

An Important Overview of University Administrators' Participation and Engagement in Decision-Making to Enhance Good Governance at Malaysia Public University

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Abstract

Malaysian university governance has been under heightened scrutiny in recent years. This research paper delved into the university administrator's participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance. The research paper explored the participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making processes (institutional, financial, strategic, and human resource management) to enhance governance at Malaysian public universities. This research paper encompassed three principal categories within university administration, as delineated in the specific regulations about higher education in Malaysia: registrar, bursar, and librarian. The primary responsibilities of these administrators encompassed administration, operations, creation, coordination, and oversight of various university programs. This research paper selected a designated cohort of university administrators as the study population, comprising about 529 officers (336 from the Registrar Scheme, 104 from the Bursary Scheme, and 89 from the Librarians Scheme). This research paper was undertaken utilizing a mixed-methods technique to deepen comprehension. The results indicate that the participation and engagement of university administrators in financial management decision-making significantly enhance good governance ($p < 0.01$, $p = 0.015$), and their participation and engagement in strategic management decision-making also significantly enhance good governance ($p < 0.01$, $p = 0.006$).

Key Words: Good Governance, University Governance, Participation and Engagement, Institutional, Financial, Strategic, and Human Resource Management.



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Introduction

A country should make substantial investments in its educational system as the educational system's successes determine the nation's future trajectory. Hence, the educational process should be a powerful tool for shaping and growing the mind, soul, and spirit toward self-awareness and attaining a respectable and ideal level of social existence. Nonetheless, from a different perspective, education is a bridge to connect human capital, knowledge, training, potential, and interest to a more dynamic and forward-thinking dimension to improve the country's growth.

Due to its significance, higher education became one of the focuses of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs, accepted by all United Nations member states in 2015, included various challenges linked to socio-economic, environmental, and technological development and applied to all countries, not just those generally regarded as 'developing' or 'emerging'. The SDGs expanded their focus beyond primary and secondary education to encompass postsecondary education as part of their comprehensive mandate. It was a significant step, as earlier development objectives the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All had shown, that higher education was lacking from the international development agenda (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021) universities conducted basic and practical research in the sciences and humanities to comprehend life better. Similarly, as Malaysia continues to evolve, its higher education system has undergone substantial development and maturation. A future-ready curriculum (FRC) was a framework that focused on three elements: curriculum structure, teaching and learning delivery, and evaluation. This curriculum was constructively oriented to prepare graduates to address twenty-first-century problems (Wosley & Muhamad, 2013).

According to the Higher Education Statistics in 2023 as of 4th August 2024, 1,247,908 students were enrolled in Malaysian higher education institutions. There were 484,318 students (56%) in 20 public universities and branch campuses and 379,298 (44%) in nearly 400 private higher education institutions. Regarding international student enrolment, over 58.4% (66,908 students) were enrolled in private higher education institutions, while 41.6% (47,857 students) enrolled in public universities. Malaysia aimed to maintain its position as an international education hub, with a target of 250,000 international students by 2025 (Higher Education Statistics 2024: Ministry of Higher Education (KPT), 2024). Furthermore, universities are not merely bastions of higher education but also pivotal hubs of knowledge, cutting-edge research, and intellectual discourse that mold national civilization. Effective university administration is crucial in realizing these principles amidst the structural changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Public university staff must adapt to evolving circumstances and navigate shifting regulations under the leadership of bodies like the Council of the Association of Administrators of Public Universities (MASTI), championing professional development initiatives for staff welfare and effectiveness, as noted by Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali, Ex-Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia. Currently, there are 93,638 government workers, 5.85% of whom are UA citizens, and around 9,652, or 10.3%, are professional administrators. The government places a high value on cooperation between policymakers and policy implementers, particularly via collaborative associations or non-governmental organizations." In his address officiating

the Third Malaysian Public University Administrators Convention online on March 29, 2021, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia remarked, "To have a clear image, the many measures that the government wishes to execute must be via the Participation of stakeholders." In addition, Bryn Williams-Jones, Professor and Director of the Bioethics program in the School of Public Health at Université de Montréal, emphasized that administrative personnel are the university's backbone. Without them, students would be unable to enroll in courses or Programs, grades would go unrecorded, classrooms would remain unreserved and unprepared, and grant funds would be left unmanaged (Lehoux & Williams, 2020). A discerning student or professor soon realized the benefits of maintaining a cordial and productive relationship with department and program secretaries. These individuals knew how to accomplish tasks efficiently and navigate shortcuts, yet they often remained the university's unseen contributors. While academics and senior administrators occupied the spotlight and attracted funding, the administrative workers and staff ensured the institution's continued operation throughout the holidays when professors and students were on leave. Administrative and support employees at universities should have been acknowledged as frontline workers. Despite their expertise and dedication, they are often underpaid and underappreciated, much like many other frontline workers (Lehoux & Williams, 2020). Hence, for these reasons, this research explored university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making. It aimed to objectively determine the current stage of participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making (institutional, financial, strategic, and human resource management) to enhance university governance in public universities (Research, Comprehensive, and Focus University). Furthermore, few studies examined university administrators as a sample to assess the impact of participation and engagement in decision-making on enhancing governance in Malaysian public universities. The lack of strategic positions in public universities means administrators have fewer opportunities to participate and engage in decision-making (Yatim, 2021). Rigid professional development routes limit the extent to which higher learning institutions may attract, recruit, and retain the finest personnel, which is an essential issue to address for the benefit of Malaysian universities (MOE, 2015).

Finally, the primary objective of this research is to enhance university good governance through the participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Ban (2008) define governance as "the process of decision-making and the mechanism through which choices are executed or not implemented. According to Nolan (2021), corporate governance refers to any set of rules, corporate charters, bylaws, or formal regulations that guide a corporation and its leadership in administering the organization. Corporate governance involves balancing the interests of shareholders with those of stakeholders such as employees, board members, business partners, and the wider community.

Literature Review

Decision-making

Decision-making may be seen as a problem-solving activity that results in an optimum, or at least adequate, answer. As a result, it is a process that may be reasonable or irrational and can be founded on explicit or implicit information and beliefs. In complicated decision-making processes, tacit knowledge is often employed to fill gaps. In most cases, both tacit and explicit knowledge are utilized in the decision-making process. The surroundings of the decision-maker may influence the decision-making process. Environmental complexity, for example, impacts cognitive function. A complicated environment has many distinct potential states that change over time. Furthermore, more complex settings correspond with greater cognitive performance, implying that the location may impact a choice. In one experiment, the number of little objects and appliances in a room was used to determine its complexity; a simple room had fewer of these items. The greater measure of environmental complexity has a significant impact on cognitive function, making it easier to think about the issue and make better decisions (Nolan, 2021).

Participation

Employee participation, sometimes termed workplace participation or worker participation, denotes the engagement of employees in the decision-making processes and management of an organization. The concept originates from the Latin term "participare," which translates to "to share" Vahdat et al. (2014). Participation may manifest in multiple ways, encompassing individual engagement in personal healthcare decisions and collective involvement in the formulation of organizational policies and strategies. Community development and organizational management regard employee participation as an essential element. It fosters employees' mental and emotional engagement in collaborative settings, enabling them to contribute to collective objectives and share accountability (Amran et al., 2022). Engagement may develop enduring alliances between employees and management, since it promotes a culture of collective comprehension and reciprocal advantages. Employee participation groups must possess requisite skills and knowledge for systematic problem-solving, follow established procedures, integrate horizontally and vertically within the organisation, and operate as regular members rather than as distinct entities (Mohrman & Ledford, 1985).

Engagement

A major component of organisational success, employee engagement directly affects employee productivity, retention, and general job happiness. Employee engagement is the idea of workers being physically, cognitively, and emotionally committed to their work in a multifarious sense. Many times, people define participation as a mental condition in which workers are very committed to their company and their duties inside it. Enthusiastic about their work, driven to

go above and beyond their job responsibilities to help the company to flourish, engaged employees feel a purpose (Toksoz, 2021). They are totally engaged in their work, finding it relevant and difficult, and ready to put a lot of effort into ensuring the company runs well. The literature suggests three main elements define employee engagement: enthusiasm, devotion, and absorption. High degrees of energy and mental resilience, the readiness to commit time to one's task, and tenacity even in the face of challenges define vigour. Dedication is being very engaged in one's work and feeling of significance, passion, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption is the state of being totally focused and delightedly engaged in one's job, in which time passes rapidly, and one finds it impossible to separate herself from the activity (Khalid, 2021). In the end, involved workers see their company as their own and have a strong emotional bond to it.

Good Governance

The concept of good governance encompasses eight key characteristics: participative, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable, and inclusive. Additionally, it adheres to the principles of the rule of law. It guaranteed the reduction of corruption, the inclusion of minority perspectives, and the participation of the most marginalized individuals in decision-making processes. Based on Yap (2011), claimed that it was also adaptable to the current and future societal demands. In addition, this study assessed good governance by examining its attributes related to several selected variables in management, as outlined in the conceptual framework of the study. To achieve good governance, it is essential to have participation and engagement from both men and women. This can be achieved either through direct participation and engagement or by utilising legitimate intermediary institutions or representatives. Institutions and processes need to strive to meet the needs of all stakeholders within an acceptable timescale. Effective governance necessitates the intervention of many societal interests or stakeholders to attain a comprehensive agreement on what is most advantageous for the university community and how it might be accomplished. The procedures and institutions yielded outcomes that effectively fulfilled the requirements of the university community while optimizing the utilization of available resources (Yap, 2011).

University good governance

Good governance is especially important in higher education because a university is, in many ways, a much more complicated organization than a business, and governance in higher education must provide a framework for a truly variegated group of stakeholders. Nonetheless, the basic principles of corporate governance find application in higher education governance as well. Having principles that were analogous to those in business did not mean that leadership in higher education should behave like businesspeople. What it did mean was that good governance structured how leadership pursued its objectives – in any organization. The objective of higher education was knowledge. “Knowledge was higher education’s core business: However broadly or narrowly we defined it, knowledge was the material. Research

and teaching were the main technologies,” as one commentator puts it. Good governance drove performance in the pursuit of knowledge and managed the risks involved (Rathod, 2020).

Employee Participation in Decision-making in Higher Education Institutions

Employee participation and engagement can yield advantages for public higher education institutions due to three primary factors: political, social, and economic. From a political standpoint, involving employees in decision-making is crucial as it extends democratic ideas to the workplace. This empowers employees to have a say in decisions that directly impact their work lives (Tchapchet et al., 2014). Hence, from a social perspective, employee participation enhances the quality-of-service delivery, increases job satisfaction, fosters dedication, and improves labour relations. From an economic perspective, cooperation among employees promotes increased dedication, efficiency, and drive, resulting in improved productivity (Tchapchet et al., 2014). Granting staff in higher education institutions the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process fosters a sense of belonging and affiliation with the institution. This fosters a higher level of dedication to the organization and enhances their job performance, indicating that implementing their ideas would further amplify their effectiveness in their roles. Based on this, Bakker et al. (2008) propose in their burnout and engagement model that fostering employee engagement and participation in relevant concerns fosters a feeling of community. A feeling of community entails that the academic staff of a university are motivated to engage in community affairs and are acknowledged for their valuable efforts. This aligns with the model of employee engagement, which underscores the importance of granting employees the opportunity to make significant contributions. This statement by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) asserts that it improves the perception of organizational support. A significant percentage of favourable responses imply that staff engagement will motivate the responders to provide efficient services to the students of the faculty, hence enhancing the overall efficacy of both the faculty and the university. Following that, 10 out of the 12 respondents indicated that staff participation enhances their efficiency. Given that most respondents indicated that employee participation enhances their effectiveness and efficiency, it can be concluded that employee participation positively influences the productivity of the faculty. The reason for this is that, as previously stated, the metrics employed to assess teacher production in this study were effectiveness and efficiency. The affirmative responses indicate that employee participation has a beneficial impact on faculty productivity (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Employee Engagement in Decision-making in Higher Education Institutions

According to Sonnentag (2003) observed that work engagement is inherently positive, and John-son (2004) further supported this idea by explaining that employee engagement is considered a practical concept that not only yields outcomes but can also be quantified in terms

of recruitment expenses and employee productivity. As indicated by the second quote, investing in boosting employee engagement leads to various results, and there is a significant level of agreement in both professional and academic literature regarding the advantages of this practice. The advantages can be divided into two main categories: organizational outcomes and personnel outcomes. From an organizational standpoint, employees that are engaged are more inclined to remain with the organisation (Levinson, 2007) and are more likely to persist even during times of organizational hardship. Moreover, employees that are actively involved perform 20 percent more effectively than their peers (Jarernsiripornkul & Pandey, 2018). They have a greater willingness to exceed expectations and serve as champions for the organisation (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007). Engagement may greatly influence the performance of an organisation, leading to higher profits by increasing productivity, fostering customer loyalty, boosting sales, and enhancing retention rates (Cleland & Mitchinson, 2008). Furthermore, participate has the potential to enhance the ability of companies and organisations to swiftly adjust to evolving markets and enhance the effectiveness of change programs (Cleland & Mitchinson, 2008). From an employee's perspective, engagement enables individuals to fully invest themselves in their work. The work primarily focuses on the well-being agenda. Nevertheless, numerous insights gained from the effective execution of the interventions can be extended to the broader context of enhancing staff participate and engage in the design, implementation, and evaluation of other projects in higher education.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach using an online survey. Hence, online surveys have become increasingly popular in research studies due to their unique capabilities (Jedinger et al., 2018). They offer several advantages over traditional paper surveys, such as convenience for participants, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to reach a larger and more diverse sample (Jedinger et al., 2018). A set of questionnaires was developed to measure each construct used in this study, which were: decision-making related to (1) governance and institutional policies; (2) human resource management; (3) financial management; (4) strategic management; and enhancing the university's good governance. A sample size of 266 out of 529 questionnaires was completed by the respondents who are administrators affiliated with public universities. Consequently, surveys were administered to the governing bodies of nine public universities in Malaysia, consisting of three universities from research universities, three universities from focus universities, and three universities from comprehensive universities. Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and Universiti Putra Malaysia are examples of research universities. Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris are considered comprehensive universities, whereas Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak are considered focus universities.

This research paper has used multiple regression analysis as a statistical analysis to answer the questions related to the exploration of the role of participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making to enhance good university governance. Thus, to understand the relationship between the dependent variable (DV), namely good governance,

and four (4) independent variables, namely institutional management, financial management, strategic management, and human resources management. In regression analysis investigations, the researcher may assess the amount to which each independent variable influences the dependent variable and detect any potentially deceptive effects or interactions between the independent variables (Purwanto et al., 2021).

Hence, this strategy is particularly beneficial when there are intricate interactions between variables or when numerous parameters must be controlled concurrently (Pruzek, 1971). As a result, multiple regression analysis is an important tool in this study, particularly when dealing with statistical data, because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between variables (DV), namely good governance, and four (4) independent variables, namely institutional management, financial management, strategic management, and human resources management and enables the study to identify and make decisions based on the results of the analysis. It seems that the answers presented are already thorough and address the significance of multiple regression analysis in statistical research. (Purno et al., 2023). Multiple regression is a regression or prediction model that involved more than one independent variable or predictor. Multivariate regression, on the other hand, is a regression analysis that involved more than one response variable (dependent variable or outcome variable). Multiple linear regression constituted a multiple regression model when the dependent variable was scaled using interval or ratio data (quantitative or numerical), with independent variables typically also scaled using interval or ratio data. Another form of linear regression involves independent variables using nominal or ordinal data scales, commonly known as dummy variables, and is referred to as linear regression with dummy variables. Multiple logistic regression, meanwhile, constituted a multiple regression model when the dependent variable is dichotomous, meaning it had two categories (Allison, 1999).

Multinomial regression, in contrast, is a type of regression where the dependent variable was nominal data with more than two categories, and the independent variables included more than one predictor. This regression resembled multiple logistic regression but differed in that the dependent variable had more than two categories, whereas multiple logistic regression dealt strictly with dichotomous dependent variables. It also bore similarities to ordinal regression, except that the data scale in multinomial regression was not ordered (Allison, 1999).

Findings and Discussion

The objective of the study regarding university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making to enhance good governance in Malaysian public universities was to ascertain the extent of administrators' participation in institutional decision-making and its correlation with effective governance. Considering the growing intricacy of university governance, it is essential to comprehend the function of administrators in formulating policies, executing plans, and maintaining institutional responsibility. The research indicates that while administrators significantly contribute to decision-making, their effect fluctuates according to variables including Institutional Management, Financial Management, Strategic Management, and Human Resource Management. Findings and discussion that emerged from the research include:

Table: 1.0 Multiple Regression (Model Summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.438 ^a	.191	.179	.48943	1.963

a. Predictors: (Constant), HR, FM, IM, SM
b. Dependent Variable: Good Governance (DV)

Based on Table 1.0, in this research paper, this research paper explored the role played by university administrators in four (4) independent variables (IVs), namely institutional management (IM), financial management (FM), strategic management (SM), and human resource management (HM), will be measured by and the dependent variable (DV), namely good governance, to see the relationship that will statistically show the role of university administrators. Hence, based on the analysis of multiple regression that has been made, the Durbin-Watson value is 1.963, while in this research paper, there is no multicollinearity issue because the tolerance value is more than 0.3 and the VIF value is less than 4. Not only that, the finding of the R-Square value tells how much of the variable in the DV is explained by the model. For this research paper, it was found that the value is 0.191, or 1.91% of the research study; in other words, the findings of this study found that 1.91% fits the whole model used in this research.

Table: 2.0 Multiple Regression (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.801	4	3.700	15.447	<.001 ^b
	Residual	62.521	261	.240		
	Total	77.322	265			

a. Dependent Variable: Good Governance (DV)

b. Predictors: (Constant), HR, FM, IM, SM

According to Table 2.0, the multiple regression analysis revealed that the p-value < 0.001 is lower than the chosen level of significance (0.05). This suggests that the model is statistically significant, indicating that the predictor variables, when considered together, have a significant influence on the dependent variable. In the multiple regression analysis, we investigated the association between excellent governance (DV) and institutional management, financial management, strategic management, and human resource management (IV). The regression model explained a significant portion of the variance in the good governance score (R-squared = 14.801, $F(15, 447) = 3.700$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that institutional management, financial management, strategic management, and human resource management (IV) all play a role in good governance (DV).

Table: 3.0 Multiple Regression (Coefficients)

Model	Standard ized Coefficie nts	Beta	t	Collinearity Statistics	
				Sig	Tolera nce VIF
1 (Constant)			21.6 43	<.0 01	
Institutional Management (IV)		-.026	-. .318	.75 1	.468 2.137
<i>Financial Management (IV)</i>		.173	2.45 2	.01 5	.619 1.615
<i>Strategic Management (IV)</i>		.246	2.78 2	.00 6	.395 2.532
Human Resource Management (IV)		.113	1.27 9	.20 2	.397 2.516

a. Dependent Variable: Good Governance (DV)

Table 3.0 displays the research findings of the multiple regression results for all four (4) independent variables: institutional management, financial management, strategic management, and human resources, on good governance. The study found that only two independent variables "strategic management" and "financial management" have a substantial impact on the role of university administrators in decision-making to enhance good governance. Furthermore, the primary elements influencing or contributing to university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making. The highest beta value indicates the primary element that impacts or contributes to university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making, which in this research is "***Strategic Management.***" ***This suggests that the model is statistically significant because the $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.246$ and "Financial Management" with $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.173$.*** The strategic management element is a key to creating effective governance and necessitates that chief administrators demonstrate an understanding of the functions of higher education institutions and make prompt decisions that align with the overall institution's goals. As a result, positive university governance should leverage strategic financial management approaches to effectively and efficiently use available financial resources to meet the demands of its founding objectives (Omal et al., 2018). The growing trend towards increased representation and participation in governance has resulted in greater use of governance committees (Collins, 2023). This has led to some new interfaces and tensions between governance and management roles, particularly about strategic direction-setting and planning (Jain et al., 2014). Strategic management is an essential aspect of effective university administration. University administrators must engage in strategic planning to provide a blueprint for the institution's future growth and development. This strategic planning process involves all members of the university community, including senior administration, faculty,

staff, students, alumni, and community representatives. Proper implementation of strategic planning can have a powerful impact on transforming and advancing colleges and universities (Kotler et al., 2023). Administrators need new understanding, tools, and approaches for managing the transformation facing higher education today. Practicing strategic management does not guarantee that an organization will successfully meet all challenges, but it does increase the odds (Kotler et al., 2023). Strategic planning typically involves a time horizon of more than two years, with a five-year projection being common. The purpose is to provide a clear vision and roadmap for the university's future. A key component of strategic management is succession planning, which ensures the transfer of relevant skills and knowledge necessary for the system's continuity, survival, and progress. However, the university management has often failed in its strategic planning efforts by not putting in place effective processes for succession planning and mentoring (Ghazali et al., 2021). Ultimately, strategic management is essential for university administrators to chart a clear course for their institution's future and engage all stakeholders.

University administrators face a myriad of challenges in managing the finances of their institutions. Effective financial management is crucial for the sustainable administration and long-term success of universities. Finance is the foundation that enables universities to carry out their core missions and activities effectively (Irawan et al., 2021). Sound financial management practices, such as planning, managing, storing, and controlling funds and assets, are essential for universities to achieve their strategic objectives (Irawan et al., 2021). Efficient procurement and utilization of financial resources are necessary for universities to deliver quality education, conduct impactful research, and provide meaningful community service. Equally important is the need for university administrators to understand the complex and often delicate nature of employment relationships and decision-making processes within the university system (Bramblett, 2020). Positive university governance should leverage strategic financial management approaches to effectively and efficiently use the available financial resources. The stewardship of financial resources as well as human resources, including university personnel, trustees, and alumni, is critical for the success of private universities. Applying modern financial management principles can help universities gain the trust of the wider community and enhance their overall reputation (Irawan et al., 2021). In conclusion, university administrators cannot overstate the importance of strategic financial management. Effective financial management is a key driver for sustainable administration, institution-building, and the achievement of universities' founding objectives.

Effective financial management and strategic decision-making at higher education institutions rely largely on the participation and engagement of university administrators. This participation and engagement ensure that institutional priorities are articulated, financial resources are allocated appropriately, and competing demands are effectively managed to promote sustainable governance and uphold the institution's founding objectives (Merkel & Litten, 2023). Furthermore, the collaborative approach of governing boards, administrators, and faculty fosters an environment in which financial decisions reflect a thorough understanding of institutional needs, resulting in a more robust allocation of resources to support long-term strategic goals (Ridley et al., 2023). Furthermore, the complex dynamics of budgeting processes necessitate that administrators engage with various stakeholders, allowing for a comprehensive

dialogue that can influence key financial decisions while aligning them with the institution's overall goals, thereby enhancing both accountability and transparency in resource allocation (Todowede, 2013). The growing tendency towards greater participation and engagement in governance has resulted in the widespread usage of committees in university decision-making processes. However, the capability of advertising, concerns are frequently raised about administrators' ability to maintain a leadership role and make timely, informed decisions in this committee. This problem demonstrates how critical it is for administrators to not only fully understand how institutions work, but also to effectively navigate and influence complex governance structures. This strengthens their participation in developing and implementing solutions that correspond with institutional goals and increase overall financial sustainability (Zou, 2018). The allocation of financial resources among competing needs is a critical undertaking for any college or university, and it necessitates the joint efforts of the governing board, president, and faculty members based on their individual areas of expertise and duties. This collaborative framework not only ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in the budgetary process, but it also helps to foster a shared commitment to achieving the institution's strategic goals, enhancing the effectiveness of financial management practices in the university setting (Kenno et al., 2020). To summarize, participation and engagement on financial decision-making in universities not only meets administrative requirements, but it also fosters a culture of shared responsibility, which is critical for long-term university governance and effective resource utilization to achieve institutional goals.

Conclusion

University governance has gained significance in recent years, especially among Malaysian public universities. The capacity of university administrators to actively participate in decision-making processes is essential for the governance and effectiveness of these institutions. This research paper analyses the significance of strategic and financial management in influencing the participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making, hence enhancing governance in Malaysian public universities. University governance is essential for the effective and efficient administration of higher education institutions.

In Malaysian public institutions, the participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making processes is crucial for enhancing governance (Asiimwe & Steyn, 2014). The current findings underscore the significance of strategic and financial management in the decision-making process of university governance. Hence, based on these findings we must consistently enhance the two independent factors (IV), Institutional Management and Human Resource Management, to promote increased participation and engagement. University administrators must engage actively in the decision-making process, ensuring their participation and engagement aligns with the overarching goals of enhancing governance in Malaysian public universities.

Suggestion for Future Research

Further research can uncover fresh insights regarding the participation and engagement of university administrators in decision-making processes aimed at enhancing governance at Malaysian public universities. This study can analyze the impact of digital transformation on governance and the influence of digital governance tools, artificial intelligence, and data-driven decision-making on the engagement of university administrators. It may also examine the function of e-governance and digital decision-making platforms in enhancing transparency and accountability. Conversely, subsequent researchers may explore gender and diversity in decision-making, examine the impact of gender representation and diversity among university administrators on governance practices, and investigate whether increased inclusion results in improved policies and decisions at the institutional level. Researchers may also examine other significant factors, including longitudinal research on governance improvements. Undertake extensive study on the effects of governance reforms in Malaysian public institutions and assess if modifications in the Malaysian Education Blueprint have affected administrator participation and engagement over time. Further research may examine the collaboration between administrators, faculty members, and student representatives in governance, along with the influence of student councils, academic senates, and advisory boards on university policy formation. Finally, future research must concentrate on creative governance frameworks, digitalisation, inclusion, and policy efficacy to guarantee that Malaysian public universities maintain transparency, accountability, and excellence in decision-making.

Co-Author Contribution

This research study is a collaborative endeavor among the authors, each making substantial contributions to various facets of the research, including the conceptualization of the research framework, the establishment of research objectives, and the formulation of research questions. Authors contributed to the literature study and theoretical framework; Authors were tasked with data collection, conducted interviews and surveys with university administrators, and collated primary data sources. Authors significantly contributed to the analysis and discussion of the findings, as well as to the draughting, editing, and revision of the paper. Authors assisted with the formatting and citations, ensuring the content was cohesive. Every author has examined and sanctioned the final paper, consenting to be responsible for their own contributions and the research's integrity.

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