

# CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT: AN APPROACH TO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

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## ABSTRACT

*Despite the many definitions of governance, the literature agrees that it generally describes the organizational structure, processes, and policies leading to decision-making in higher education institutions. The authors venture to provide a critical description of modern university governance and its relation to excellence in output. In particular, it focuses on how a university operates, its framework, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness; the latter includes decision-making processes aimed at delivering expected pre-defined objectives. University management also involves various organizational structures and implementing the functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the work and behavior of critical people in the university and other stakeholders. The paper further sheds light on the interaction between Leadership and management and their impact on the excellence in teaching, research, and societal impact.*

**Keywords:** University Governance, University Management, Teaching, Research, Societal Impact, Leadership

## INTRODUCTION

University governance involves the governing boards and senior managers of a university. It also speaks about how a university is organized, officers' responsibilities, qualifications, and positions (Saint, 2009). From this analysis, Higher Education policymakers and stakeholders consider a range of options available to improve university performance through teaching & learning, research, and societal impact (Saint, 2009).

University governing boards are interpreted in many ways, e.g., university council, board of trustees, administrative council, senates, etc. Whatever this may be called, the higher education institution considers this as the highest decision-making body and in which leaders are accountable on matters in the operations.

Leading and managing a university is a great challenge faced by academic leaders. People who occupy a leadership position and exercise the role of a leader are two different characteristics. The first requires only a title; the latter has to lead the institution in ways that enable them to adapt to a demanding internal and external environment. Therefore, optimizing the mission formulated, aligned with core values to produce a sustainable contribution to society (Lane et al., 2013).

## Research Objectives

- a. Determine clear manifestations of good governance as a determinant of optimal performance in a university,
- b. Explore relationships between governance and management as an ideal of clear vision and democratic, responsive Leadership.
- c. Reinforce that good and effective governance, management, and Leadership are essential in achieving excellence in university teaching, research, and societal impact.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers will analyze and use related literature and cases as a research approach. It is used to discover patterns and practices, generates descriptive forecasts, evaluates causal links, and generalize university governance and management results. This paper explores secondary data and derives valuable lessons. Moreover, the literature review will help look at the problem challenge of governance from a broader perspective and emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to strengthening it.

Furthermore, the technique used in this study is based on a comprehensive assessment of recent literature to predict how governance affects the performance of organizations. Secondary data is gathered to assess the state of university governance. It highlights significant difficulties and challenges faced by universities and the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of university governance. It also intends to offer guidance in reinforcing senior executive positions within the governing bodies in effective decision-making.

## Research Statement

The discussions presented in this paper will serve as an eye-opener to the symbiosis between effective governance models and excellence in meeting objectives, particularly those related to teaching, research & innovation, and community outreach. It further highlights malpractices that work against declared mission statements and proposes general remedial actions that governments should implement, principally concerning for-profit higher educational institutions where the focus is primarily shifted on profitability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Leadership, Governance, and Management

Individuals occupying senior executive and managerial roles can best attain active governance and management if they understand and embrace the institution's exclusive culture. Certain studies have proven that higher education institutions are diverse and have an innate density associated with their governance and management practices. These were centuries back and revolutionized, which affected their current educational objectives and also on individuals, social and governmental bodies pursuing autonomously to express the higher education ideals and ultimately permit and encouraged organizational independence and creativity (Hendrickson et al., 2013)

Worldwide academic administrators' Leadership became more informed and understood the uniqueness of an academic institution. A mission-driven academic institution has three primary functions: teaching, research, and community service. Thus, the academic leader's

responsibility is to support individuals and guarantee that their work contributes to the mission's educational institution. The task of the university leaders is also to help the mission be distinguished from the others. The mission of a college or university serves its intention, purpose, philosophy, and educational objectives. This educational philosophy or mission statement should direct the institution and its leaders. Besides, it explains how the college or university leaders approach decisions on every aspect of the strategy, what the curriculum should be, and how resources should be utilized and distributed. In focus tend, the mission should bind the institution together and offer the core values that guide every area of the institution's decision-making. Equally important is addressing the institution's internal and external concerns (Hendrickson et al., 2013; Ellis & Mille, 2014; Mophew & Hartley, 2006).

Furthermore, academic leadership and governance of higher education consider academic departments as the core units of colleges that serve the institution's avenue for implementing its academic mission. The academic departments exemplify the three themes: the base decisions on an institution's core mission and values, the need to adapt to environmental changes consistent with the institution's mission and foster democratic partnerships with other constituents. Faculty members at academic institutions play vital roles in teaching, research, and services that support the institution's goal. When faculty members contact the outside world, they know how the world is changing, which they may use to improve their courses, research, and engagement. The academic departments are the bulk of membership in all academic core governance levels. Every academic institution has departments that function according to governance.

Good governance through good Leadership is a method of networking that could effectively achieve quality in the educational system. Universities can build a network of leaders and propagate innovations and improvements of practices. The governance then transforms the direction into action and engrosses professional development for teachers, encourages research, appropriately allocates time with academic and administrative tasks. The expected result is network governance and guarantees good governance for a higher quality of education (Hidayah et al., 2019; Chaffer, 2020).

## Shared Governance

Shared governance is challenging to define, sustain, and implement. It necessitates the development of an institutional culture of goodwill, good intentions, and devotion to shared ideals. It necessitates the development of methods to foster trust, respect, continuing thought, and periodic review. Universities that have adopted and shared vital governance concepts and structures achieve future improvements and contribute to the sustainability of the external communities (Tamrowski, 2017). They are more likely to succeed, especially in challenging situations. Shared governance organizations are those who routinely practice information sharing, extensive consultation, and reliance on others' constituent expertise in decision-making. According to Miller & Nadler (2009), shared governance is one of the features of higher education, which allows leaders the opportunities to provide resources in the decision-making process. The practice involved all stakeholders, from the students, trustees, and other administrators, in the governance and decision-making. The study also included other staff members like the accountants, administrative staff, administrators, and others. Fifteen governance leaders underwent a three-round Delphi method study (Quyên, 2014). Feedback gathered from them showed better governance if these staff worked together. There were three areas specifically considered."

1. The issue of shared governance, which concerns mutual respect and communications by all stakeholders, with good cooperation, teamwork, and good decision-making.

2. The rules guide the entire system, functions, and the stakeholders' recognition. It requires a smooth system in dealing with essential issues in the organization.
3. Organizations should retain more qualified and robust leaders who respect peers and other stakeholders within and outside the organization.

### **Governance independence and Flexibility**

There is a need to ensure that governance systems are appropriate and may be applied to institutions of any size, complexity, or legal structure. Each institution must determine how to effectively apply and establish a governance plan that is proportional and effective for their specific set of circumstances. Cutting-edge HEIs must evaluate the context of their legal and regulatory settings. Universities must consider the overlay of the public interest governance principles. Compliance with good governance is an essential source of assurance for stakeholders who need to have faith in HEI governance mechanisms. Institutions that affirm they operate within the context of publicly accessible corporate governance reporting, such as annual reports or financial statements, are transparent and trusted. As a result, governing bodies must effectively convey their compliance to stakeholders. Many businesses will include this information in their financial statements. There must be a reflection on the sector's variety, as well as support for its Flexibility and autonomy (Gallagher, 2018; EUA, 2017).

McKenzie (2003) explained the fast-changing growth of higher education worldwide. Institutions of higher learning are supposed to create and share knowledge, improve impartiality, and respond to the needs of the stakeholders, especially learners. The study mentioned the competition between the private and public sector funding of research and other functions of the higher education institutions for the students, staff, both academic and administrative. An issue raised was how the higher education institution gains independence and Flexibility while enhancing and developing economic and social objectives. Every higher education institution seeks autonomy, and to achieve this, it must first link its performance, which is assessed publicly. The senior managers in higher education institutions are selected with excellent leadership skills to strengthen and improve their competitive market positions.

The study by Bryman (2007) examines research published in journals from 1985 to 2005. He studied the styles and approaches of leadership and leadership behaviors that affect higher education institutions' effectiveness. Various leaders were interviewed and asked about their personal experiences on leadership behavior and how this affects explicitly higher education institutions. The following aspects of leadership were identified by the researcher at the departmental and institutional levels: Establishing trustworthiness as a leader, possessing personal integrity, possessing the credibility to serve as a role model, facilitating participation in decision-making; consultation, providing communication about developments, representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s), and networking on its behalf; preserving existing culture while capitalizing on opportunities.

Bryman's final analysis stated that a leader should create an environment conducive to the success of academic, and administrative, staff and let them fulfill their potential and interest in their roles. There should be, according to him, a collegial climate of mutual support and consistency of autonomy. Likewise, he stressed the "don'ts" of leadership damage like lack of consultancy on essential matters, not adhering to the company values, actions that could undermine collegiality, self-interest instead of considering the majority, and drifting from department and institution.

Research by Chang & Merve (2018) explored the perceptions of Chinese and European university staff members on challenges and capacity-building needs about university leadership

and governance. An open-ended survey questionnaire was administered to randomly selected respondents from 7 and 8 European universities. The findings showed that Chinese staff needs to develop their Leadership and managerial skills, while the European staff needs to develop their interpersonal skills. They considered these areas for capacity building to enhance their potential in their fields. The results further revealed that these skills could be learned from each other. Hence, the participant respondents from these universities have been sharing their practices for their improvements.

Moreover, the work of Lane (2013) discusses how the higher education managers and leaders meet the new and rapidly changing demands faced by HEIs today. It guides how leaders may successfully deliver on their obligations while also managing their relationships with internal and external stakeholders. It provides a thorough understanding of their institutions' structure and activities to make better decisions. The qualities of good leaders in governance like creativity, commitment, collaboration, delegation, and care are essential to navigating a college or a university to be successful, sustaining, and meeting the environment's demands.

The foundations of this reference are the higher education of the United States relating issues of environment organization on and management to specific institutions from the president's perspective. They include the Trustees, Deans, and Department Heads. Further, it offers a comprehensive view of how higher education institutions respond to external forces and internal issues. There are three principles to focus on: Sound institutional decisions based on a clearly articulated mission and core values, adaptation to a changing environment, and leaders who can create and foster partnerships with diverse individuals with a shared vision and mission grounded with core values.

## **Governance Challenges**

The different goals that governance strives to fulfill are at the root of the challenges they face. Students and faculty mobility are one way to support institutional change and the development of new forms of collaboration. So many interpretations are possible when it comes to the objective of leading the university's change. Ever-closer cooperation between internal and external stakeholders is an indicator of both internal and exterior dimensions. Even though this idea is appealing to some degree, it overlooks the importance of financial and legal frameworks. The agreements are expected to open up new avenues that will ultimately help higher education. A variety of collaborative structures, such as curriculum design, may benefit from learning from the experiences of those working to overcome hurdles to cooperative action. College and university boards of trustees are adapting to changing conditions. Both of these aspects are actively supported by the governance. However, are these goals important to the plans of the participating universities? According to some of their immediate and long-term aims, several collaborations have different ideas about what they should change and how they should change it.

## **Review on selected Cases in Governance**

The researchers chose two examples from two countries, one from Europe and one from Africa. Historically established HEIs have radically distinct patterns in organization, coding, and behaviors. Following this comparison, content analysis aids in addressing this paper's study question. Ireland's success story of development and expansion started more than 300 years before the United States ever existed. Beginning in the seventeenth century. University education was almost entirely restricted to upper-class white men. Despite this, women and minorities

made some progress in higher education throughout the decade. In 1900, women made up 35% of college students, rising to 39% by 1910. In Ethiopia, on the other hand, Addis Ababa Institution, the country's oldest university, was established in 1950 as University College of Addis Ababa. It was reorganized and renamed Haile Selassie I University in 1961, and it was given its current name in 1975. This vast difference in historical variation provides clues on how to build up governance.

### **Ireland Case**

The Higher Education Academy depicts the systems and procedures considered a collecting higher education system. The objective of the collective oversight is to ensure the HEIs achieve the outcomes projected efficiently and effectively. The systems set should conform to the Codes of Governance as instituted by the Irish Institutions. "Regulation," on the other hand, all the administrative rules and requirements required by Higher Education Academy and constantly monitoring and reviewing compliance of these. Need to note that governance and regulations are twined for mutual dependence, adhering to the regulatory being as part of the overall governance. The HEA's governance and regulatory functions are an essential aspect of the organization's overall mission. In almost all publicly supported HEIs, the HEA is required to allocate funds, provide policy advice, and exercise certain regulatory powers. The funding mandate includes creating appropriate funding models focusing on ensuring transparency and fairness in allocations, accountability in terms of monitoring funding application for the intended purposes, and oversight of the financial health of individual HEIs and the system as a whole. In addition to funding, the HEA advises the Minister on the growth of higher education and research and serves as the repository for statistics on the HE system (Higher Education Authority, 2017).

In all dealings with HEIs, the HEA applies the following values: (Higher Education Authority, 2017).

- Respectful of institutional autonomy within a framework of responsibility.
- A strategy that is open and inclusive via constructive dialogue.
- Transparency, justice, and openness.
- Accountability to the Minister for the attainment of goals.
- A dedication to evidence-based policy creation.
- Understanding of the multi-year environment that underpins HEI operations

### **Ethiopian Case**

Melu (2017) aimed to investigate the governance structures of Ethiopian higher education, and she attempted to provide some insights into the governance components of the Ethiopian higher education system's ever-expanding most serious issue, focusing on the legal framework political backdrop. As higher education grew in popularity, the country became more prone to bottlenecks, which hampered institutions' ability to fulfill their missions. Governance did not equally accompany the expansion of higher education institutions that need to be adapted and planned. There was a distinction between the institutions and the political interest groups at various levels. They do not meet the much-needed quality education with research and community service. The observations for two decades show that an increase in the number of universities complicated the governance patterns of higher education institutions. There was the absence of clear guidelines concerning the appointment selection and recruitment of board members and leaders of universities. There was an attempt to investigate the governance

structure and look for alternatives for the efficient Leadership and management of higher education institutions which ultimately could contribute to the country's development. The recommendations are such that the governance structure and its elements in the system should be clear. University governance models must be adapted and implemented in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

### **Models of Excellence in Higher Education Institutions**

Excellence is an outstanding quality that surpasses a defined threshold in a particular field (Harvey & Green, n.d; Skelton, 2009). Excellence in the trilogy functions of a higher education institution is relative. However, the much-experienced European Foundation for Quality Management explains the 'Excellence Model' as a self-assessment methodology for assessing an organization's strengths and areas for improvement across all of its activities. Because the Excellence Model focuses on what an organization does or could do. The term 'excellence' provides an excellent service or product to its consumers, service users, and stakeholders." According to this framework, there are five (5) criteria associated with this concept of excellence: Leadership excellence enables leaders to foster and accelerate the achievement of the institution's vision and mission. Leaders continuously enhance the core values and systems required for workable achievements, and these are implemented through actions and behaviors (European Foundation for Quality Management, 2003). Excellence in policy means strategy organization implements its vision and mission by adapting a stakeholder-focused strategy that considers the market and the sector. Excellence in people management tap and deliver the full capabilities of their people at an individual, team-based and organizational level. The organization likewise promotes fairness and equality and employee empowerment—employees' skills and knowledge harness proper communication, motivation, and commitment for the organization's benefit. Excellence in partnerships and resources is achieved by planning and managing external partnerships, suppliers, and internal resources to support policy and strategy and efficiently operate processes. Through design, management, and improvement processes, excellence in process management fully satisfies and produces improving value for customers and other stakeholders (Brusoni et al., 2014; Rolfo & Finardi, 2014).

According to Busoni, et al., (2014), the following are considered excellence in governance and management and teaching and research: The emphasis is given on instruction and student support, on creating a conducive learning environment and continuous enhancement of the curriculum and program, one student's feedback on research and subject knowledge of teachers, innovative teaching and effectiveness of Leadership in teaching, on the literary and high valued form of teaching, aligning teaching and learning to meet and satisfy national goals, teachers' enthusiasm, clarity, preparation and organization of subject delivery to stimulate knowledge transfer and on fitting the student's aspirations in comparison with other universities programs.

Brusoni, et al., (2014) further presented multiple criteria for excellence and management: A solid and successful strategic governance and management - the higher education institution is expected to demonstrate a solid commitment to implementing its mission and core values. It is expected that how the institution practices its ethos and style of governance influence its decision-making, planning, and resourcing. The executive management and other governing bodies support the mission and goals institutions mission (Ozdem, 2011). An excellent institution's characteristics are its knowledge of strengths and weaknesses and the willingness and ability to strengthen and improve the latter. Excellent institutions consistently demonstrate and resolve issues of achieving the best evolvments—a high level of educational attainment. A

vital measure of a successful higher education institution is the performance of students and staff in the programs and the field of research. It is mentioned here that the institution's reputation is foremost based on the scholarly achievements of students and staff and a manifestation of skills sets that include intellectual ability and practical competencies. Motivated students become more independent and focused in their studies and apply them in practical situations. Higher education institutions award students' performance. However, there is difficulty assuming a measure of successful performance applicable across the higher education sector for self-accrediting institutions. The presence of external verification and requirements are an essential and relevant assessment of the performance of higher education institutions. Students' employability and destinations are another track record for assessing their performance and higher education institutions, including career opportunities or further study. It is a common perception that excellent and well-trained students perform well in the labor market and labor successfully in their professions. First destinations graduate in the UK survey within six months of graduation to determine graduate employability. It demonstrates student excellence, achievement, and preparation of graduates to a challenging world of work.

Aside from reflecting academic goals, the institution is expected to align its objectives with the government's goals and would-be employers of the graduates. The outstanding experience of the student in the higher education institution is attributed much to the excellent quality of teaching and learning with student support and the needed learning resources. In the past 'though, this experience is beyond comparing the reputation to the degree of research. Higher education institutions demonstrate innovative ways of improving students' teaching and learning experiences. This process is recognized as a significant factor in benefiting the students—constructive feedback from stakeholders. Stakeholders usually give their feedback on the performance of higher education institutions. Excellent performance of an institution leads to this feedback. The feedback may come from different employers, the users of research outcomes, and how the institution transfers knowledge. A high-performing institution is expected to be revealed when students meet the expectations of employers and other interest parties.

A high level of students' satisfaction is another criterion that is considered vital. Repeatedly mentioned by researchers, the learning experiences and other support extended to students during their stay in the higher education institution contribute much to excellence in governance and management. Many institutions conduct exit interviews and regular student satisfaction surveys upon completion of their studies. Some countries conduct a national survey of all higher education to assess the overall student satisfaction as a basis for improvement. Focus on research and academic development is another criterion for an excellent institution. There should be a dance of strategic and academic development involving academic, administrative students, and researchers on research. There should be ample quantity and quality of produced research by discipline and that the researchers, either individually or in tandem and with linkages, participate in the broader subject community.

Higher education institutions are expected to support the local and regional community's social, economic, and cultural development, fulfilling their missions through research and program development, application of research, and social welfare. The institution is considered a social good enhancing intellectual development and technical skills and promoting core values like equity and citizenship. A key factor is how the institution plays its role as a recognized social benefit of education. An essential function fosters the values of a society promoting social mobility and justice. An outstanding institution will display social and cultural commitment (Gibbs, 2010). The importance of competition in an international knowledge economy. It recognizes engagement of development and benchmarking performances of comparable institutions, leading to international research and academic development cooperation. The

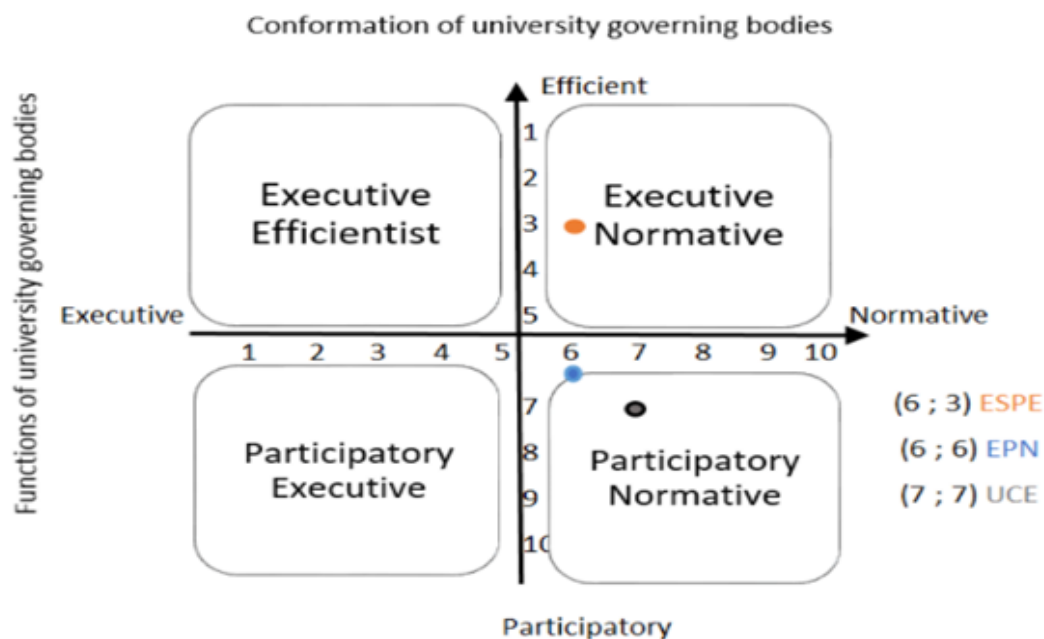


development of impartiality and academic freedom is also an essential element of an excellent higher education institution. In pursuit of knowledge, the institution commits itself to the value of objective inquiry without the restraint of political willpower or other forms of interventions. The institution should uphold the equality of opportunity and the individual right of expression, fulfilling students' full potentials.

### Samples of Governance Models

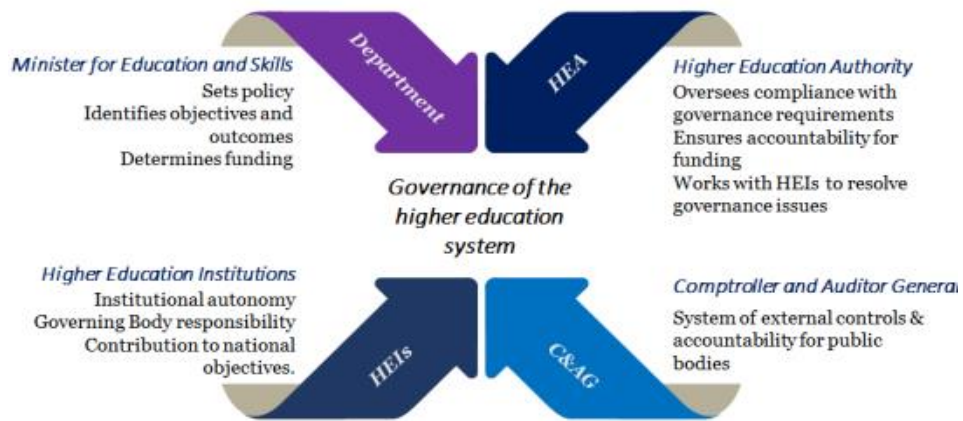
Many universities' risk records are expected to include governance issues more prominently. Now governance issues are making news throughout the nations. It may go wrong if things go skewed, as recent experiences at UK institutions like De Montfort and Swansea show. Even though governance receives relatively more minor attention than other significant challenges in the sector, it is an essential aspect of the success of an organization. Bad governance may substantially hinder a university's growth, diverting valuable time and resources. It can keep a university in difficulties for months or years. At the very least, a governance crisis may be a tremendous distraction for university administrators and governors, leading to substantial missed opportunities for both the university and the society at large. Many professionals in education, including some in senior positions, lack a thorough understanding of governance issues. It is impossible to have an accurate idea of how a governing body operates unless you've been an active member of a university governing body. However, this is partly because minimal studies have been conducted on such an important subject. Thus, studying samples see (Samples,1,2,3 below) of governance highlights the main variables that need further research.

#### Sample-1



**FIGURE 1**  
**UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE BODIES**

**Sample 2**



**FIGURE 2**  
**THE CORE PILLARS OVER WHICH AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION**

Source: [https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/01/governance\\_framework-15.5.17.pdf](https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/01/governance_framework-15.5.17.pdf)

**Sample 3**



**FIGURE 3**  
**UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

Source: <https://www.sketchbubble.com/en/presentation-university-governance.html>

## CONCLUSION

This paper advocates the critical importance of education in general, and higher education in particular, to the development of human culture and the welfare of societies. The discussions in this paper presented several governance models and demonstrated the paramount importance of sound governance in securing proper education outcomes. An increasing number of public and private accreditation agencies are vouching to control and remedy governance in higher educational institutions. However, what such agencies mostly fail to capture and address are the four tenets of proper governance advocated for in the literature: participation, consensus, accountability, and fair responsiveness. This failure is because agencies mainly base their assessments on pre-written and doctored self-evaluation reports and mere interviews to discuss the findings in the reports and provided evidence documents. Therefore, most accreditation practices end up being ceremonial instead of instilling the value systems stipulated in their mission statements, and some of them are purely profit-based. Most countries are witnessing a major transfer of the beacon of higher education services from public institutions to private, where the latter suffers from trespassing between the borders of interaction between the various governance components. This mutation in governance creates an apparent and unrealistic participative (or shared) approach where the voice of staff members, in particular the academics, is influenced by political, economic, and conflict of interest issues. In private institutions, many governance systems, which have been developed over the years in higher educational institutions to ensure the proper education, are being removed for profitability purposes. Examples of such systems are sabbatical leaves, tenured contracts, adequate spending on research, scholarships for graduate education, and pension. An optimal governance system would observe that the qualifications and expertise of staff members are harnessed, further developed, and encouraged to better serve the mission of the institution and society at large. The authors support a participative leadership model which satisfies the intellect of academic staff members by echoing their voice in the decision-making process and providing stability and reassurance to their scientific development. This can only be achieved through the development of a thorough legislative infrastructure, imposed by governmental agencies, to control and monitor governance practices of higher educational institutions and provide environments conducive to shared practices. The desired legislative control should provide assurances of academic freedom to offer rigorous teaching and research without breach of the governance model, such as contractual pressure, that serves increased profitability at the peril of sound education. Furthermore, mission statements should be aligned with national priorities, market demand, in addition to human and other resources available to the institution. The strategic document should emphasize mainly the three tiers of teaching research and community outreach. It should be realistically ambitious with achievable and measurable operational indicators that could be mapped with the mission statement. Sufficient support should be given from each board member, executive, and manager to their subordinates with a professional level of freedom to share their input along their line of expertise and without contractual-related menaces. Finally, the contemporary scientific advancement and welfare in various features of global challenges are based on the proper educational systems of our previous generations. We owe it to our future generation to secure continuing sustainable scientific advances and human development that could be passed on. This could only be achieved through rigorous educational systems at all levels that should be administered by sound external and internal governance systems.

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