

ADMINISTRATORS' PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING TOWARD ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA: DOES GENDER MATTER?

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ABSTRACT

Employee's participation refers to the act of taking part in an activity, process, or event. It can manifest in various contexts, such as from social, political, education, and community settings. Whereas, employee engagement is often considered as a key element in fostering inclusivity, democracy and collaboration and this applies to women employees as well. In a workplace setting, employee engagement refers to the extent to which employees are committed to perform their work, feel motivated, and eventually contributes to the success of the organization. In reality, women have been underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making positions and prior studies also found that man is more dominant as compared to women. However, there has been a growing recognition of the importance role of women participation and engagement in decision-making processes in universities. Achieving gender diversity in university governance is essential for promoting equity, fostering a variety of perspectives, and also ensuring inclusivity in terms of policies and practices. Thus, this research attempts to examine the differences in the level of participation and engagement in decision-making between gender toward enhancing university good governance. A total of 266 questionnaires were obtained out of the 527 identified study samples amongst administrators from Public Universities in Malaysia. The process of sample selection involved nine (9) Public Universities located in Malaysia. These higher education institutions were chosen to represent three (3) different categories namely, Comprehensive Universities, Focused Universities, and Research Universities. In this study, an Independent Sample T-test analysis was conducted to determine the difference between gender participation and engagement in decision-making. Apparently, the finding reveals that there is significant different in mean value between male and female university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance at Public Universities in Malaysia.

Keywords: Participation; Engagement; Decision-making; Good governance; Gender,

INTRODUCTION

Does gender matter?, gender is a crucial factor in the decision-making process, impacting people's preferences and decisions in different situations. As to Agars's (2004) study, individuals' choices about their job routes, financial investments, and even personal relationships may be influenced by gender stereotypes and cultural expectations. Further, according to gender role theory, decision-making may be influenced by cultural norms and expectations around gender roles. The study's results may be explained by gender role theory, according to the Hulton (2001) asserts that adolescents' sexual decision-making is significantly influenced by their gender as well.

According to Datuk Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN Habitat, there is a gender disparity of over 10 percent in decision-making between men and women in every member nation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Despite making up more than half of the workforce, women are often left out of economic activities globally and are also accountable for doing unpaid labour. Despite the fact that women make substantial contributions to families and the economy, they are less economically empowered, earn less money, and are less self-sufficient (Bernama, 2018).

In addition, less than 25% of MPs worldwide, according to Datuk Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN Habitat, means that women have a little say when it comes to making decisions. Without women's involvement, a nation cannot be inclusive or sustainable in the true sense. Thus, by planning large-scale projects like making cities safer, providing public spaces, and improving crowded areas, UN Habitat emphasises the need for cities to be planned in a gender-responsive way (Bernama, 2018).

Indeed, the public service delivery system is one the most important and adaptable public administration framework with a state-of-the-art internal control mechanism to carry out agency corporatization initiatives. Hence, by putting this policy into practice, public entities are exposed to create a governance framework to be more effective and able to reduce the issues of buracracy. In fact, this regulation will enables public entities to establish their own internal control framework. It is possible to improve accountability and transparency (Siddiquee, 2006; Samaratunge et al., 2008). Control the system architecture like the commercial sector, governance is overseen by a board of director that will maximize stakeholder value for equity and transparency carried out in a morally and legally responsible manner of legislation.

Obviously, the concept of employee participation is complex and ambiguous, with multiple definitions, goals, and interpretations (Arrigo & Casale, 2011, as quoted in Leonardi, 2016). The way that participation practices are varies depending on the organisation's philosophical concepts and the definition those results from those ideas (Yadav and Rangnekar, 2015). Different phrases with slightly different subtexts are used to describe participation. Various forms of democracy, such as industrial democracy, employee voice, employee involvement, and organisational democracy, can be recognised. According to Gollan and Xu (2015), the terms engagement, empowerment, involvement, and participation can occasionally be used interchangeably. Participation from employees is essential to the success of the organization and to employee retention. Employees acquire a sense of ownership and dedication to carry out their work when they actively participate in goal setting, problem-solving, and decision-making processes. As a result, this could heighten the level of employee's motivation and job satisfaction (Linde & Visagic, 2017). In fact, employees will feel respected and empowered when they have the chance to express their ideas and influence the organization's course. Not only that, employees is more likely to remain engaged and committed to their roles in a more favourable work environment as a result (Tian & Zhai, 2019). Hence, it promotes honest communication and exchange of ideas among staff members, employee participation develops a sense of teamwork and collaboration (Kumar & Saha, 2017).

Meanwhile, employee engagement is referred to the level of focus and concentration exhibited by an individual in serving in their capacities (Saks, 2006). It's an idea that addresses interactions amongst employees both with their real work and with one another (Lyu, 2016). That is a person's passion to committ to their work (Roberts and Davenport, 2002). In addition, engagement in work is a good, satisfying mental state connected to one's job (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Besides, employee engagement is defined as their degree of passion for their work (Hassan and Jubari, 2010). Devoting an employee's entire energy voluntarily to their work is known as work engagement labour (Bakker and Leiter, 2010).

Undoubtedly, happy workers perform at their best and make valuable contributions to in the best interests of the organisation (Diedericks, 2012; Lin, 2010). Besides, the degree to which employees are emotionally and intellectually committed to do their work in their organisation and its objectives is referred to as employee engagement. Higher levels of productivity, work satisfaction, and overall organisational performance can result from this dedication (Singh et al., 2011). To foster a pleasant workplace culture and improve organisational performance, it is critical for businesses to place a high priority on employee engagement (Tanwar, 2017). Hence, to establish a happy and effective work environment, companies should give priority to their employee engagement initiatives (Tanwar, 2017). A successful organization's key competency is engaging its workforce. In many organisations, it is recommended as a performance monitoring method (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). Organisations can learn more about the factors that promote employee engagement in their setting by utilising a complete approach that involves evaluating employee attitudes and behaviours (Tanwar, 2017).

Absolutely, the process of decision-making is an essential and intriguing facet of human cognition. It is the process of determining a course of action from a set of available alternatives in consideration of preferences, values, criteria, and information. Decision-making is an intrinsic and pivotal component of the human condition, influencing a multitude of spheres such as marketing, education, business, and personal growth (Wierenga, 2011). Organisations must acknowledge the significance of incorporating best practices into their decision-making processes to close the disparity between potential and actual performance (Joshi & Giménez, 2014). In addition, organisations ought to implement mechanisms for measuring and enhancing decision-making continuously. Within the domain of marketing, the process of decision-making is of the utmost importance due to its direct influence on the company's success and expansion. A comprehensive comprehension of the determinants that impact consumer purchasing choices is imperative for marketers to efficiently refine products and services and to target customers (Kanagal, 2016). Moreover, significant progress in disciplines including neuroscience and behavioural decision-making has yielded invaluable understandings of the complexities inherent in the decision-making process. Our comprehension of decision-making processes has been significantly enhanced by these developments, which have contributed to the dual-process model, learning, emotions, and expertise (Joshi and Giménez, 2014).

EMPLOYEE'S PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The degree of an employee's participation and engagement in different organizational components is referred to as employee participation. It entails workers accepting responsibility for their job, discussing ideas and proposals, putting changes into practice, and actively engaging in decision-making processes. Employee participation in an organization has several advantages such as to 1) enhanced productivity: Workers feel more engaged and driven when they actively participate in decision-making and problem-solving. Higher levels of involvement result in enhanced efficiency and production; 2) to make better decision-making: Organizations can leverage the aggregate knowledge and skills of their staff by incorporating employees in decision-making processes. Better outcomes for the organization and more efficient decision-making may arise from this; 3) Boosts job satisfaction and employee morale: When workers see that their ideas and opinions are respected, they take pride in their work and feel a sense of ownership over it. Consequently, these results in increased job satisfaction and enhanced organizational morale overall; 4) Creativity and innovation: Employee participation fosters a creative culture within the company and frequently results in the creation of new concepts. When staff members are encouraged to share their thoughts and recommendations, innovative solutions

and enhanced procedures may arise; 5) Employee development: Employees have the chance to learn and develop when they are involved in various facets of the company (Tanwar, 2017). It assists in enhancing their abilities, know-how, and proficiency, which may ultimately be advantageous to the organization and the workers (Tanwar, 2017).

Furthermore, employers can encourage employee participation by using a variety of tactics, such as; 1) clear lines of communication is fostered through creating open channels of communication where staff members are encouraged to provide their ideas, opinions, and suggestions; 2) Decision-making including employees: Employee participation in decision-making processes aids in the production of better educated and practical decisions, particularly when it directly impacts their work; 3) Acknowledgment and incentives: Employees can be further encouraged to participate actively in the company by receiving incentives and recognition for their efforts; 4) Development and training: Giving staff members the chance to pursue training and development opportunities gives them the information and abilities needed to take an active part in a variety of projects; 5) Employee empowerment is granting workers the freedom and authority to decide for themselves and to accept responsibility for their job. In summary, employee engagement is critical to improving an organization's overall performance and success, organizations may fully use their staff and establish a productive and exciting work environment by incorporating people in decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity (Tanwar, 2017).

Moreover, this study specifically involved University Administrators, apart from the primary responsibility of university administration, administrators play a crucial role in promoting the exposure of academic media by leveraging the diverse experience and talents of scholars who dedicate a significant amount of their time to classroom instruction, laboratory research, field work, and seminars. Administrators can summarise the findings of academic research by creating presentations that are not too technical or scientific and that are simpler for readers and media viewers to comprehend. It is the administrator's responsibility to choose which products are relevant and noteworthy, after which they must summarise the innovation's writing into news stories, articles, or FAQs (Noh, 2023). The administrators' next step is to send all these documents to their university's Corporate Communications Office, which serves as a bridge between academics and the media to advance innovation and research. To swiftly address any current difficulties facing the nation, university managers must also carefully oversee the knowledge of professors in their different faculties (Noh, 2023). In essence, these opinions and remarks highlight the necessity for university administrators to collaborate with other stakeholders in higher education management to promote the organization's success (Noh, 2023).

In addition, on August 20, 2023, in conjunction with the commemoration of Public University Administrator Day, which honours the role of public university administrators in Malaysia, it is anticipated that public university administrators will be capable of competently assisting academics and universities with first-rate services. According to Wan Mohd Wazir Wan Abdul Wahab, President of the Malaysian Association of Public University Administrators (MASTI), outlines the aptitudes that university administrators ought to possess proficiency, scientific advancement, ingenuity generation, personal growth, leadership, and involvement in extra-institutional and community initiatives. The incorporation of writing and media relations proficiencies among public university administrators aligns with contemporary competency standards that aim to comprehensively enhance the governance abilities of administrators during an information-rich era that is particularly demanding (Noh, 2023). It is not an exaggeration to say that the competence and responsibility of public university administrators are more demanding than those of administrators in other government agencies, given that university administrators attempt to meet the expectations of more complex clients and stand as high and as low as academia to supplement the needs of high-impact academia. Proficient administration and excellence enhance the prominence of research and innovation. Public universities in Malaysia have the capacity to foster national progress and bolster the international reputation of Malaysian public universities (Noh, 2023), once again, Wan Mohd Wazir Wan Abdul Wahab, President of the Malaysian Association of Public University Administrators (MASTI) views emphasise how urgently administrators must enhance their visibility and competencies through more comprehensive participation and engagement in order to meet the most recent demands of Malaysian Higher Education.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

In numerous fields, gender differences in participation and engagement have generated considerable interest (Gokulsing & Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). There are differences in the level of participation and engagement between males and females especially in the areas such as education, economic, and political. Individual preferences and abilities, as well as societal norms and expectations, access to resources and opportunities, and other variables, can influence these differences. The significance of gender disparities exist in the context of education, participation and engagement (Pirani & Tocchioni, 2014). The issues of gender disparity can assist in the development of interventions and strategies that promote gender equality and guarantee equal opportunities for people to participate and engage in a variety of spheres. Furthermore, by addressing gender disparities in participation and engagement, societal development and progress can be enhanced. Hence, various factors, including aptitude, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and classroom environment, can contribute to the variability of gender disparities in participation and engagement (Meece et al., 2006).

The existence of gender disparities in participation and engagement is evident from a young age, and these differences can have significant consequences for academic achievement, employment prospects, and general welfare. Vigilance and resolution of gender disparities in education, school access, participation, and other spheres are of critical importance (Pirani & Tocchioni, 2014). Gender differences can be discerned, and efforts directed towards attaining gender-equitable access and participation can be directed towards analysing data and employing indicators such as literacy rates, admission rates, enrollment ratios, and school survival (Meece et al., 2006). Diverse domains such as education, economic engagement, and political participation have been found to exhibit gender disparities in participation and engagement (Pirani and Tocchioni, 2014). The variations may exert substantial influence on various aspects of life including political consciousness, wages, employability, family size, and health status. It is essential to promote gender equality and guarantee that every individual has an equal opportunity to flourish and make

contributions to society by addressing gender disparities in engagement and participation (Chatterjee et al., 2021). Thus, it is critical to promote gender equality and accomplish societal progress by recognising and confronting gender disparities in participation and engagement.

In addition, to develop good governance within an organisation, it is critical to encourage high levels of employee participation and engagement in decision-making processes (Shaed et al. 2018). This may be accomplished by fostering a culture of trust and employee empowerment in which workers feel appreciated and their ideas are actively solicited. Employee participation in decision-making allows businesses to benefit from their unique views and insights, resulting in more well-informed and productive choices (Shahzad et al., 2018). Furthermore, employee participation and engagement in decision-making foster a feeling of ownership and responsibility among workers, as they are more likely to be committed to the results and execution of choices in which they had a role (Shaed et al. 2018).

Hence, organisations may tap into their workers' creativity and innovation by actively including them in decision-making, since employees are more likely to provide new ideas and solutions when they feel included and empowered (Kok et al., 2014). This eventually improves organisational governance since choices are made with a greater variety of viewpoints, as well as staff involvement and dedication (Mohsen & Sharif, 2020). Furthermore, to enhance good governance, it is critical to include workers in decision-making and encourage active participation and engagement (Shaed et al. 2018). Hence, studies have shown that staff participation may enhance performance, minimise absenteeism, and boost customer loyalty (Han et al., 2010). Moreover, employee engagement in decision-making promotes organisational trust and openness by making workers feel heard and appreciated. In fact, employee engagement in decision-making is critical for long-term growth and organisational success (Shaed et al., 2018). Organisations may benefit from the different views and ideas of their workers by including them in decision-making. This may result in more imaginative and effective solutions, as well as increased employee ownership and engagement (Han et al., 2010). In conclusion, employee participation and engagement in decision-making are critical for improving organisational good governance (Shaed et al., 2018). It increases employee ownership, responsibility, and dedication, encourages innovation and creativity, and results in better informed and effective choices that benefit the company as a whole (Shaed et al., 2018).

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance refers to the application of procedures and policies that guarantee the management of resources in compliance with the regulations, which are created and constructed using high-quality materials, such as accountability, openness, responsiveness, consensus, justice, anti-corruption, efficient, and effective to support an organization's operations (Shipley & Kovacs 2008; United Nations Economic and Social Commission 2004). Wiesel (2014) and Rhodes (1996) define good governance as the state level include the effectiveness of the government (Rindermann et al., 2015), control a few terms, including cybernetic systems, corporate governance, good governance, and modern public management. Moreover, Yosinta (2016) employs nine dimensions namely efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, transparency, engagement, legal provisions, equity, responsiveness and consensus are hallmarks of good governance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has identified the following components of governance for the tourism sector namely: accountability, transparency, engagement, rule of law, equity, responsiveness, deal-orientedness, and strategic vision Pulido-Fernández (2017) illustrate these components.

Moreover, from a national perspective, particularly during the administration led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim prioritises the concept of good governance. Hence, Madani was strengthened through the reign of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, with a particular focus on governance. To achieve a nationwide approach consistent with efforts towards a corruption-free government, the public service must implement the value-based governance principles of integrity, accountability, and transparency. Whereby the mid-term study of the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP), which was unveiled by the Ministry of Economy, identifies two significant reforms that will enhance the governance of the public service: governance and institutional framework, and legislation pertaining to corruption (KSP RMK12: *Terap Prinsip Tadbir Urus Pentadbiran Awam*, 2023). Hence, efforts to promote good governance are presently the foremost concern of the government. The Malaysian government's sincerity in establishing a special committee to examine governance-related issues and challenges becomes readily apparent.

Furthermore, not only does the Prime Minister highlight the importance of good governance, but other prominent figures in Malaysia, such as the Palace leadership, are also drawn to the topic for example Sultan of Kedah Darul Aman, in his decree, Sultan of Kedah Darul Aman Al Aminul Karim Sultan Salahuddin Ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah declared, "Good governance and integrity are the foundations of an organization's excellence." "The success or failure of a company, organisation, leader, or individual is contingent upon their integrity" (Muhamad, 2023). The principles and practices of good governance are unquestionably critical to the success of any nation, state, or organisation, as demonstrated by this statement. Hence, by prioritising and executing effective initiatives that promote and maintain good governance, an entity such as a nation, state, or organisation can effectively achieve success and optimise productivity (Muhamad, 2023).

GENDER AND GOVERNANCE

Gender inclusion is critical to successful governance (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). It guarantees that all viewpoints are reflected, resulting in more complete and effective decision-making processes (Abakah, 2018). Women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities benefit from equal representation in national and local institutions such as legislatures, public service, and the judiciary, making decision-making more responsive, inclusive, and representative of the population (Ennaji, 2018; Kurebwa, 2020). Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is critical to fostering gender equality because it not only increases the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions, but it also ensures that their interests and demands are prioritised and taken into account in policy creation and implementation (Kurebwa, 2020). This may be accomplished by establishing favourable circumstances and

policies that allow for greater involvement of women in leadership roles. Hence, gender mainstreaming must go beyond representation to address the specific issues and impediments that women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities confront (Fauziyah et al., 2020). This involves combating gender discrimination, violence, and uneven access to resources and opportunities. Gender mainstreaming entails not only increasing the representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions, but also ensuring that their opinions and interests are considered and incorporated into governance processes (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014).

Moreover, gender equality is essential for good governance (Mahapatro, 2014). Equal presence of women in governance institutions broadens and diversifies decision-making processes. This results in improved outcomes since multiple viewpoints and experiences are included (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). Furthermore, gender equality in governance fosters social transformation and strengthens disadvantaged groups who have traditionally been excluded from decision-making processes (Mahapatro, 2014). It is crucial to highlight that implementing gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality in governance may be difficult. Social and economic factors, policy attitudes, and disparities in gender equality approaches may all impede the process (Kurebwa, 2020). However, gender mainstreaming in governance must continue to be worked on to promote inclusive and equitable decision-making that reflects the needs and interests of all persons, regardless of gender (Woodward, 2003). Promoting gender mainstreaming in governance not only results in more inclusive decision-making processes, but also in improved policy outcomes that serve the needs and interests of all members of society (Woodward, 2003). The inclusion of a gender equality viewpoint in governance is critical to attaining good governance.

Hence, by embracing a gender equality approach, government becomes more sensitive to all persons' interests and rights (Kurebwa, 2020). This results in more effective and responsible government that promotes social justice, equality, and sustainable development (Park & Liang, 2019). Furthermore, gender mainstreaming in governance contributes to the breakdown of patriarchal structures and practices that perpetuate inequality and discrimination (Kurebwa, 2020). Gender mainstreaming in governance requires a comprehensive strategy that extends beyond token representation of women. It entails developing a supportive institutional climate, providing officials with training and capacity-building opportunities, and incorporating gender analysis into all phases of policy creation and implementation (McNutt & Béland, 2015).

In addition, good governance requires gender sensitivity to account for men and women's demands and experiences in policies and decisions. It also improves governance inclusion, diversity, and equality (Ampaire et al., 2019). Governments must include gender equality in policy creation and execution to achieve gender equality (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). Gender mainstreaming is essential for government gender equality. Gender considerations in governance policies may meet men and women's unique needs and views, resulting in more equal results (Kurebwa, 2020). Promoting gender equality and considering women's opinions and interests requires gender mainstreaming in governance. Gender mainstreaming in governance extends beyond representation to changing the institutions, attitudes, and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014).

Furthermore, the link between gender equality and good governance is clear (Mahapatro, 2014). Studies have shown that nations with greater levels of gender parity have more open and accountable governance processes. This association implies that when women participate and engage in decision-making processes and have equal access to opportunities, government becomes more responsible and responsive to the interests of the whole community (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). Gender equality in governance is critical for facilitating social change, empowering marginalised groups, and ensuring that varied viewpoints are considered. Women's equal participation and influence in governance improves the overall efficacy and legitimacy of governance systems. Gender mainstreaming in governance is critical for attaining gender equality and encouraging effective governance (Mahapatro, 2014). The Impact of Gender Mainstreaming on Climate Change Adaptation Gender mainstreaming is critical in climate change adaptation because it ensures that the consequences and vulnerabilities of climate change are handled gender-responsively. Gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation policies and strategies allows governments to better recognise and address the particular issues that women and men confront in the face of climate change (Woodward, 2003).

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA

Public Higher Education Institution was the previous name of the organization. The public university (UA) was the name given to it as of March 2015. Nowadays, Malaysia is home to twenty Public Universities. Research Universities, Comprehensive universities, and Focus universities are the three groups into which all 20 universities are separated. To guarantee that Public Universities (UA) can acquire a reputation for possessing dynamic and competitive capacities, as well as the ability to anticipate future issues and be ready to move decisively in response to global events, the higher education system was founded.

Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia will keep working to increase UA's ability to carry out its duties and obligations in a more effective, transparent, and efficient manner to build a top-notch higher education system. Hence, three (3) kinds of UA in Malaysia are designated in accordance with these goals: research universities, comprehensive universities, and focus universities (technical, education, management, and defense). As of right now, the nation is home to twenty institutions: five (5) Research Universities, four (4) Comprehensive Universities, and eleven Focus Universities. While focused universities concentrate on subjects linked to their formation, research universities concentrate on research fields, and comprehensive universities offer a variety of courses and areas of study (Ministry of Higher Education, 2022).

Table 1. Public Universities in Malaysia by Category

Research University	Focus University	Comprehensive University
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universiti Malaya 2. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia 3. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia 4. University of Sains Malaysia 5. Universiti Putra Malaysia 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universiti Utara Malaysia 2. Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris 3. Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia 4. Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka 5. Universiti Malaysia Perlis 6. Universiti Malaysia Terengganu 7. Universiti Malaysia Pahang 8. Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia 9. Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin 10. Universiti Malaysia Kelantan 11. Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universiti Teknologi Mara 2. Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia 3. Universiti Malaysia Sabah 4. Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Source: <https://www.mohe.gov.my>

Apart from variations in nomenclature, all universities are the same but there are important differences that need to be made clear, such as the function that research universities play in society. Universities that focus on research are not a novel idea. The best universities in the world, including Harvard, MIT, Oxford, and Cambridge, all conduct research abroad. An educational establishment that prioritizes research and innovation at the center of its objectives is known as a research university.

In 2005, the Cabinet of Malaysia approved the concept proposal for the inaugural research university, which was established under that name. The vision of the institution is delineated in the concept paper for the creation of a research university as one that actively engages in the investigation of novel concepts, evaluates inventive approaches, and intellectually ascends to further probe and broaden the boundaries of knowledge (Mohammad, 2020). The primary objectives of the research university are to stimulate national development, facilitate intellectual dialogue among scholars and students, and cultivate an environment that encourages innovation and investigative thinking so that wealth can be generated, and knowledge can be expanded. Ultimately, these endeavors aim to elevate the standard of living. Several specific objectives are delineated to accomplish this overarching vision and mission: establish a preeminent position in the realm of innovation, generate Nobel Prize laureates and world-class research, and evolve into a hub of excellence in areas of national importance (Mohammad, 2020).

Furthermore, the institution strives to produce and attract scholars of exceptional caliber, attract foremost authorities in both instruction and investigation, generate influential research articles, secure research grants from industry, foster an environment that is conducive to all these objectives, and generate high-impact research publications. In addition, the government's objective during that period was for research universities to stimulate economic expansion by investigating novel and sophisticated concepts and information. For this to occur, students, alumni, faculty, and support personnel must act in accordance with the institution's stated vision and mission. It is the responsibility of the entire university, not just the researchers (Mohammad, 2020).

Moreover, although universities serve a similar purpose in general, their holistic function changes when they are tasked with cultivating intelligent individuals. An instance of an institution that acts as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation in Borneo society is Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), which functions as a comprehensive university. A more specialized function for the advancement of the community takes precedence in a framework where the comprehensive university is strong. Hence, the employability rate (GE) of UMS graduates for 2019 has increased significantly from the previous year (2018), when the same number was 90.4%. This is because of hard work and better job opportunities. The university's significant role in enlightening the community, imparting knowledge, skills, and solutions, and most importantly, relieving the community of preexisting problems, is exemplified through worthwhile joint venture projects with communities. This demonstrates UMS's comprehensive university status and its contribution to the community (UMS *Berjaya Jadi Antara Universiti Komprehensif Terbaik: Menteri KPT*, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This research employed quantitative method by using a questionnaire to examine the differences between male and female university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance. Furthermore, this study applied the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 as a tool to analyze the data (Ong & Puteh, 2017). To achieve the study's objectives, a descriptive analysis and an Independent Sample T-test were used to describe the respondents profile and to compare the result on the differences between male and female participation and engagement in

decision-making (Weissgerber et al., 2018).

Data Collection Process

In this study, a total of 574 questionnaires were distributed to university administrators’ at Nine (9) public universities in Malaysia which randomly selected that is three (3) universities from Research Universities, three (3) universities from Focus Universities, and three (3) universities from Comprehensive Universities respectively. 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 as comprehensive universities, whereas Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak are considered as focus universities. Nevertheless, in this study, only a total of 266 responses were obtained from the 574 questionnaires that were distributed were used and analysed for analysis.

This study focuses on public universities for numerous reasons (Aithal, 2018). Public universities get government financing and follow specific rules. Second, public university are bigger and have more students than private ones. This gives the study a wider sample and more representative data. In addition, public universities are also important for national research and innovation. Thus, knowing the problems and causes affecting public university research productivity might help higher education institutions improve their research output. Another reason to concentrate on public universities is because they follow government and senior management resource and policy limits (Tyagi, 2020). Hence, by focusing on public institutions allows the study to examine how these restrictions affect research output and find solutions (Utama &, 2017). In fact, public universities also contribute to knowledge diffusion and social development. As a conclusion the ultimate reasons why this study focuses on public universities because they receive government money, have greater enrollments, operate under resource and regulatory restrictions, and contribute to social development and knowledge diffusion.

FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents

Table 2: Profile of Respondents (Administrators)

Profile	Demographic	Male	Female	Total
University Administrators Category	Registrar	45	70	115
	Bursar	32	52	84
	Librarian	28	39	67
University	Universiti Malaya	10	15	25
	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	9	22	31
	Universiti Putra Malaysia	13	18	31
	Universiti Teknologi MARA	58	82	140
	Universiti Malaysia Sabah	5	6	11
	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak	6	3	9
	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris	2	6	8
	Universiti Malaysia Terengganu	2	5	7
	Universiti Malaysia Kelantan	2	2	4
Gender	University Administrators’	105	161	266
Position Grade	Public Sector Key Positions (JUSA C)	-	1	1
	Grade 54	13	8	21
	Grade 52	23	32	55
	Grade 48	37	50	87
	Grade 44	32	70	102
Age	30 to 35 years old	-	4	4
	36 to 40 years old	22	29	51
	41 to 45 years old	29	48	77
	46 to 50 years old	23	31	54
	51 to 55 years old	20	35	55
	56 to 60 years old	10	10	20
	60 years old and above	1	4	5
Level of Education	Diploma	0	1	1
	Bachelor’s degree	65	90	155
	Master’s degree	40	67	107
	Doctor of Philosophy	-	3	3

Table 3: The differences level between male and female University Administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance. (Independent Sample T-Test, Group Statistics)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Good Governance	Male	105	4.5226	.52055	.05080
	Female	161	4.4356	.55147	.04346

Table 4: The differences level between male and female University Administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance. (Independent Sample T-Test)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
										Lower	Upper
Good Governance	Equal variances assumed	.522	.471	1.286	264	.100	.199	.08706	.06767	-.04619	.22031
	Equal variances not assumed			1.302	231.388	.097	.194	.08706	.06686	-.04466	.21878

Table 5: The differences level between male and female University Administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance.

Variable/construct between gender		Levene's (Test) (0.471) Homogeneity Variances Assumed			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
The differences level between male and female University Administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance		1.286	264	0.08706	0.06767

Based on the table 3,4 and 5, apparently the findings revealed that there is significant difference in mean value between male and female university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance [t=1.286, df=264, p=0.08706 (p>0.05)].

DISCUSSION

This study attempts to examine the difference between male and female university administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making toward enhancing university good governance especially at Public University's in Malaysia. These findings discovered a significant difference between male and female participation and engagement in decision-making. Thus, the results of this study demonstrates that women university administrators are not subject to marginalisation, in fact, they have an equal opportunities and space as their male counterparts in university administration regarding Institutional Management, Finance Management, Strategic Management and Human Resource Management. Besides, the study findings also demonstrated that women possess a high level of commitment in their participation and engagement in leadership and decision-making at the operational, strategic, and policy levels in Malaysia's educational institution ecosystem. This study finding was supported by prior studies which indicated that women make up most at the university administrators, and that women's educational attainment demonstrates that they are more knowledgeable than male (Zainuddin, 2018).

Most importantly, this finding will support the policies that the Malaysian government has made and is currently making, particularly regarding women in the public sector and their 30% participation and engagement as decision-makers (UMS *Berjaya Jadi Antara Universiti Komprehensif Terbaik: Menteri KPT*, 2020). These policies are more beneficial when Malaysian women are given the opportunity to demonstrate their participation and engagement can significantly contribute to both the nation's and women's own development. Therefore, women's roles extend beyond the home as mothers and wives and influence how the nation, state, and organisation evolve (Zainuddin, 2018).

In most south-east Asian countries, women had an inferior position and less autonomy than men at the household level as well as in society (Bhandari et al., 2016). Although both male and female showed significant contribution with participation and engagement in decision-making, there is still a need to address the exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly poor women, from meaningful participation and engagement in decision-making processes (Hicks, 2011). By addressing this gap and ensuring women's increased in the decision-making process, we can create a more equitable and inclusive society that values

and respects the contributions of all individuals, regardless of their gender (Acharya et al., 2010). In fact, by including diverse perspectives and voices, decision-making would become more inclusive, leading to better outcomes and solutions that address the needs and concerns of all members of society regardless of their gender (Lusa et al., 2009).

Definitely, the implementation of gender mainstreaming at universities encompasses more than just augmenting the representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions (Huang, 2020). It also entails ensuring that women in these roles effectively represent the interests of women and actively promote gender equality. In order to improve the quality of good governance at public universities, it is essential to implement a well-organized and methodical system for assessing and evaluating performance, with a particular emphasis on incorporating gender equality principles (Huang, 2020). This initiative aims to facilitate the appointment and advancement of women in leadership positions within colleges and universities, therefore guaranteeing equal opportunities for both genders to pursue professional growth and development (Kwesiga & Ssendiwalwa, 2006).

Moreover, it is crucial to advocate for a transformation in the position of women in positions of authority in higher education institutions, highlighting their impact on societal progress and harnessing the benefits that arise from their leadership, sometimes referred to as the "gender dividend" (Huang, 2020). In order to attain gender equality and social fairness, it is imperative to include gender mainstreaming into universities (Huang, 2020). This entails advocating for the creation of systems that appraise and appraise female leadership, while also expediting the process of integrating domestic chores into societal norms.

Furthermore, it is vital to augment the comprehension and cognitive abilities of female leaders in higher education institutions to enable them to become exceptional leaders (Kurebwa, 2020). This may be accomplished via many strategies that emphasise the significance of women in societal progress. In order to tackle the challenge of female leaders in colleges and universities, it is crucial to provide conducive circumstances that enable them to effectively manage their professional and personal obligations (Huang, 2020). Gender equity and increased participation and engagement of women in university leadership and decision-making roles can be facilitated through the implementation of supportive policies (Kwesiga & Ssendiwalwa, 2006). To achieve gender equality and enhance good governance in public universities, a comprehensive approach is necessary.

Absolutely, the initiative focuses on advancing gender mainstreaming in university leadership and decision-making, by ensuring that women effectively represent the interests of women and pushing for gender equality (Yusuf & Yahaya, 2022). Implementing a systematic assessment and evaluation procedure with a primary emphasis on gender mainstreaming would facilitate the accomplishment of this goal. In order to improve the quality of governance at public universities, it is essential to implement a well-organized and methodical system for assessing and evaluating performance, with a particular emphasis on incorporating gender equality principles (Huang, 2020). This initiative aims to facilitate the identification and advancement of women in leadership positions within higher education institutions, therefore guaranteeing equitable opportunities for both genders to pursue professional growth. In order to tackle the varying levels of participation and active engagement of male and female university administrators in decision-making processes, it is crucial to use gender mainstreaming initiatives. Gender mainstreaming initiatives should prioritise not just the numerical increase of women in leadership roles, but also their ability to advocate for gender equality and effectively represent the interests of women (Huang, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provides multiple contributions especially to the existing body of knowledge by examining two (2) critical components of human resources namely, employee participation and engagement especially in decision-making processes aimed at enhancing good governance. Most importantly, the findings obtained from this study would be able to establish empirical evidence or study on the differences exists between gender and their participation and engagement in decision-making. Thus, it is proven that the contributions of both male and female administrators in Malaysian Public Universities are critical to the institutions' pursuit of excellence.

Indeed, gender participation and engagement in decision-making is an important aspect of achieving gender equality and promoting women's rights. It is crucial to include the perspectives and expertise of both men and women in decision-making processes. This ensures a more comprehensive and balanced approach, as different genders may have different experiences, values, and priorities that can contribute valuable insights to the decision-making process (Lusa et al., 2009).

In addition, the results of this study demonstrate that gender matters when making decisions, as previous researchers have pointed out. Thus, in a technical sense, there is a gender difference in the decision-making process. The gender role in participation and engagement in the decision-making process to enhance good governance in universities thus shows a significant level of difference between male and female university administrators at public universities. As a result, this study has obtained additional input that can empower research on gender equality issues, especially in higher education.

Without a doubt, gender participation and engagement in decision-making is not only beneficial for promoting gender equality and women's rights but also for achieving overall development and progress (Hicks, 2011). Besides, it is proven from this study, the participation and engagement of both male and female are build up comprehensive and coordinated manner in the domains of Institutional Management, Financial Management, Strategic Management and Human Resource Management.

In addition, at Public Universiti in Malaysia, the significant effect between the genders might even result in a comprehensive outcome for the role of intermediaries in both sectors as agents capable of implementing good governance to accomplish organisational excellence. Therefore, in order to improve the overall performance of an organization's the organisation should

thoroughly investigate how to create an engaged workforce, which involves increasing participation and engagement opportunities and cultivating a sense of justice (UMS *Berjaya Jadi Antara Universiti Komprehensif Terbaik: Menteri KPT*, 2020).

Nevertheless, the limitation of this study is that it primarily focuses on gender as the determining factor for participation and engagement. This limitation may overlook other important factors that could influence administrators' participation and engagement, such as educational background, experience, or organisational culture. Additionally, the study only considers public universities in Malaysia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other types of institutions or different cultural contexts (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2014). Furthermore, the study's reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires may introduce response bias and limit the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Moreover, the study's sample size of administrators from public universities in Malaysia may not be representative of the entire population, leading to potential sampling bias. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting and applying the results of this study to other contexts or making broad generalisations about administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making to enhance good governance. Hence, the study's limited scope may also fail to capture potential variations in gender dynamics within different departments or levels of hierarchy within public universities in Malaysia. Additionally, the study may not fully capture the complex interplay between gender and other social identities, such as race or religion, which could also influence administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making. Overall, the study's limitations suggest that a more comprehensive and nuanced approach is needed to fully understand the factors influencing administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making and to enhance good governance at public universities in Malaysia.

Importantly, this study offers significant insights and suggestions for policymakers, practitioners, and academic institutions in Malaysia (Nafi & Kamaluddin, 2019). The study's conclusions emphasise the significance of Institutional Management, Financial Management, Strategic Management and Human Resource Management in enhancing good governance and integrity standards in academic institutions. The aforementioned elements exhibit a substantial correlation with integrity practices, suggesting that focusing on and enhancing these aspects may considerably augment the entire good governance structure in academic institutions (Said et al., 2022).

In facts, this study highlights the need of several initiatives and elements in fostering good governance practices. Adopting these approaches may enhance the strength and effectiveness of the organizational system and enhance the overall good governance framework at public universities. In summary, this study highlights the significance of administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making processes to enhance good governance in public universities in Malaysia. Finally, this study suggests that future research should use a more extensive and varied sample size to enhance the credibility of the results and the study proposes that further research should be undertaken to investigate other variables that can impact the enhancement of good governance in academic institutions in Malaysia. Ultimately, the study emphasises the need of administrators' participation and engagement in decision-making processes to foster effective good governance and ethical conduct at Malaysian public universities.

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