectors and includes a spectrum of unethical or illegal behaviors, from bribery and embezzlement to nepotism, favoritism, and regulatory capture.

Corruption risk, on the other hand, refers to the potential or likelihood that corruption may occur within an organization, sector, or governance process due to systemic vulnerabilities.

These risks may arise from weak internal controls, opaque decision-making, low accountability, or permissive organizational cultures.

In this research, corruption risk refers to the management and assessment of risks related to rules, regulations, and policies that increase corruption cases in the organization. According to Petrou and Thanos (2014), corruption is the misuse of entrusted authority for extra positive gain, and the term misuse often implies the occurrence of illegitimate action. It is important for the organization to identify weaknesses in the enforcement of rules and regulations within the institution, sector, and/or process under analysis (McDevitt, 2013).

Social enterprises occupy a hybrid space between the public and private sectors, operating with both social missions and market-driven models.

While they are often seen as ethical and community-focused, they are not immune to corruption risks, particularly in areas like public procurement, donor funding, and informal governance structures (Cheng & Meng, 2023). As they grow in scale and interact more with state actors and donors, transparency, accountability, and ethical governance become critical to their sustainability.

2.2. Penta Helix

Innovation is critical to advancing regional development. The realization of innovation necessitates the participation of numerous parties. This type of assistance or involvement is commonly referred to as the helix concept. The synergistic relationship between the three helix components interacts and functions together, and the interaction between the three components produces the dynamics of innovation-based economic activities (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Rampersad, Quester, & Troshani, 2010). The concept of helix continues to develop in accordance with changes in society.

Several models have been developed, including the Triple-Helix, Quadruple-Helix, and Penta-Helix. The Triple Helix model, which emphasizes collaboration among Academics, Industry, and Government, was initiated by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997).

Then this model was developed based on the claim that there was a shift from the dual helix model between Industry and Government or the relationship between Industry and University to the connection among the three helixes, namely: (1) Government, (2) Industry/Business, and (3) University/Higher Education (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). Critics of the Triple-Helix concept have arisen because this concept ignores the role of the community in innovation projects developed by government, industry, and academia (Fyodorov, Peshina, Gredina, & Avdeev, 2012).

This criticism led to the development of the Quadruple Helix, which expands the Triple-Helix model by integrating civil society as the fourth helix (Afonso, Monteiro, & Thompson, 2012). The Quadruple-Helix is an interaction of four sectors, namely: government, business, academic, and civil society. These sectors play a role in encouraging innovation. Furthermore, in the process of developing the Quadruple-Helix, it was expanded into the Penta-Helix (refer Figure 1).

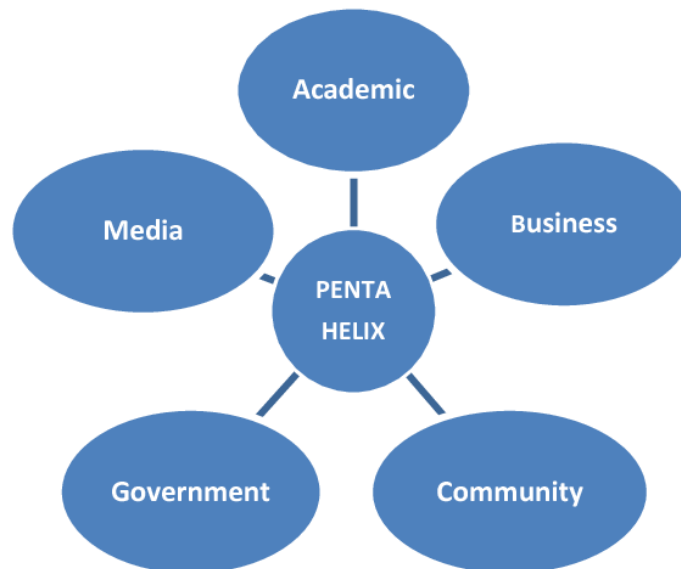


Figure 1. The Penta helix dimensions.

Penta Helix was formed around the development of two innovative models, namely the Triple-Helix, subsequently developed into the Quadruple-Helix, and then into the Penta-Helix. The Penta-Helix may be a conceptual framework involving academics, government, industry, non-governmental institutions, civil society/community, social entrepreneurs, or media that could enhance the economy to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship through collaboration and synergy (Fyodorov et al., 2012; Halibas, Sibayan, & Maata, 2017; Muhyi, Chan, Sukoco, & Herawaty, 2017; Tonkovic, Veckie, & Veckie, 2015).

In this research, Penta Helix is defined as collaboration among stakeholders consisting of Academics, Business, Government, Community, and Media (ABGCM) to develop innovation and an innovation-based economy. Pertaining to the size utilized in previous research and the context during this study, which aims to identify relevant dimensions for the support provided by stakeholders of the Penta Helix concept to enhance the innovation capacity of start-ups, the construct dimensions of the Penta Helix variables in this study are:

- a) Academician: Academicians contribute to the event of human resources such as graduates, lecturers, and researchers, who play a crucial role in the utilization of data and research into innovation, as well as new products and businesses (Carayannis, Barth, & Campbell, 2012).
- b) Business: Business is often interpreted as a business person or entrepreneur. This subsystem is predicted to contribute to a knowledge-based economy in the form of "venture capital" and the ability to run a business. This aligns with what was expressed by Carayannis et al. (2012). The role of this helix is to support start-up innovation, among others, with capital support, networking, business cooperation, and CSR.
- c) Community: The variable community features a role in supporting the innovativeness of start-ups through creating a forum for interaction within the community and enhancing their creative skills (Awaluddin, Sule, & Kaltum, 2016). The community is one source of innovative development ideas (Nylander & Tholander, 2017) and also a vehicle for sharing ideas and developing innovation (Lindtner, Hertz, & Dourish, 2014). Therefore, community involvement within the Penta helix scheme has a crucial role besides academics, business, and government, and communities have the power to participate directly in fostering innovation and a knowledge-based economy. Communities can directly conduct research and obtain feedback regarding new products issued by entrepreneurs through the existing non-governmental organizations as community representatives, or directly through the community itself.
- d) Government: The government has the authority within the field of law and public policy in this case. Indicators of the government dimension are associated with "political and legal capital" from the

government, namely: permits, policies, incentives, grants, which will be allocated for the event of start-up innovations, and also the supply of basic infrastructure like electricity, water, and access roads (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Fathin, Achidsti, & Priambodo, 2016).

- e) Medias: Medias have a task in conveying information concerning all variables needed by different stakeholders. Journalists are positioned to hide and inform stakeholders. Publicity must aim to teach the general public. The media also serve as a channel for feedback and interaction between relevant stakeholders (Effendi, Syukri, Subiyanto, & Utdityasan, 2016). Additionally, the media play a role in connecting all main actors with national and global industrial markets. Specifically, the media are ready to play a crucial role in ensuring that a company's reputation in Indonesia, for instance, can remain equivalent in other developed countries (Awaluddin et al., 2016). The indicator of media support during this dimension is often seen from the aspect of publicity that media provide for start-ups and their products, the extent to which start-ups receive ideas, information regarding the voices and choices of consumers, and other useful information channelled via the media. This reflects the level of intensity of communication between start-ups and stakeholders, which is also facilitated through the media.

Given the critical role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in promoting ethical governance, this study investigates the influence of the five Penta Helix factors: academia, business, community, government, and media on corruption risk mitigation within Malaysian social enterprises. Drawing from prior research on integrity systems and hybrid governance, the outcomes associated with effective stakeholder engagement were evaluated through dimensions such as improved organizational transparency, strengthened institutional accountability, and enhanced trust in governance structures. These success indicators reflect the potential benefits social enterprises can derive when key actors actively contribute to the integrity ecosystem. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the Penta Helix components and corruption risk reduction, which were empirically assessed within the Malaysian SE context.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a structured, quantitative research methodology to examine the constructs in question, employing validated instruments modified from previous empirical research. To ensure the evaluation was comprehensive and robust, each essential component was tested using multiple questions. Responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing participants to express varying levels of agreement with each statement.

For the corruption risk construct, the measurement items were adapted from the works of Zulkefli, Salina, Taufik, Zaifudin, and Azlindar (2017) as well as from OECD and the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2015), both of which are widely cited in governance and policy research. Meanwhile, the penta-helix construct, which captures the collaborative dynamics among government, academia, businesses, civil society, and media, was measured using items derived from Sudiana, Sule, Soemaryani, and Yunizar (2020).

The study's target population consisted of accredited social enterprises (SEs) in Malaysia. The British Council (2019) states that there are more than 20,000 social companies in Malaysia. These businesses include various forms such as MSMEs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and co-operatives. The Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) officially registered 447 of these social enterprises (SEs). Of these, 37 received full accreditation from the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC). The sampling frame for this research was derived from MaGIC's publicly accessible list of firms with SE Basic Accreditation, comprising a total of 220 qualifying social enterprises. Between November and December 2024, these businesses were invited to participate in an online survey.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is a robust statistical analysis method that encompasses both measurement and structural components. It allows for the simultaneous analysis of relationships

among variables within a conceptual framework. PLS-SEM was employed for theoretical development and predictive purposes. The choice of PLS path modeling was due to its recommendation as an appropriate statistical technique for modeling complex constructs in latent variables within behavioral research (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The PLS also allowed the estimation of complex models with various constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths without imposing distributional assumptions on the data (Hair et al., 2021).

This study also conceptually implemented Ringle, Sarstedt, and Straub (2012) Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) into the PLS-SEM framework. The IPMA provides a distinctive approach to illustrating the significance and efficacy of prior constructs in relation to the target construct. It combines the performance of latent variable scores, which are rescaled to a range of $[0,100]$, with total effects (importance). The IPMA results give us useful information by showing us where we need to make the most improvements. It specifically identifies constructs that are very important but not very effective at the target construct, which can help improve the overall efficacy of the model.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Respondents Profile

Out of the distributed questionnaires, 220 were returned fully completed and qualified for analysis. The remaining 30 responses were excluded because they contained more than 15% missing data, exceeding the acceptable threshold suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), who recommends omitting responses with over 10% missing values. The demographic profile of the 220 survey respondents reveals a diverse representation across gender, age, and education levels (Refer Table 1). The sample consists of a slightly higher proportion of male respondents (55.0%) compared to female respondents (45.0%). The age distribution shows a concentration in the middle age brackets, with the majority falling between 31-50 years (65.0% combined). In terms of educational background, the sample demonstrates a well-educated population, with 55.0% holding higher education degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD combined). This demographic composition suggests a mature, well-educated respondent pool with balanced gender representation (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondent profile (n=220).

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	121	55.0
Female	99	45.0
Age		
31-40	77	35.0
41-50	66	30.0
51-60	55	25.0
60 above	22	10.0
Education level		
SPM	22	10.0
STPM/Certificate	33	15.0
Diploma	44	20.0
Bachelor degree	66	30.0
Master degree	33	15.0
PhD	22	10.0

4.2. Assessment of the Measurement Model

An evaluation of the measurement model was conducted by examining reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. SmartPLS 4 software was utilized for PLS-SEM purposes. The 2-step procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2021) was adopted for assessments of the measurement models and structural model. The assessment results are summarized in Table 2.

All of the reflective constructs were evaluated together by considering the criteria for the assessment of the reflective measurement model. To assess the reliability of the reflective construct, the loading of each indicator on its associated latent construct should be higher than the threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). Results showed that all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.70; thus, all items are retained. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that all items loaded on their respective constructs with the factor loading higher than the threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). Composite reliability of the constructs exceeded the threshold of 0.70 (Chin, 1998). The results support the reflective measurement model of the constructs. Next, construct validity is assessed by analyzing convergent and discriminant validity (Hair, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Table 2 shows that all AVEs of first-order constructs were found to be higher than the threshold of 0.5. The results revealed that convergent validity was ensured for reflective first-order constructs.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which each construct is distinct from other constructs in a model (Hair et al., 2019). To establish discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations method was employed. The discriminant validity using HTMT should have a value less than 0.85, but sometimes less than 0.90, regarding the correlation between the constructs for there to be no discriminant issue (Henseler et al., 2015). As in Table 3, the constructs generate less than 0.85, so there are no discriminant issues.

Table 2. Construct validity of measurement model for first-order reflective constructs.

First-order construct	Item code	Items	Loading	Second-order construct	Construct Reliability and Validity	
					CR	AVE
Academia	A1	The quality of the workforce that graduated from local Higher Education Institutions who work at start-up firms is excellent.	0.89	Penta Helix	0.86	0.78
	A2	The workforce who graduated from local higher education institutions is always available to work at start-up firms.	0.92			
	A3	Start-up firm utilizes research results from local higher education institutions.	0.85			
Business	B1	The distance between start-up firms and local higher education institutions is close.	0.81			
	B2	Start-up firm easily obtains loan capital support from financial institutions (banks, cooperatives, etc.).	0.92			
	B3	Start-up firm has an investment partnership with other businesses.	0.90			
	B4	Start-up firms perform business interactions with other companies frequently.	0.91			
	B5	Start-up firms frequently receive guidance from established businesspeople.	0.83			
Communication	COM1	Start-up firm's products are consumed by the target community.	0.80			
	COM2	Start-up firm receives numerous ideas from the community.	0.80			
	COM3	Start-up firm gets lots of information from the community.	0.77			
Government	G1	Start-up firms can easily obtain the necessary licensing to operate their business.	0.79			
	G2	The government policy always supports start-up firms.	0.89			
	G3	Taxation and user charges are easy to	0.91			

First-order construct	Item code	Items	Loading	Second-order construct	Construct Reliability and Validity	
					CR	AVE
		deal with and are not burdensome to start-up firms.				
	G4	Government assistance is available and easily accessible.	0.80			
	G5	The quality of basic infrastructure near start-up firms such as electricity, roads, and water is good enough.	0.85			
	M1	Start-up firm receives numerous ideas and other valuable information from the media.	0.75			
	M2	The mass media publicize many of start-up firms' products and businesses.	0.86			
Media						
Corruption risk	CR1	My organization has a clear guideline on what should be included in a corruption risk assessment.	0.69	Corruption Risk	0.89	0.51
	CR2	The guidance in place determines the need for the project to be altered based on the corruption risk assessment.	0.66			
	CR3	There are clear procedures defining the level of decision-making, or clearance required for projects based on the corruption risk level.	0.70			
	CR4	My organisation has specific regulations to prevent corruption and requires high standards of integrity.	0.75			
	CR5	My organization conducts specialized training on corruption risk for staff involved in procurement.	0.75			
	CR6	My organization conducts training and outreach on anti-corruption standards and requirements for bidders and recipients of contracts.	0.74			
	CR7	My organization has an independent internal audit function.	0.76			
	CR8	My organisation has a clear policy on how to respond when evidence of corruption is found.	0.61			
	CR9	My organization has good coordination between corruption risk assessment and the independence of the internal audit function.	0.67			
	CR10	The investigation and audit findings are used to inform audit planning and future corruption risk management efforts.	0.66			

Note: CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity – HTMT Criterion

	Academic	Business	Community	Corruption risk	Government	Media	Penta helix
Academic							
Business	0.82						
Community	0.83	0.68					
Corruption risk	0.71	0.79	0.79				
Government	0.62	0.46	0.83	0.79			
Media	0.72	0.75	0.81	0.88	0.81		
Penta helix	0.74	0.65	0.83	0.92	0.75	0.80	

4.3. Structural Model Analysis

The path analysis was conducted using non-parametric bootstrapping to assess the structural model. The subsample was set at 5000, as suggested in past studies (Hair et al., 2021), and the analysis provided path coefficients (β), sample means (M), standard deviations (STDEV), t-statistics, and p-values, which indicate the significance of the paths in the structural model. The β -values and significant results, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, revealed that the relationship between the penta helix framework and corruption risk is particularly noteworthy, with a path coefficient of 0.88 (t-value = 51.40, $p < 0.001$). This strong positive relationship, combined with the highest t-statistic among all relationships, suggests that the penta helix framework significantly influences corruption risk management. The small standard deviation (0.02) indicates high consistency in this relationship across different samples. This finding suggests that the results are robust and generalizable.

Table 4. Bootstrapping results

	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Penta helix -> Corruption risk	0.88	0.02	51.40	<0.001

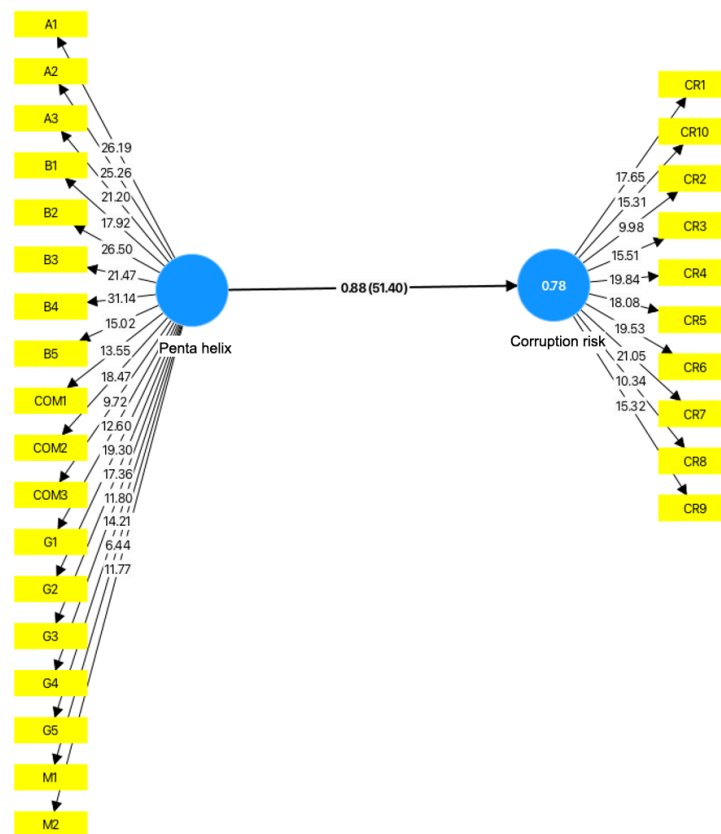


Figure 2. Structural model.

4.4. IPMA Analysis

The Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) provides empirical evidence regarding the relative significance and actual performance of various indicators within the penta helix framework as it relates to corruption risk assessment. This analytical approach enables the identification of critical areas for strategic intervention while illuminating the current effectiveness of implemented measures (Refer Figure 3).

The academic indicators (A1-A3) demonstrate substantive importance coefficients, with A1 exhibiting the highest total effect (0.078) coupled with satisfactory performance (63%). This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the crucial role of academic institutions in governance frameworks (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

The performance disparity among academic indicators suggests heterogeneous implementation effectiveness despite their comparable importance weights.

The business indicators (B1-B5) manifest clustered importance coefficients (0.070-0.076), indicating their relatively uniform significance within the model. However, their performance metrics reveal notable variability, with B1 and B3 achieving superior performance (approximately 60%) compared to B5's substantially lower performance (35%). This heterogeneity in performance despite homogeneous importance suggests differential effectiveness in operational implementation, a phenomenon previously noted in multi-stakeholder governance studies (Carayannis et al., 2022).

Analysis of community indicators (COM1-COM3) reveals a distinctive pattern wherein COM1 demonstrates both high importance (0.070) and superior performance (65%). This finding supports theoretical propositions regarding the significance of community engagement in corruption prevention mechanisms (Klitgaard, 2017). The varying performance levels among community indicators suggest opportunities for targeted enhancement of specific community engagement mechanisms.

The governmental indicators (G1-G5) exhibit particularly noteworthy characteristics, with G1 achieving the highest performance score (75%) while maintaining substantial importance (0.066). This exceptional performance aligns with institutional theory perspectives on the centrality of governmental mechanisms in corruption risk management (North, 2018). The consistent importance levels but varying performance scores among other governmental indicators suggest differential implementation effectiveness of various governmental mechanisms.

The media indicators (M1-M2) present an intriguing dichotomy. M2's superior importance coefficient (0.068) and performance metric (70%) compared to M1 suggest asymmetric effectiveness in media-related mechanisms. This finding contributes to the growing literature on media's role in corruption risk management and institutional governance (Alesina & Weder, 2002).

These findings contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical implementation of penta-helix frameworks in corruption risk management. The observed patterns suggest that, while institutional mechanisms demonstrate varying levels of importance, their performance often diverges from their theoretical significance, indicating potential implementation gaps.

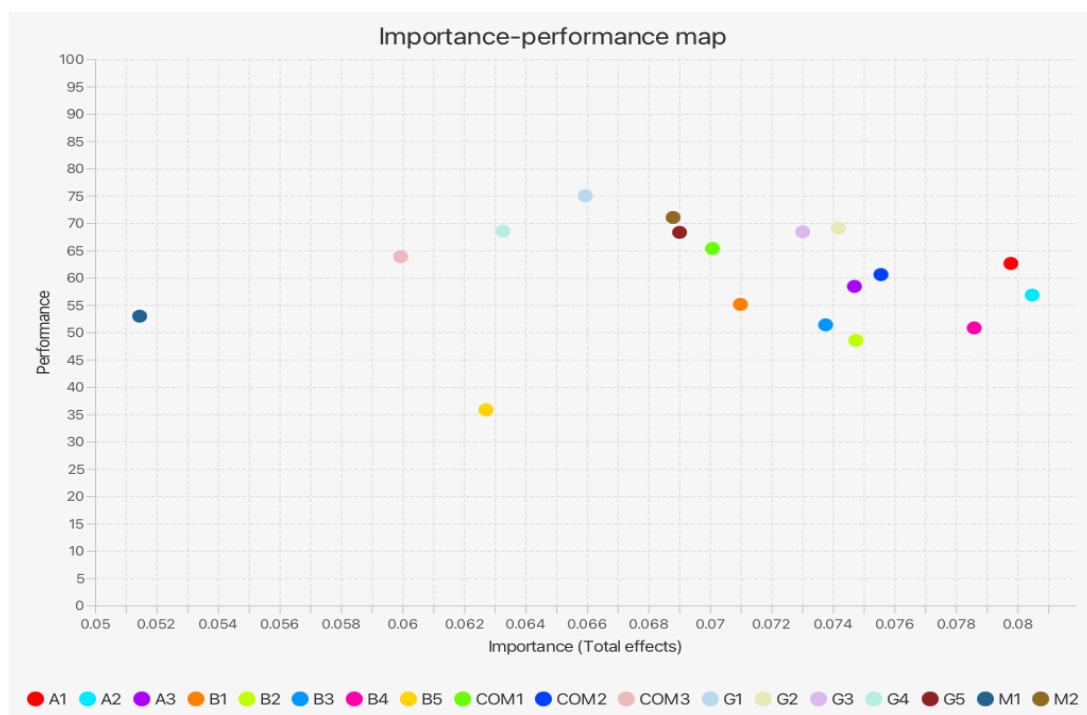


Figure 3. IPMA results (Penta helix and corruption risk).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study discovers that the Penta Helix framework, which includes academia, industry, community, government, and media, is very important for reducing the risk of corruption in Malaysian social businesses. The empirical data, corroborated by PLS-SEM and IPMA analyses, demonstrate that each component significantly enhances institutional integrity, with academia exerting the most substantial influence. However, there are gaps in performance concerning media and community engagement that indicate areas needing improvement. In light of these findings, it is advisable for policymakers to incorporate the Penta Helix method into national anti-corruption initiatives specifically designed for social businesses, while academia and government should take the lead in offering training and governance resources. To improve openness and accountability at the grassroots level, media and community actors need to be empowered through better relationships and communication channels. Business stakeholders are also encouraged to support social enterprises by investing ethically, mentoring, and collaborating on projects. If these efforts are well-coordinated, they can create a more robust governance ecosystem that extends beyond typical compliance models to include anti-corruption strategies involving multiple stakeholders.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: This study involved minimal risk and followed ethical guidelines for social science fieldwork. Formal approval from an institutional Review Board was not required under the policies of Universiti Tenaga Nasional. Informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized to protect participant confidentiality.

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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

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