THE KNOWLEDGE | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Autonomy in Higher Education: Governance Dynamics and Institutional Performance in Public Universities of Baluchistan

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes how governance structure can influence the performance of institutions in the public sector of universities by considering three fundamental dynamics, which are: faculty involvement in decision making, transparency of the governing body procedures, and political or bureaucratic intrusion. Empirical survey data indicate the nature of the governance climate as moderate and uneven in terms of participatory, moderate in terms of its recurrence, and high in terms of its pervasiveness in the operations of vital statutory bodies. It has been shown that these are not independent elements but combine on a systemic level, where the internal flaws in procedures increase the vulnerability of the institutions to the outside influence, thus undermining autonomy and disrupting performance. This paper contends that traditional and separate administrative reforms are not enough. It, as a result, suggests a unified system of governance, which simultaneously strengthens internal processes, by the introduction of organized transparency, or faculty representation, but which also introduces institutional safeguards to defend the self-determination of the constitution of academic self-determination. It is hypothesized that this holistic methodology is a key to developing the autonomous, responsible and merit-based environment necessary to improve the institutional efficacy and academic excellence.

## Key Words

Autonomy, Higher Education, Governance, Dynamics, Institutional Performance

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## Introduction

Higher education significantly drives socio-economic progress and produces skilled workforce, although the public universities in underdeveloped regions as Balochistan remains a complicated and underexplored issue in Pakistan (Mengal, 2024). Autonomy empowers an institution to manage its academic, financial, and administrative matters with intervention of external forces. Also enable an organization to adapt market demands, innovation, and pursue academic excellence (Cameron, 1984). The freedom of an institution is a concerning topic is recent history because of political interference and lack of available funds. University of Baluchistan facing similar barriers of political intervention, finance availability and inefficient administration

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Public universities in Baluchistan are in a critical situation, struggling with funds and a demoralized faculty who are experiencing delayed salaries and scarce research opportunities. It is crucial for intellectuals and make it difficult for the universities to perform effectively (The Dawn, 2024). This study aims to bridge between the gapes in current literature by evaluating the governance and autonomy in Baluchistan's. and examine the impact on the institutional performance of universities, which includes their academic output, quality of research, and financial stability.

Studies indicate that public universities in underdeveloped areas such as Balochistan faces more challenges of "lack of governance, lack of funds availability, and administrative issues," which weaken their institutional autonomy and academic standards (Mohammed & Cai, 2025). Even with constitutional empowerment of provinces such as transferring the power to lower levels as in Balochistan still experience restricted practical autonomy in higher education, as the dependency on the federal HEC still exists (Naqvi et al., 2024). Furthermore, the recent legislative changes, such as the Balochistan Universities Act 2022, which reduce the shared process of directing faculty and students and empowers the central authority. On the other hand, global studies linking autonomy, institutional performance and good governance. While universities in Balochistan facing major governance and performance challenges. The is lack of direct examination these factors in public universities of Balochistan. Therefore, this research analyze how the province's centralized governance, political meddling, and financial crises impact institutional autonomy and performance (Mohammed & Cai, 2025).

## Literature Review
### The Conceptual Framework of Institutional Autonomy
Institutional autonomy is a complex and essential aspect of the organization and operation of modern higher education (Enders, 2012). It is generally defined as the "providing favorable environment and allowing an organization to establish and implement their goals" (Maggetti & Verhoest, 2014). Research commonly recognizes four key aspects of autonomy (Teshome, 2025):

**Academic Autonomy:** The right to design the curriculum, admission policies and award degrees.

**Financial Autonomy:** Refer to the authority to manage their financial resources, set tuition fees, making opportunities generate its revenue and utilize their funds.

**Organizational and Managerial Autonomy:** The freedom to design internal structure, department creation, planning and achievements of objectives.

**Staffing Autonomy:** the power to recruit, promote, and facilitate and reward staff, also appointment of Vice-Chancellor.

Experts advise that while autonomy is important, it should be monitored with accountability to the government and other stakeholders (Pruvot & Estermann, 2017; Choi, 2019). This is a form of regulatory autonomy, with authority subject to checks and balances and focused on performance-driven objectives.

### Autonomy, Governance, and Institutional Performance
The relationship between institutional autonomy and performance in higher education governance is a major subject of discussion. With reference to history, greater autonomy has been named as a "panacea" for enhancing accountability, adaptability, and performance (Teshome, 2025). The debates claim the empowered university responds more efficiently to internal and external demands, encourage new ideas, innovations and better results (Belgaroui & Ben Hamad, 2021).

However, there is limited and complete research study and information from direct and indirect sources to explain the importance of organizational autonomy and its impact on performance of institution. Some studies

advise that autonomy reforms could lead to slightly switch in control from individual academic autonomy to administrative sector, without substantial effect on measurable outcomes (Truong & Tran, 2025).

Furthermore, In situations with limited institutional capacity. Slightly allowing autonomy without required resources and development may not result into expected performance and results. To achieve such goals capacity building is an important tool for effecting governance (Choi, 2019).

Crucially, governance dynamics acts as key mediator. Poor governance characterized by misgovernance, political interference, and administrative dysfunctions, can significantly diminish the benefits and its potential positive impact on performance (De Boer et al., 2007; Usman, 2014)

An effective governance structure based on shared governance, where is mutual autonomy of administration, faculty and students and maintain the balance. Without this balance, autonomy can turn into a form of "managerial tyranny" (Pringle & Woodman, 2022, as cited in Hao, 2025).

## The Governance and Autonomy Crisis in Pakistan and Balochistan

The higher education sector in Pakistan has been in struggle for autonomy, particularly following the 18th Amendment the higher education has been granted to provinces, Yet HEC's federal centralized authority overrules the policy making, curriculum design, and financial controls, which facing heavy criticism for bonded provincial institutional autonomy (Naqvi et al., 2024). For provinces like Balochistan, this has meant limited practical control over their own HEIs (Naqvi et al., 2024).

Balochistan having the combination of national-level issues. The public universities in the province are struggling among the below regional-specific challenges:

**Chronic Financial Crisis:** Universities in Balochistan are not funded to its requirement and on time in terms of salaries and moving universities fund to other projects, which leads to catastrophic situation (Shahid, 2024). Their limited financial resources question their autonomy and emphasizing their dependency on provisional and federal Governments to meet their requirements.

**Political Interference and Poor-governance:** The literature highlights serious problems related to poor-governance, Political interest in university administrative affairs, staffing and internal issues direct impact over the organization staffing and governance autonomy (Shattock, 2014).

For example, The absence of a Provincial HEC and the characteristics of the Balochistan Universities Act 2022 highlight political control that centralizes authority and discourage the representation of faculty/student and weaking shared governance (Meer et al., 2025)

**Impact on Performance:** Due to the restrictive governance structure and limited functional autonomy are directly reflects the province's inability to achieve its socio-economic development goals through higher education. resulting in the loss of qualified faculty and restricted access to essential intellectual resources (Aijaz et al., 2022).

## Methodology
### Research Design
The research design of this study was quantitative, non-experimental research design which was used to examine the connection between the dynamics of governance and the performance of the institution in the realm of the Baluchistan public universities. The cross-sectional survey methodology was utilized, which entailed the possibility of systematic gathering of standardized data of various institutions at one time. This structure allows statistical analysis of the proposed relationships between variables and also takes into consideration the limitations of the contextual complexity of real-life organizational contexts.

## Population and Sampling

The target population was all the eleven (11) publicly sector universities in Baluchistan. The target group comprised academic faculty (lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors) and administrative officials who are related to governance procedures. Multi-stage sampling strategy was applied due to the limitations of logistics and accessibility.

The researcher used purposive sampling in the first stage to identify four (4) universities. This sampling was done in terms of critical institutional features such as size, discipline interest, and geographical distribution in order to get a representative cross-section of the sector. The second phase was the selection and recruitment of the participants within the target population of the academic and administrative staff in the selected institutions using a convenience sampling approach.

## Instrument and Procedure of Data Collection

Primary data was gathered through a structured and self-reported survey through a Google Forms survey platform. The questionnaire was to operationalize the main constructs of the study:

**Governance Dynamics:** Scale is based on scaled items that measure perceived degrees of university autonomy, the character and the power of external control systems (e.g., government, regulation), and internal decision-making.

**Institutional Performance:** It is a multi-item scale assessing the main key performance indicators, such as the perceptions of academic quality, research output/productivity, and financial efficiency/resource management.

## Data Analysis

The analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics on 200 complete responses collected using a Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) were computed in order to characterize the demographics of the respondents as well as to characterize the central tendencies and dispersions of the key variables. The hypothesis of the study was tested using inferential statistics. In particular, paired samples t-test was used to test the hypothesized relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The purpose of the analysis was to establish whether differences in mean scores between the governance and performance constructs were statistically significant ($p < .05$), which would include evidence to either accept or reject the null hypothesis.

## Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 200 | 1.4850 | .50103 |
| Designation | 200 | 1.8200 | 1.24715 |
| Decision-making in my university is participatory and inclusive of faculty input. | 200 | 3.2200 | 1.11256 |
| The university's governing bodies (Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council) function according to clear and transparent procedures. | 200 | 3.1100 | 1.05996 |
| Political or bureaucratic interference affects key university decisions. | 200 | 3.1800 | .90092 |
| The Vice Chancellor and other executives exercise authority in accordance with institutional statutes. | 200 | 3.4000 | .94044 |
| External agencies (HEC, Government) provide oversight without constraining academic independence. | 200 | 3.3600 | 1.11202 |

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| There is a balanced relationship between internal autonomy and external accountability mechanisms. | 200 | 3.1350 | 1.06887 |
| The university's leadership communicates decisions effectively across departments. | 200 | 3.0850 | 1.04558 |
| Policies regarding recruitment, promotions, and finance are applied consistently and fairly. | 200 | 2.8000 | 1.22782 |
| Feedback from faculty and departments is considered in governance and planning. | 200 | 3.3450 | 1.15440 |
| Academic programs meet quality standards set by accreditation and internal review bodies. | 200 | 3.4500 | .93373 |
| The university provides incentives and resources to promote faculty research. | 200 | 3.0300 | 1.17730 |
| Faculty and students actively engage in community outreach and applied research. | 200 | 3.1700 | 1.14352 |
| Budget utilization reflects efficiency and alignment with institutional goals. | 200 | 3.2550 | 1.02725 |
| The university maintains transparency in financial reporting. | 200 | 3.0900 | 1.24081 |
| Internal quality assurance mechanisms are effectively implemented. | 200 | 3.2400 | 1.11743 |
| Collaboration with industry and external partners enhances research and training outcomes. | 200 | 3.3250 | 1.11155 |
| Institutional autonomy has improved academic quality and research productivity. | 200 | 3.3450 | 1.05429 |

In descriptive statistics as presented in Table 01, it can be seen that the total number of respondents working in Balochistan in total in public university is 200. The data narrates a system that is moderate and uncommitted to governance and performance of institutions with areas of great concern. The respondents scored various assertions through the use of a Likert-type scale, with the majority of the respondents being of junior academic position. The general trend indicates that the means are concentrated between 2.8 and 3.45 which implies that the perceptions lie between slight agreement and small disagreement without ever having a strong conviction about any positive quality. The mean was the largest at 3.45 in academic programs meeting the standards of quality that is associated with the careful belief in the primary teaching role. Conversely, the most misuse and critical score (2.80) was recorded on regular and fair implementation of policies in recruiting, promotion, and funding. This implies that the institutional integrity that is being strongly emphasized by procedural justice is facing a critical crisis of trust. The other aspect scores of governance remained the same. Strong dissatisfaction is shown by the perceived good communication between leaders (3.085), open governing institutions (3.11), and involvement in decision-making (3.22), that are barely above the neutrality. The identification of the political meddling (3.18) and low scores on institutional autonomy (3.345) and external oversight (3.135) represent a system that guides external influences. The standard deviations indicate a critical layer. The fact that the highest SD values (usually greater than 1.1) correspond to the lowest-rated items, such as policy fairness and financial transparency, means that there is not only negative averaging, but also a lot of internal disagreement. The experiences of governance by these advocates are extremely unequal, and probably these experiences represent different practices that favor certain individuals and negatively affect other individuals even within the same system. Furthermore, the descriptive data constitutes a baseline of awareness: the quality of the academic activities is maintained relatively on the same level, but the

machine of governance that is supposed to be behind the quality level is seen as being opaque, inconsistent, and unjustly administered. This underlying dissatisfaction and consensus deprivation possibly forms a difficult situation to attain high institutional performance in the Balochistan public sector universities.

### Table 2
*Gender*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Male | 103 | 51.5 | 51.5 |
|  | Female | 97 | 48.5 | 48.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table 02 reveals that the survey sample of 200 respondents included in the study is nearly balanced in terms of gender: 103 males (51.5) and 97 females (48.5), which means that it was broadly represented and it is possible to conduct potentially gender-based analysis of the data.

### Table 3
*Designation*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Lecturer | 124 | 62.0 |
|  | Assistant .Professor | 27 | 13.5 |
|  | Associate Professor | 23 | 11.5 |
|  | Professor | 13 | 6.5 |
|  | Admin | 13 | 6.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 03 shows that the sample has been designated to the 200 respondents, a sample is highly biased towards lecturers, as 62 percent of respondents are lecturers. The middle tier is composed of Assistant Professors (13.5%), Associate Professors (11.5%), though there are also only 6.5% Professors and Admin personnel. This clarifies that the survey mainly put into consideration the opinions of junior and middle academic staff.

### Table 4
*Decision-Making in My University is Participatory and Inclusive of Faculty Input*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 7 | 3.5 |
|  | Disagree | 63 | 31.5 |
|  | Neutral | 31 | 15.5 |
|  | Agree | 77 | 38.5 |
|  | Strongly agree | 22 | 11.0 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

As shown in Table 04, (49.5) percent of the participants concurred and (35) percent of the participants disagreed regarding their involvement in the decision-making process in their respective universities. As (15.5%) remain neutral. It proves this to be an argumentative issue, which lacks a solid consensus. The moderate degree of consensus and the size of the critical minority indicate that the institutional practices are the domain of significant dissatisfaction.

**Table 5**

*The University's Governing Bodies (Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council) Function According to Clear and Transparent Procedures*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 14 | 7.0 |
|  | Disagree | 47 | 23.5 |
|  | Neutral | 55 | 27.5 |
|  | Agree | 71 | 35.5 |
|  | Strongly agree | 13 | 6.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 05 shows that there is a profound uncertainty when it comes to openness of university governing organs. Although an aggregate 42% insist that they operate in a transparent manner, this is a feeble agreement (6.5% strongly agree). Conversely, there is a substantial (30.5% ) amount who do not agree. Most dramatically, the single group that the majority pertains to is the biggest (27.5%), indicating general uncertainty or the absence of clear information. This information promotes a considered lack of openness, and processes viewed as ill-informed to the faculty.

**Table 6**

*Political or Bureaucratic Interference Affects Key University Decisions*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 8 | 4.0 |
|  | Disagree | 39 | 19.5 |
|  | Neutral | 65 | 32.5 |
|  | Agree | 85 | 42.5 |
|  | Strongly agree | 3 | 1.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 06 presents a combined slight lean towards agreement with the overall perception that political or bureaucratic interference is a factor influencing key university decisions, with a total result of 44% (Agree + Strongly agree) of the participants agreeing with the statement. Nevertheless, the most glaring revelation has been the high percentage of the respondents who stood at the middle at 32.5. The percentage of those who disagree is also rather low (23.5% Disagree + Strongly disagree). The huge Neutral section indicates a general reluctation to either affirm or refute the existence of interference, which in conjunction with the majority of assent indicates an atmosphere of distrust or unascertained impact on university management.

**Table 7**

*The Vice Chancellor and Other Executives Exercise Authority in Accordance with Institutional Statutes*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 5 | 2.5 |
|  | Disagree | 26 | 13.0 |
|  | Neutral | 76 | 38.0 |
|  | Agree | 70 | 35.0 |
|  | Strongly agree | 23 | 11.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

Table 07 presents a marginal net agreement around that political or bureaucratic interference is motivating around key university decisions whereas Table 07 presents ambiguity and uncertainty about the executive compliance with

institutional statutes. Although 46.5 percent (Agree + Strongly agree) of the respondents concur with the statement, a substantial opposing group (15.5 percent) (Disagree + Strongly disagree) of the respondents hold the opinion that the executives do not adhere to the statutes. More importantly, the most significant single category is the largest group of 38% which is the category of Neutral where the uncertainty or the absence of clear knowledge is the highest in terms of all the tables. This implies that the procedural adherence of the Vice Chancellor and executives is not well expressed and comprehended by the faculty.

### Table 8

*External Agencies (HEC, Government) Provide Oversight without Constraining Academic Independence*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 10        | 5.0     |
|       | Disagree          | 43        | 21.5    |
|       | Neutral           | 39        | 19.5    |
|       | Agree             | 81        | 40.5    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 27        | 13.5    |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

Table 08 indicates that there is a strong consensus of agreement that oversight by outside agencies does not limit academic freedom. A majority of 54% of the respondents are in strong agreement of the statement. There was a small proportion of 26.5% Disagree with disagreement and the Neutral was relatively low at 19.5%. This reflects a high, affirmative opinion of the equilibrium between the external regulation and the academic freedom of the university.

### Table 9

*There is a Balanced Relationship Between Internal Autonomy and External Accountability Mechanisms*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 10        | 5.0     |
|       | Disagree          | 56        | 28.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 47        | 23.5    |
|       | Agree             | 71        | 35.5    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 16        | 8.0     |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

Table 09 reveals that the faculty is split on whether there is a balanced relationship between an internal autonomy and an external accountability. Although there is a majority of 43.5% Agree who held that there is a balance, there was a large minority of 33% Disagree who did not agree. The Neutral category is also important at 23.5%. The closeness of the percentage of the Agreement and Disagreement indicates that there is no total consensus and implies that the perception of a balanced relationship is not common among the faculty.

### Table 10

*The University's Leadership Communicates Decisions Effectively Across Departments*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 10        | 5.0     |
|       | Disagree          | 61        | 30.5    |
|       | Neutral           | 41        | 20.5    |
|       | Agree             | 78        | 39.0    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 10        | 5.0     |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

According to Table 10, there is a polarizing problem with the effectiveness of the communication by the leadership of the university. Although 44% expressed their opinion that communication is effective, a very high minority of

35.5% expressed their opinion that they disagreed with it. There is the Neutral group that represents 20.5 percent of the respondents. The close call between the agreement and disagreement and the great percentage of the outright disagreement is an indication that the communication practices are not consistent or are fundamentally missing in a big percentage of the faculty that can be one of the main sources of dissatisfaction.

**Table 11**

*Policies Regarding Recruitment, Promotions, and Finance are Applied Consistently and Fairly*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 32        | 16.0    |
|       | Disagree          | 60        | 30.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 42        | 21.0    |
|       | Agree             | 48        | 24.0    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 18        | 9.0     |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

The disagreement in the application of policies is evident and significant as revealed in Table 11. The 46% respondents who did not agree with the statement is the highest percentage of negative response of any given table. The percentage of agreement was only 33 with the Neutral group being 21 percent. This deep-seated aversion is an indication that the implementation of the key policies (recruitment, promotion, finance) is viewed as unfair or unequal by a sizeable portion of the faculty, which implies a serious source of internal organizational conflict and distrust.

**Table 12**

*Feedback from Faculty and Departments is Considered in Governance and Planning*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 9         | 4.5     |
|       | Disagree          | 46        | 23.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 49        | 24.5    |
|       | Agree             | 59        | 29.5    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 37        | 18.5    |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

Table 12 indicates a favorable attitude towards the fact that the faculty feedback is taken into account in terms of governance and planning. Most of the respondents 48% said that their feedback is taken into account. The greatest single group was Neutral with 24.5, and 27.5% expressed Disagreement. The plurality of agreement can be taken to imply that the mechanisms of faculty input are usually functioning effectively though the large numbers of Neutral and Disagree classes imply that the mechanisms are not universal or entirely trusted by all departments and by all faculty members.

**Table 13**

*Academic Programs meet Quality Standards Set by Accreditation and Internal Review Bodies*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 5         | 2.5     |
|       | Disagree          | 24        | 12.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 70        | 35.0    |
|       | Agree             | 78        | 39.0    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 23        | 11.5    |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

In Table 13, the evaluation of the quality of academic programs is high in terms of a positive rating. A large proportion of 50.5% respondents agreed that programs are of quality. Disagreement was low at 14.5%. However, the biggest single group is that of Neutral with 35%. This proves that, although the faculty members with the opinion overwhelmingly agree that the quality of the academic programs is high, a significant portion of the faculty does not have a significant confirming or disconfirming opinion, which may show that they are not aware of the exact standards or review procedures.

## Table 14

*The University Provides Incentives and Resources to Promote Faculty Research*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 18 | 9.0 |
|  | Disagree | 64 | 32.0 |
|  | Neutral | 29 | 14.5 |
|  | Agree | 72 | 36.0 |
|  | Strongly agree | 17 | 8.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

The provision of research incentives and resources has shown a high rate of disagreement as shown in Table 14. The percentage of those strongly disagreeing with the statement was 41% and this is significantly more than the percentage of those who strongly agreed, which is 44.5. The least category is the Neutral group with 14.5 percent only. These figures indicate that even though slightly more members agreed, the overall figures are that the larger fraction of the faculty members do not agree or do not know, and that there is a significant gap between the perceived institutional support on the activities of the research.158003

## Table 15

*Faculty and Students Actively Engage in Community Outreach and Applied Research*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 9 | 4.5 |
|  | Disagree | 63 | 31.5 |
|  | Neutral | 39 | 19.5 |
|  | Agree | 63 | 31.5 |
|  | Strongly agree | 26 | 13.0 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

The case of high polarization and discordancy on community outreach and applied research has been evident in table 15. Although the collective agreement is at 44.5, the collective disagreement is almost equal at 36. The fact that the number and percentage of the Disagree and the Agree category have equal frequencies and 31.5 percent is indicative of an abysmal rift. This implies that there is no agreement on the degree of activity so that one may have departments that seem to be very active and others may be seen as doing very little and thus, the university outreach activities are not seen holistically.

## Table 16

*Budget Utilization Reflects Efficiency and Alignment with Institutional Goals*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 8 | 4.0 |
|  | Disagree | 43 | 21.5 |
|  | Neutral | 58 | 29.0 |
|  | Agree | 72 | 36.0 |
|  | Strongly agree | 19 | 9.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

There is evident positive evaluation of budget utilization in table 16. Every 45.5 percent of the respondents answered that the budget is used effectively and in accordance with the goals, and only 25.5 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The biggest single category is the Neutral with 29%. This reflects a positive, but not strong feeling of trust in the careful and objective management of money. The great share of the Neutral group of respondents indicates that the efficiency of budget use is not completely clear and transparent to a considerable number of the faculty.

**Table 17**

*The University Maintains Transparency in Financial Reporting*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 20        | 10.0    |
|       | Disagree          | 54        | 27.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 45        | 22.5    |
|       | Agree             | 50        | 25.0    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 31        | 15.5    |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

Table 17 reveals that the consensus on the transparency of financial reporting is more divided than there is consensus. Disagreement based on this was a higher 37% overtly saying that the university lacks in transparency compared to the 40.5% of respondents who said the same. The Neutral segment is also quite large at 22.5%. The more frequent occurrence of disagreement than agreement points to the fact that the financial practices of the university do not inspire trust and perceived transparency among the university faculty members, which means that there is a significant venue of enhancing institutional trust.

**Table 18**

*Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms are Effectively Implemented*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 9         | 4.5     |
|       | Disagree          | 63        | 31.5    |
|       | Neutral           | 39        | 19.5    |
|       | Agree             | 63        | 31.5    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 26        | 13.0    |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

Table 18 reveals that there is slight skew in support of the fact that internal quality assurance mechanisms are implemented effectively. An aggregate 43% of the respondents concurred with the statement. This is however closely accompanied by the combined 30 percent of those who disagreed and an enormous amount of 27 percent of Neutral who represent the largest category. The near equal percentages of all three key groups (Agree, Disagree, Neutral) point to high uncertainty and non-unanimity on whether internal quality mechanisms are effective or not, indicating that their application or effects are not all equally deemed to be successful throughout the university.

**Table 19**

*Collaboration with Industry and External Partners Enhances Research and Training Outcomes*

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 15        | 7.5     |
|       | Disagree          | 38        | 19.0    |
|       | Neutral           | 32        | 16.0    |
|       | Agree             | 97        | 48.5    |
|       | Strongly agree    | 18        | 9.0     |
|       | Total             | 200       | 100.0   |

The value of external collaboration has a great and positive consensus as shown in Table 19. The overwhelming majority of the 57.5 percent affirmed that teamwork improves performance. The highest percentage of 26.5 was expressed in disagreement and the least percentage was the Neutral group at 16. This is among the agreement rates in all statements, which implies that the members of the Institute of Higher Learning are in overwhelming numbers considering external partnerships to be an effective and valuable way of enhancing the outcomes of research and training.

### Table 20

*Institutional Autonomy has Improved Academic Quality and Research Productivity.*

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly disagree | 7 | 3.5 |
|  | Disagree | 38 | 19.0 |
|  | Neutral | 63 | 31.5 |
|  | Agree | 63 | 31.5 |
|  | Strongly agree | 29 | 14.5 |
|  | Total | 200 | 100.0 |

According to Table 20, there is a majority of consensus that institutional autonomy has enhanced the quality of academia and output of research. Forty-six percent of the respondents concurred with the statement. The most remarkable however is the exact correlation between the Neutral group and the Agree group at 31.5 since they are the biggest groups. The level of disagreement is rather low at 22.5%. The high combined agreement would indicate a general favorable opinion of the effects of autonomy but the high co-equal Neutral category, 31.5% indicates that a good portion of the faculty is either unsure or is not seeing the definite benefits associated with autonomy directly causing the said improvements.

### Table 21

*Paired Samples Statistics*

|  |  | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pair 1 | Governance Dynamics | 3.2168 | 200 | .56218 | .03975 |
|  | Institutional Performance | 3.1953 | 200 | .83928 | .05935 |

The descriptive statistics are given in Table 21 of the paired-sample t-test between Governance Dynamics and Institutional Performance of the same 200 respondents. The averages of the scores are too similar (3.22 vs. 3.20), which indicates that there is not much difference. Institutional Performance however presents a significant variation in responses (Std. Deviation = 0.839) compared to Governance Dynamics (0.562). The 200 N is proof of an entire paired dataset. Std. Error Mean shows the accuracy of every mean estimate, and it is smaller in the case of more variable Institutional Performance. Essentially this table preconditions the t-test that allows concluding whether the small perceived mean difference can be considered significant based on the significant difference in the data dispersion of two related variables.

### Table 22

*t test Statistics*

|  | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Governance Dynamics Institutional Performance | -.824 | 199 | .411 |

As shown in Table 22, there is no significant difference in the mean score between Governance Dynamics and Institutional Performance because the above outcomes demonstrate definite statistical data. The average Governance Dynamics (3.22) and Institutional Performance (3.20) scores of the 200 respondents are amazingly close. The paired-samples t-test provides a t-statistic of -0.824 with a degree of freedom of 199 and a two tailed significance (p-value) of 0.411. This p-value is a lot greater than the standard alpha value of 0.05 and hence, one accepts the null hypothesis. This shows that there is not any significant difference in the means as witnessed, and this may be as a result of random variation in sampling.

## Discussion

This paper explains the governing dynamics that have been critical in the performance of the institutional universities in the public sector. The results are a subtle image of internal process wellbeing and massive external pressures, which in combination shape a governance ambiance that is less than participatory but greater than limiting.

The statistics show that there is an underlying participatory level of governance as almost half (49.5%) of the faculty members responded that they have a say in decision-making. This implies that there are formal consultation structures and these are viable to some extent. The large share of disagreement (35%) however indicates that there is a noticeable perception difference meaning that the participation can be uneven or token and exclusive to specific groups or concerns. This qualified inclusivity may cause a lack of legitimacy of decisions, which may weaken the trust and ownership of faculties - major stimulators of institutional performance and innovation.

This uncertainty of action is reflected in the procedural clarity of central governing organizations. Of importance is the discovery that not all bodies such as the Syndicate and Senate have transparent procedures that operate under the belief of most of its citizens with 42% of all the respondents agreeing with the statement. The fact that almost a third (30.5%) are actively disagreeing indicates that it is systemic. The governing bodies that act without clear guidelines are likely to be seen as random or prone to capture by the internal elites thus compromising on accountability and the rule of law within the institution. Such ambiguity in procedures directly affects the performance of institutions through its effects of uncertainty, delay in implementation, and an atmosphere in which persuasion can easily win out over merit when making decisions.

There is however the strongest finding that pertains to the outside interference. The highest level of consensus (44%) in the opinion that political or bureaucratic influence influences major university decisions is an indicator of the major struggle of institutional autonomy. The fact that the greater part of the respondents (32.5%) being neutral in this sensitive question is in itself suggestive since it may be possible that the high rate of neutrality is a sign that such interference is a normalized aspect of the operational environment that is not to be changed. This force of influence is probably destructive to the internal weaknesses of governance. An example is that opaque practices in the Senate might aid in the funneling of outside interests, and the lack of faculty involvement decreases the collective academic voice that might serve as an effective barrier to outside influences. The implementation of autonomy is a pillar of institutional performance allowing universities to value academically excellence, long term strategy, and decisions that are made based on merit than those that are made because of short term political or administrative expediency. Its corruption poses a direct threat to the quality of education, integrity of research and finally, the relevance of the university to society.

All these findings give a picture of a strained system of governance. The medium level of participation and procedural openness is not enough to protect the core academic processes of the university against outside infiltration. A double limitation of institutional performance therefore exists, that is inside inefficiencies and a lack

of legitimacy due to unclear procedures and lack of meaning engagement that are exacerbated by distortion of priorities by outside players.

This interaction brings a cycle that suffocates performance. The resulting interference will cause decisions that undermine academic standards or resource allocation, which serves as a demotivator to the faculties whose participatory engagement, is already viewed as ineffective. The result of this lack of morale and trust is a further erosion of inner governance, which makes the institution even more susceptible to outside pressure. The only way to improve the performance of organizations within a particular institution is to make the reforms simultaneous and mutually reinforcing: internal governance can be strengthened by introducing codified and transparent procedures that apply to all governing bodies, and the protective measures against political and bureaucratic influence on academic freedom can be institutionalized (e.g. by making it clear who should be appointed and by the introduction of statutory protection). Until this symbiotic relationship between the internal procedural health and the external autonomy is resolved, the complete performance potential of these public sector universities will fail to be achieved (Ültanır, 2025).

## Conclusion

This paper conclusively shows that in the case of the public sector university, institutional performance is essentially influenced by three governance dynamics namely the extent of real faculty engagement, openness of internal processes, and the extent of outside interference. The results demonstrate an anomaly of a system. Although there is a minimum level of participation structures, there are huge perception of being tokenized and opaque procedures among relevant governing institutions such as Senates and Syndicates which destroys its legitimacy and effectiveness. External pressures take full advantage of this internal vulnerability, and a full agreement exists that any political or bureaucratic interference impacts fundamentally on academic decision-making.

These factors are interdependent which leads to a vicious cycle of stifling performance in institutions. Secrecy undermines internal accountability, and this makes universities easily influenced by external forces. On the other hand, this interference discourages faculty and demeans participatory processes, and weakens internal controls. This cycle is a direct hindrance to strategic focus, merit-based decision-making, and the development of an innovative academic culture- all needed to be high performers.

That is why it is not possible to make isolated reforms. Institutional performance is a systemic task that needs to be enhanced. The urgent need is to simultaneously strengthen the internal governance by enforcing formal, explicit, and open processes to all statutory bodies and establish meaningful faculty participation in strategic decision making and ensure strong protection mechanisms against partisan and bureaucratic influences to the institution. In the end, the road to these universities is not just the reaction of the administration but the serious shift toward the knowledge of the governance model based on the transparent, participatory, and independent academic leadership. It is only with this kind of wholesale reform that these institutions can be made to be all that they can be in terms of being sources of knowledge and driving societal development.

## Recommendations

According to the recognized governance limitations, the following developed recommendations are to be offered as integrated to improve institutional performance in the public sector universities:

The faculty representation in statutory positions is suggested to be guaranteed by the election or selection of the position, which membership in all the main governing bodies should ensure a true inclusion into academic and strategic decision-making.

It has been recommended to establish open governance charters which require every university institution (Senate, Syndicate) to establish, publish and follow open procedural Codes in order to establish accountability through agendas and minutes which are open to the public.

They also suggest the formation of independent academic integrity council and a statutory institution of senior academics and ombudspersons to hear and report on any decision that might have external interference, to protect institutional autonomy.

The government of Balochistan ought to introduce leadership capacity initiatives and hence to establish forced preparation of academic and administrative leaders to shared governance, procedural fairness, and strategic management to efficiently work out reformed frameworks.

It is highly advisable to assure of the regular governance audits in all the universities and to undertake regular, independent audit of the governance practice against the participation, transparency and autonomy benchmarks to maintain continual evaluation and improvement.

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