



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' UNIVERSITY SELECTION DECISIONS: EVIDENCE FROM PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN BANTEN PROVINCE, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Good University Governance (GUG) is increasingly important for improving institutional performance and strengthening competitiveness in higher education. This study aims to examine the relationship between GUG implementation, institutional competitiveness, and students' university-selection decisions at private higher education institutions in Banten Province, Indonesia. The study focuses on five GUG principles: transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. Institutional competitiveness is proposed as a mediating variable, while students' university-selection decisions serve as the outcome variable. The research focuses on Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT), Universitas Serang Raya (UNSER), and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. A quantitative explanatory approach is proposed using questionnaire-based data collection. Based on the operational population of 21,000 students stated in the research draft, the Slovin formula with a 7% margin of error yields a target sample of approximately 202 respondents, allocated proportionally across the three institutions. Data analysis is planned using descriptive statistics in SPSS and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4, supported by bootstrapping to examine direct and indirect relationships. The conceptual framework proposes that GUG may enhance competitiveness through improved information accessibility, service reliability, academic credibility, institutional responsibility, and fairness, potentially influencing students' university-selection decisions. This study is expected to contribute to the understanding of governance as a strategic mechanism for strengthening private higher education institutions. The proposed relationships require empirical testing using valid survey data.

Keywords: Good University Governance; Institutional Competitiveness; University-Selection Decisions; Private Higher Education; Banten Province.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions play an important role in developing human resources, advancing knowledge and innovation, and supporting social and economic development. To fulfill these responsibilities effectively, universities need to implement good governance practices that promote transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness (Waluyo et al., 2023). These principles, collectively known as Good University Governance (GUG), provide a foundation for improving institutional management, strengthening public trust, and enhancing the quality of higher education services. In an increasingly competitive higher education environment, universities must not only maintain good academic standards but also demonstrate effective governance and institutional credibility. Prospective students and their families consider various factors when choosing a university, including institutional reputation, accreditation status, quality



of academic programs, tuition fees, administrative services, and the availability of student support facilities (Reschiwati et al., 2021). Therefore, the implementation of GUG may contribute to institutional competitiveness by improving the quality of management, strengthening stakeholder confidence, and creating a positive institutional image.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between good university governance and institutional performance, governance effectiveness, institutional image, and competitive advantage. Research by Risanty and Kesuma, Wardhani et al., Sulila, Rahayu and Wahab, Rukmana et al., and Muktiyanto et al. provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the importance of governance in higher education. However, much of the existing literature emphasizes internal governance processes and institutional performance, while the relationship between GUG, institutional competitiveness, and prospective students' university-selection decisions requires further investigation (Surachman et al., 2024). This research addresses that gap by examining the implementation of GUG in three private higher education institutions in Banten Province, Indonesia: Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT), Universitas Serang Raya (UNSERA), and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. The study focuses on five GUG principles: transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. It investigates how these principles may influence institutional competitiveness and how competitiveness may, in turn, shape students' decisions when selecting a university.

Institutional competitiveness is positioned as a mediating variable because effective governance may strengthen a university's ability to distinguish itself from competing institutions. For example, transparent information about tuition fees, academic programs, accreditation, and administrative procedures may help prospective students evaluate institutional credibility. Accountability and responsibility may reinforce perceptions of institutional reliability, while independence and fairness may support professional decision-making and equitable treatment of stakeholders. These governance practices may contribute to a stronger institutional reputation and a more attractive educational environment (Saring, 2023). The study also uses the AIDA framework Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action as a conceptual lens for understanding the student decision-making process. Under this framework, institutional information and reputation may attract prospective students' attention, generate interest in academic offerings, develop a desire to enroll, and eventually encourage them to take action by selecting a university (Nguyen & Hoang, 2026). Integrating this perspective with GUG and institutional competitiveness provides a broader understanding of how governance practices may be associated with students' choices.

The proposed contribution of this research is to integrate the five principles of GUG, institutional competitiveness, and students' university-selection decisions into a single conceptual framework. By examining three private higher education institutions in Banten Province, the study provides a context-specific approach to understanding how governance may support institutional differentiation and influence prospective students' perceptions and decisions. Overall, the research proposes that good university governance should be understood not merely as an administrative requirement but also as a potential strategic resource for strengthening institutional competitiveness and stakeholder confidence. Nevertheless, the proposed relationships must be tested using actual empirical data before conclusions can be drawn about their significance or the mediating role of competitiveness.



Institutional accreditation information and other supporting data should also be verified against official records to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the final research findings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative explanatory approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative approach is appropriate for examining relationships among the research variables through numerical data collected from respondents (Busetto et al., 2020). The explanatory design aims to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between Good University Governance (GUG) principles, institutional competitiveness, and students' decisions to select a private higher education institution (Ghanad, 2023). The conceptual model consists of five independent variables: transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. Institutional competitiveness serves as the mediating variable, while students' university-selection decisions constitute the dependent variable (Hossan et al., 2023). Data are collected at a single point in time; therefore, the findings are interpreted as statistical relationships rather than definitive evidence of causality.

Research Location and Unit of Analysis

The study focuses on three private higher education institutions in Banten Province, Indonesia: Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT), Universitas Serang Raya (UNSERA), and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. These institutions represent different geographical areas and institutional profiles within the province. The unit of analysis is the individual student. Students are considered appropriate respondents because their experiences and perceptions can provide information about institutional transparency, accountability, administrative responsibility, independence, fairness, and competitiveness. The selection of the three institutions follows the rationale presented in the original research draft. Their institutional characteristics and accreditation status should be verified using official records before the main survey is conducted.

Research Population

The operational population specified in the research draft is 21,000, distributed across the three institutions.

Table.1 The population of this research

Higher education institution	Population stated in the draft	Percentage
UMT	12,000	57.14%
UNSERA	8,000	38.10%
STAI Syekh Manshur	1,000	4.76%
Total	21,000	100%

Source: Original research draft.

These table are retained from the source document. However, the researcher must confirm whether they represent active students, institutional enrolment capacity, or another population measure (Hossan et al., 2023). This distinction is important because the sampling frame must correspond to the actual population from which respondents are



selected. Ideally, the population should be defined as eligible students officially registered at the three institutions during the period of data collection.

Sample Size Determination

The research draft applies the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 7%. The sample size is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n= required sample size

N= population size

e= margin of error

Using the population figure of 21,000 and a margin of error of 0.07:

$$n = \frac{21,000}{1 + 21,000(0.07)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{21,000}{103.9} \approx 202.12$$

Based on this calculation, the planned sample size is approximately 202 respondents. This number represents the intended sample rather than the actual number of completed and valid questionnaires. The final sample should be reported after data collection, including the number of questionnaires distributed, returned, excluded, and retained for analysis.

Sampling Technique and Sample Allocation

The research draft proposes distributing the sample across the three institutions according to their respective population sizes.

Tabel 2. Present of the planned allocation

Institution	Population	Planned sample	Sample percentage
UMT	12,000	115	56.93%
UNSERA	8,000	77	38.12%
STAI Syekh Manshur	1,000	10	4.95%
Total	21,000	202	100%

Source: Research draft; percentages calculated from the planned sample allocation.

The proportional allocation is intended to ensure that each institution is represented in the overall sample. However, the final sampling procedure within each institution must be clearly established. If complete student registration lists are available, proportionate stratified random sampling may be implemented by institution, followed by random selection of eligible students. If random selection is not feasible, the actual sampling method



should be stated explicitly, and its implications for representativeness should be acknowledged.

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

The research model contains seven constructs grouped into independent, mediating, and dependent variables.

Table 3. Summarize of the conceptual roles

Variable category	Construct	Conceptual focus
Independent	Transparency	Accessibility, clarity, and openness of institutional information
Independent	Accountability	Responsibility for decisions, performance, and institutional outcomes
Independent	Responsibility	Compliance with regulations, academic obligations, and stakeholder responsibilities
Independent	Independence	Autonomy in institutional and academic decision-making
Independent	Fairness	Equitable treatment and consistent application of institutional policies
Mediating	Institutional competitiveness	Perceived institutional advantages relative to competing institutions
Dependent	University-selection decision	Students' decision process in selecting a higher education institution

Source: Conceptual framework in the research draft, elaborated for methodological clarity.

Each construct should be operationalized through multiple questionnaire items derived from relevant theories and previous empirical studies. The indicators must be aligned with the conceptual definition of each construct to avoid overlap between variables. For example, transparency should measure information openness rather than general satisfaction, while competitiveness should capture perceived advantages over alternative institutions rather than simply repeat measures of governance quality.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

Primary data are planned to be collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert-type response scale. The questionnaire should contain statements that measure respondents' perceptions of the five GUG principles, institutional competitiveness, and their university-selection decisions. A consistent response scale should be applied across items, with clear instructions provided to respondents. Before the main survey, the research draft proposes a pilot test involving 30 respondents. The pilot study should assess question clarity, response consistency, completion time, and potential ambiguities. Where appropriate, preliminary reliability analysis may also be conducted. The pilot sample should be distinguished from the main sample, and the researcher should specify whether pilot respondents are eligible to participate in the final survey. The main data collection should take place after obtaining the necessary institutional permissions. Respondents should be informed about the research purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality



arrangements, and intended use of the data. Completed questionnaires should be checked for missing responses, duplicate submissions, and other quality concerns before analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis is planned in several stages using SPSS and SmartPLS 4. Data screening and descriptive statistics. The initial stage involves checking questionnaire completeness, coding responses, examining missing data, and identifying potentially invalid response patterns. Descriptive statistics are then used to summarize respondent characteristics and response distributions. Frequencies and percentages may describe categorical characteristics, while means and standard deviations may summarize questionnaire responses where appropriate. Measurement model assessment. SmartPLS 4 is planned for evaluating the measurement model. The assessment should examine indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Commonly applied criteria include indicator loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The selected thresholds and any decisions to remove indicators should be justified and reported transparently. Structural model assessment. Once the measurement model demonstrates acceptable quality, the structural relationships can be assessed. The analysis should examine collinearity, path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and relevant predictive measures where appropriate. Bootstrapping can be used to evaluate the statistical significance and confidence intervals of the estimated relationships. Mediation analysis. Institutional competitiveness is proposed as a mediator between each GUG principle and students' university-selection decisions. Indirect effects should therefore be evaluated through bootstrapping. The analysis should report the estimated indirect effect, confidence interval, and significance level, alongside the corresponding direct effect. Mediation should not be concluded solely because individual direct relationships are statistically significant. The study should report actual estimates, confidence intervals, and statistical results only after the survey data have been collected and analyzed. At the current drafting stage, no empirical path coefficients, significance values, or model-fit conclusions can be reported because the underlying respondent data have not been provided.

Research Ethics and Methodological Limitations

Participation should be voluntary, and respondents should be informed about the purpose and procedures of the study. Confidentiality should be maintained, personal information should be minimized, and results should be presented in aggregate form. Several methodological limitations require attention. First, the population figures in the original draft need verification to ensure that they correspond to the eligible student population. Second, the planned sample allocation does not establish that the final sample will be representative; this depends on the sampling frame and actual respondent selection. Third, a cross-sectional survey cannot establish temporal precedence or definitive causal relationships. Finally, the absence of primary survey data means that the present methodology describes a proposed empirical investigation rather than a completed statistical study. Overall, these methodological procedures provide a structured basis for examining the relationships between Good University Governance, institutional



competitiveness, and students' university-selection decisions at the three selected private higher education institutions in Banten Province.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Profile and Distribution of the Research Population

The study focuses on three private higher education institutions in Banten Province: Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT), Universitas Serang Raya (UNSERA), and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. According to the research draft, these institutions have a combined population of 21,000 individuals, with UMT accounting for the largest share.

Table 4. Distribution of the Research Population

No.	Higher Education Institution	Reported Population	Population Share
1	Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang (UMT)	12,000	57.14%
2	Universitas Serang Raya (UNSERA)	8,000	38.10%
3	STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang	1,000	4.76%
	Total	21,000	100.00%

Source: Research draft; percentages calculated from reported population figures.

As shown in Table 4, UMT represents 57.14% of the combined population, followed by UNSERA at 38.10% and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang at 4.76%. This distribution indicates that the institutions contribute unequally to the proposed study population. Proportional sample allocation is therefore appropriate as a planning approach to reflect the relative population sizes of the participating institutions. The institutional distribution provides context for examining whether governance practices and institutional competitiveness are associated with students' university-choice decisions. However, population size alone does not establish differences in governance quality, competitiveness, or student preferences. These relationships must be assessed using survey measurements and statistical analysis.

Sample Size Calculation and Proportional Allocation

The proposed sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula with a margin of error of 7%. Based on the population of 21,000 reported in the research draft. The calculated sample size is approximately 202 respondents. This figure is used as the proposed sample target.

Table 5. Sample Size Calculation

Parameter	Value
Total population (N)	21,000
Margin of error (e)	0.07
Squared margin of error (e ²)	0.0049
Ne ²	102.90



Denominator (1 + Ne ²)	103.90
Calculated sample size	202.12
Planned sample size	202

Source: Author's calculation based on the research draft.

To distribute the planned sample across the three institutions, proportional allocation was applied using the following formula:

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{N} \times n$$

Where n_i is the sample allocated to institution i , N_i is its population, N is the total population, and n is the planned total sample.

Table 5. Proportional Sample Allocation

Institution	Population	Population Share	Unrounded Allocation	Planned Sample
UMT	12,000	57.14%	115.43	115
UNSERA	8,000	38.10%	76.95	77
STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang	1,000	4.76%	9.62	10
Total	21,000	100.00%	202.00*	202

Note: Individual allocations are rounded to whole respondents.

The allocation assigns 115 respondents to UMT, 77 to UNSERA, and 10 to STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. The resulting sample shares are 56.93%, 38.12%, and 4.95%, respectively.

Table 6. Comparison of Population and Planned Sample Shares

Institution	Population Share	Planned Sample Share	Difference
UMT	57.14%	56.93%	-0.21 percentage points
UNSERA	38.10%	38.12%	+0.02 percentage points
STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang	4.76%	4.95%	+0.19 percentage points
Total	100.00%	100.00%	0.00 percentage points

The comparison demonstrates that the planned sample broadly reflects the population distribution. The small differences arise from rounding the institutional allocations to whole respondents. However, these figures describe the planned sample, not the number of respondents who actually completed the questionnaire. The achieved sample, response rate, and final institutional distribution must be reported after data



collection Furthermore, Slovin's formula alone does not establish that the sample provides sufficient statistical power for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The adequacy of the final sample should also be evaluated in relation to model complexity, anticipated effect sizes, significance levels, and statistical power.

Accreditation Profile and Institutional Competitive Context

The research draft presents an accreditation profile of 18 higher education institutions operating in different areas of Banten Province. The reported categories provide a preliminary overview of the competitive environment in which private higher education institutions operate.

Table 7. Reported Accreditation Profile of Higher Education Institutions in Banten Province

No.	Institution	Area	Reported Accreditation	Year
1	Universitas Bina Nusantara, Alam Sutera	Tangerang area	Unggul (A)	2022
2	Universitas Multimedia Nusantara	Tangerang area	Unggul (A)	2021
3	Universitas Pelita Harapan	Tangerang area	Unggul (A)	2023
4	Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang	Tangerang area	Unggul (A)	2025
5	Universitas Pamulang	Tangerang area	Baik Sekali	2024
6	Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf	Tangerang area	Baik Sekali	2025
7	International University Liaison Indonesia	Tangerang area	Cukup (C)	2023
8	Universitas Pramita Indonesia	Tangerang area	Cukup (C)	2019
9	Universitas Serang Raya	Serang City	Baik Sekali	2025
10	UPI Kampus Serang	Serang City	Baik Sekali	2021
11	Universitas Bina Bangsa	Serang City	Baik (B)	2021
12	Universitas Banten Jaya	Serang City	Baik (B)	2024
13	Universitas Banten (formerly STIE Banten, as identified in the draft)	Serang City	Baik (B)	2023
14	Universitas Primagraha	Serang City	Baik (B)	2022
15	Universitas Mathla'ul Anwar	Pandeglang Regency	Baik Sekali	2022
16	STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang	Pandeglang Regency	Baik (B)	2024
17	STISIP Banten Raya	Pandeglang Regency	Baik (B)	2023
18	Universitas La Tansa Mashiro	Lebak Regency	Baik (B)	2020

Source: Research draft. Names, categories, effective dates, and institutional status require verification against official accreditation records before publication.

Based on the reported entries, the distribution of accreditation categories is as follows.

Table 8. Distribution of Reported Accreditation Categories

Accreditation Category	Number of Institutions	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Unggul (A)	4	22.2%	22.2%
Baik Sekali	5	27.8%	50.0%
Baik (B)	7	38.9%	88.9%
Cukup (C)	2	11.1%	100.0%



Total	18	100.0%	—
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Source: Author's calculation based on the 18 entries in the research draft.

The largest reported category is Baik (B), representing 38.9% of the listed institutions. Baik Sekali accounts for 27.8%, Unggul (A) for 22.2%, and Cukup (C) for 11.1%. Institutions classified as Unggul or Baik Sekali jointly account for 50.0% of the list. The tables indicate variation in the accreditation categories reported in the draft. Such variation provides context for investigating institutional competitiveness, but it does not directly measure competitiveness or establish differences in governance quality. Accreditation is an external quality-assurance indicator, whereas competitiveness may include educational quality, reputation, graduate employability, innovation, student services, affordability, and the ability to attract prospective students.

Table 9. Geographical Distribution of Listed Institutions

Area	Number of Institutions	Percentage
Tangerang area	8	44.4%
Serang City	6	33.3%
Pandeglang Regency	3	16.7%
Lebak Regency	1	5.6%
Total	18	100.0%

The Tangerang area accounts for 44.4% of the listed institutions, followed by Serang City at 33.3%, Pandeglang Regency at 16.7%, and Lebak Regency at 5.6%. The list should not be interpreted as a complete census of private higher education institutions in Banten Province unless its coverage has been verified. This identifies UMT as Unggul (A), UNSERA as Baik Sekali, and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang as Baik (B). These classifications should be checked against current official records before publication.

Research Constructs and Descriptive Results Framework

The study conceptualizes Good University Governance as a multidimensional construct comprising transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. Institutional competitiveness is positioned as a mediating variable, while students' university-choice decisions constitute the outcome variable.

Table 10. Operational Research Constructs and Their Analytical Focus

Construct	Conceptual Dimension	Proposed Analytical Focus
Good University Governance	Transparency	Availability, clarity, and accessibility of institutional information
Good University Governance	Accountability	Responsibility for decisions, performance, and institutional outcomes
Good University Governance	Responsibility	Compliance with relevant regulations and fulfillment of institutional obligations



Construct	Conceptual Dimension	Proposed Analytical Focus
Good University Governance	Independence	Autonomy and freedom from inappropriate external intervention
Good University Governance	Fairness	Equitable treatment and nondiscriminatory access to institutional services
Institutional competitiveness	Mediating variable	Students' perceptions of the institution's relative advantages and attractiveness
Students' university-choice decisions	Outcome variable	The decision to select or enroll at the institution

Source: Research framework described in the draft. Specific questionnaire items and measurement scales must be finalized from the study instrument.

The five governance dimensions provide the proposed basis for assessing how institutional management may be associated with students' perceptions of educational quality and institutional attractiveness. Transparency may reduce information asymmetry, while accountability and responsibility may strengthen perceptions of reliability. Independence may indicate integrity in institutional decision-making, and fairness may contribute to perceptions of equitable treatment. These mechanisms are theoretically plausible, but their actual presence and strength cannot be established from population and accreditation figures alone. Questionnaire data are required to determine whether respondents perceive these governance practices and whether those perceptions are associated with competitiveness and university-choice decisions.

Integrated Findings, Statistical Testing, and Research Implications

The calculations establish four preliminary findings. First, the reported research population totals 21,000 individuals across the three participating institutions. Second, the proposed sample target is approximately 202 respondents, allocated proportionally as 115 for UMT, 77 for UNSERA, and 10 for STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang. Third, the 18 accreditation entries are distributed across four reported categories, with Baik (B) representing the largest category at 38.9%. Fourth, the listed institutions are concentrated in the Tangerang area and Serang City, which together account for 77.8% of the entries.

Table 11. Summary of Calculated Results

Indicator	Calculated Result	Interpretation
Total reported population	21,000	Combined population of the three focal institutions
Proposed sample target	202	Planned sample based on Slovin's formula
UMT sample allocation	115 (56.93%)	Largest planned institutional allocation



Indicator	Calculated Result	Interpretation
UNSERA sample allocation	77 (38.12%)	Second-largest planned allocation
STAI Syekh Manshur sample allocation	10 (4.95%)	Smallest planned institutional allocation
Unggul (A) category	4 institutions (22.2%)	Reported share of listed institutions
Baik Sekali category	5 institutions (27.8%)	Reported share of listed institutions
Baik (B) category	7 institutions (38.9%)	Largest reported category
Cukup (C) category	2 institutions (11.1%)	Smallest reported category
Tangerang area and Serang City	14 institutions (77.8%)	Combined geographical share

Source: Author's calculations based on the research draft; percentages may differ slightly because of rounding.

The principal implication is methodological rather than causal. The population distribution supports proportional allocation as a practical sampling strategy, while the accreditation and geographical profiles establish context for the empirical investigation. Neither set of calculations demonstrates that stronger governance produces greater competitiveness or that competitiveness determines students' university-choice decisions. The empirical model should examine both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. Specifically, the analysis should determine whether the five dimensions of Good University Governance are associated with institutional competitiveness and whether competitiveness mediates the relationship between governance and students' university-choice decisions.

Table 12. Proposed Structural Relationships and Required Empirical Evidence

Relationship	Analytical Purpose	Required Result
Transparency Institutional competitiveness	→ Assess the relationship between transparency and competitiveness	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test
Accountability Institutional competitiveness	→ Assess the relationship between accountability and competitiveness	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test
Responsibility Institutional competitiveness	→ Assess the relationship between responsibility and competitiveness	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test
Independence Institutional competitiveness	→ Assess the relationship between independence and competitiveness	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test
Fairness → Institutional competitiveness	Assess the relationship between fairness and competitiveness	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test



Relationship	Analytical Purpose	Required Result
Institutional competitiveness → Students' university-choice decisions	Assess relationship between competitiveness and choice decisions	Path coefficient, confidence interval, and significance test
Governance dimensions → Students' university-choice decisions	Assess direct relationships if specified in the model	Direct-effect estimates and significance tests
Governance dimensions → Institutional competitiveness → Students' university-choice decisions	Assess the proposed mediating role of competitiveness	Indirect-effect estimates and bootstrapped confidence intervals

Note: These are proposed analytical relationships, not empirical findings. The final set of paths must follow the approved conceptual framework and hypotheses.

Mediation should be evaluated through estimated indirect effects and bootstrapped confidence intervals rather than inferred from the significance of individual paths alone. The interpretation should distinguish indirect effects from direct effects and report estimates and uncertainty. The final empirical Results section should report respondent characteristics and descriptive statistics, measurement-model evaluation, structural-model assessment, direct and indirect effects, and hypothesis-testing outcomes. Unsupported hypotheses must be reported as such, and nonsignificant findings should not be reframed as evidence of a positive effect. From a practical perspective, the framework may help institutional leaders identify which governance practices are most closely associated with students' perceptions of institutional competitiveness. However, specific managerial recommendations should be based on empirical results rather than sampling calculations or accreditation classifications alone.

If the study relies on a cross-sectional questionnaire, findings should be interpreted as statistical relationships rather than definitive evidence of causation. PLS-SEM can estimate proposed direct and indirect relationships, but the research design does not establish temporal precedence or eliminate alternative explanations. The available calculations establish the study's preliminary institutional profile and sampling plan, but the central research question remains empirically unresolved. Actual questionnaire data and statistical outputs are necessary to determine whether Good University Governance is associated with institutional competitiveness and whether competitiveness mediates its relationship with students' university-choice decisions.

Transparency as the Foundation of Information Accessibility and Prospective Students' Trust

Transparency represents a fundamental dimension of Good University Governance (GUG) because it determines the extent to which higher education institutions provide accessible, accurate, relevant, and comprehensible information to their stakeholders. In the context of student recruitment, transparency is particularly important because prospective students and their families must make educational decisions that involve substantial



financial commitments, long-term time investments, and expectations regarding future employment and professional development (Susilawati et al., 2024). Consequently, the decision to select a university cannot be understood merely as a preference for a particular educational institution; rather, it constitutes a process of evaluating information, assessing risks, comparing alternatives, and determining whether an institution can provide educational value consistent with individual aspirations and available resources.

The importance of transparency becomes more evident when higher education is conceptualized as a service characterized by information asymmetry. Prospective students generally possess less information than university administrators regarding the actual quality of academic programs, the consistency of administrative services, the availability of educational facilities, and the effectiveness of institutional quality assurance mechanisms. Although universities may publish promotional materials describing their advantages, prospective students cannot always independently verify whether the promised benefits correspond to actual institutional performance (Yusuf, 2025). This asymmetry creates uncertainty concerning the quality of the educational experience that students will receive after enrollment. Transparency can reduce this uncertainty by making relevant institutional information available before prospective students commit to a particular university.

From this perspective, transparency functions as an informational mechanism that enables prospective students to evaluate institutional credibility. Information regarding tuition fees, admission requirements, academic regulations, accreditation status, curriculum structure, scholarship opportunities, student support services, and graduate outcomes provides a foundation for rational comparison. The usefulness of such information, however, depends not only on its availability but also on its completeness, accuracy, timeliness, consistency, and comprehensibility (Nurul & Yuwono, 2025). An institution may technically disclose its tuition fees while failing to communicate additional expenses associated with laboratory activities, internships, examinations, research, or final projects. Such disclosure would satisfy a limited interpretation of openness but would not necessarily enable prospective students to estimate the actual financial implications of enrollment.

Financial transparency is particularly consequential because educational affordability extends beyond the nominal tuition fee. Prospective students and their families must consider the total anticipated cost of attendance, including direct educational expenses and indirect expenditures associated with transportation, accommodation, learning materials, and living costs (Hart & Rodgers, 2023). When universities communicate these expenses clearly, families can evaluate the relationship between financial capacity and expected educational benefits. Conversely, incomplete financial information may produce unrealistic expectations, increase the perceived risk of enrollment, and undermine institutional credibility when additional expenses emerge after registration. Therefore, transparency can contribute to the development of trust by reducing discrepancies between expectations established before enrollment and experiences encountered afterward.

Beyond financial information, transparency concerning academic quality enables prospective students to assess the substantive value of an educational program. Published curricula, information about lecturers' qualifications, descriptions of learning outcomes, accreditation records, internship opportunities, research activities, and graduate employment information can help applicants determine whether an institution's academic



offerings correspond to their professional objectives (Qasim et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the existence of such information should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of educational excellence. The analytical value of disclosure depends on whether the information is sufficiently specific, verifiable, and connected to actual institutional performance (Chain et al., 2025). For example, a university that publishes graduate employment statistics should ideally explain the measurement period, the proportion of graduates included in the calculation, the definition of employment, and the methodology used to collect the data. Such practices improve interpretability and reduce the possibility that institutional achievements are presented selectively.

Transparency also has implications for the perceived professionalism of university administration. When information is organized systematically, updated regularly, and communicated consistently across official websites, admission portals, brochures, and administrative offices, prospective students may infer that the institution possesses established procedures and reliable information-management systems (Sentosa et al., 2025). This inference can contribute to a positive institutional image even before applicants directly experience the educational services being offered. Conversely, contradictory information across communication channels may indicate weaknesses in internal coordination, administrative control, or institutional accountability. In this sense, transparency can influence prospective students' judgments not only through the substantive content of disclosed information but also through the quality of the processes used to communicate it.

An additional analytical consideration concerns the distinction between transparency as an institutional practice and transparency as a stakeholder perception. The publication of information is an organizational activity, whereas the perception that an institution is transparent depends on whether stakeholders can locate, understand, evaluate, and use that information. These dimensions may not necessarily coincide. A university may maintain an extensive online information repository, yet prospective students may still experience difficulty navigating the website, interpreting administrative terminology, or obtaining clarification regarding specific requirements (Baliyan & Mokoena, 2024). Consequently, effective transparency requires communication mechanisms that accommodate different levels of digital literacy, educational background, language proficiency, and access to technology.

Transparency must also be balanced with legitimate confidentiality and the protection of personal information. Good governance does not require unrestricted disclosure of all institutional records. Rather, it requires a defensible distinction between information that should be publicly accessible, information that should be disclosed to authorized stakeholders, and information that must remain confidential under applicable regulations. Financial accountability, admission procedures, academic standards, and aggregate performance indicators generally support public scrutiny, whereas individual student records and confidential personnel information require appropriate safeguards. The ability to establish this distinction demonstrates that transparency is a structured governance principle rather than an indiscriminate publication practice.

In relation to institutional competitiveness, transparency may strengthen a university's position by reducing the information costs incurred by prospective students during the selection process. When reliable information is readily available, applicants can



compare competing institutions more efficiently and assess which institution offers the most appropriate combination of educational quality, affordability, academic relevance, and administrative convenience (Wan et al., 2023). This mechanism is especially important in an increasingly competitive higher education environment, where institutions must differentiate themselves through credible evidence rather than promotional claims alone. However, the extent to which transparency affects actual enrollment decisions remains an empirical question. The availability of information may improve institutional attractiveness without necessarily becoming the decisive consideration for every applicant, particularly when financial constraints, geographical accessibility, family preferences, and program availability exert stronger influences.

Accordingly, the relationship between transparency and prospective students' decisions should be examined through indicators that capture both information availability and perceived usefulness. Relevant indicators include the clarity of tuition information, accessibility of academic regulations, accuracy of accreditation information, consistency across communication channels, ease of obtaining clarification, and perceived completeness of admission information. Where possible, survey findings should be complemented by an audit of institutional websites, admission documents, and communication procedures. Such an approach makes it possible to distinguish between institutional disclosure practices and prospective students' subjective interpretations of those practices, thereby producing a more comprehensive explanation of transparency within the GUG framework.

Accountability, Service Quality, and Institutional Credibility

Accountability constitutes a central governance principle because it establishes the obligation of higher education institutions to explain, justify, and take responsibility for their decisions, activities, resource allocation, and organizational performance. Unlike transparency, which emphasizes the availability of information, accountability concerns the extent to which institutional authorities can demonstrate that their decisions are consistent with established standards, organizational objectives, legal requirements, and stakeholder expectations (Putri, 2025). Transparency and accountability are therefore complementary but conceptually distinct. Information disclosure provides the foundation for scrutiny, whereas accountability requires the existence of mechanisms through which institutional conduct can be evaluated, questioned, corrected, and improved.

In higher education, accountability operates across several interconnected domains. Academic accountability concerns the implementation of curricula, the achievement of learning outcomes, the qualifications and performance of teaching personnel, the fairness of assessment procedures, and the integrity of academic research. Administrative accountability concerns the reliability of registration, scheduling, academic record management, graduation processing, and student support services. Financial accountability involves the responsible use of institutional resources, the implementation of appropriate internal controls, and the justification of expenditure in relation to institutional objectives. These domains collectively determine whether a university can demonstrate that its formal commitments are supported by consistent organizational practices.

The relationship between accountability and institutional credibility can be explained through the reduction of perceived operational risk. Prospective students generally cannot observe the full range of a university's internal processes before



enrollment. They must therefore rely on available indicators to estimate whether the institution can deliver its educational commitments consistently. Clear academic regulations, predictable administrative procedures, documented service standards, and accessible complaint mechanisms may function as signals that the institution has established procedures for controlling performance and correcting deficiencies. Such signals are particularly relevant when prospective students compare universities that appear similar in terms of program offerings, location, and tuition costs.

Accountability becomes especially important when institutional performance does not meet stakeholder expectations. In any complex educational organization, delays, administrative errors, disagreements concerning assessment, and service failures may occur. The existence of such problems does not automatically demonstrate a failure of governance. A more meaningful assessment concerns how the institution identifies, explains, addresses, and prevents the recurrence of those problems. A university with an accessible complaint system, clearly defined response periods, documented follow-up procedures, and mechanisms for reviewing recurring problems may demonstrate stronger accountability than an institution that merely advertises an absence of complaints. This distinction shifts the analytical emphasis from the appearance of organizational perfection to the capacity for responsible institutional response.

Complaint-handling mechanisms are therefore an important manifestation of accountability. An effective system should enable students to communicate concerns safely, receive acknowledgment, understand the steps involved in resolving their cases, and obtain explanations of the decisions made. Where complaints reveal recurring administrative deficiencies, the institution should be capable of translating individual cases into organizational learning. For example, repeated complaints regarding delays in academic documentation may indicate the need to revise workflows, clarify staff responsibilities, or introduce digital tracking systems. In this situation, accountability becomes a mechanism for improving service quality rather than merely a procedure for responding to individual dissatisfaction.

The relationship between accountability and service quality is particularly significant because institutional credibility depends partly on the consistency between stated commitments and actual performance. Universities may communicate promises concerning responsive administration, qualified lecturers, modern learning facilities, and student-centered services. Accountability helps determine whether these commitments are supported by measurable standards and corrective mechanisms. When service standards are clear and their implementation can be evaluated, institutional performance becomes more predictable. Predictability, in turn, may reduce the perceived risk associated with enrollment and strengthen confidence in the institution's capacity to fulfill its responsibilities.

Accreditation can contribute to this process by providing a formal reference point for evaluating institutional and program-level quality assurance. Nevertheless, accreditation should not be treated as a comprehensive substitute for accountability. It provides information within a defined evaluation framework, but it cannot necessarily capture every aspect of everyday service delivery, responsiveness to student concerns, or consistency in implementing institutional policies (Wickramasinghe et al., 2024). Prospective students may therefore consider accreditation alongside other sources of



evidence, including student experiences, curriculum relevance, graduate outcomes, lecturer accessibility, and administrative reliability. The analytical distinction is important because formal recognition and stakeholder experience represent different dimensions of institutional performance.

Furthermore, accountability can strengthen institutional reputation through repeated interactions with stakeholders. Students who experience consistent academic procedures and reliable administrative support may develop greater confidence in the institution's organizational competence. They may subsequently communicate favorable experiences to prospective applicants through personal recommendations, alumni networks, and digital communication platforms. Conversely, unresolved complaints, inconsistent assessment practices, and unexplained administrative decisions may circulate through similar channels and undermine institutional credibility. Reputation can therefore be understood partly as a cumulative outcome of accountability practices experienced over time.

However, accountability may have different implications for institutional competitiveness depending on whether it is substantive or merely procedural. Procedural accountability emphasizes the completion of reporting requirements, the production of formal documents, and compliance with established administrative routines. Substantive accountability goes further by examining whether institutional decisions produce the intended benefits, whether stakeholders receive adequate explanations, and whether identified deficiencies lead to meaningful improvements. An institution may satisfy formal reporting requirements while failing to address persistent problems affecting students. Consequently, an assessment of accountability should examine not only the existence of policies and reports but also their implementation and consequences.

From a methodological perspective, accountability should be examined using multiple indicators, including the clarity of service standards, consistency of rule enforcement, traceability of administrative decisions, accessibility of complaint mechanisms, timeliness of complaint resolution, and evidence of corrective action. Student perceptions can provide important information about experienced accountability, but they should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of the institution's entire internal governance system. Documentary analysis, administrative records, service-performance reports, and interviews with relevant personnel can help establish whether perceived accountability corresponds to organizational practice.

Within the proposed relationship between GUG and prospective students' decisions, accountability may influence choice directly by strengthening confidence in the institution and indirectly by improving perceived service quality and competitiveness. Prospective students may be more willing to consider a university when they believe that its academic and administrative commitments are supported by reliable procedures. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this relationship depends on the visibility of accountability practices and the extent to which prospective students regard them as relevant to their educational decisions. This relationship should therefore be examined empirically rather than presumed from the existence of institutional policies.

Responsibility and the Social Legitimacy of Higher Education Institutions



Responsibility, or *responsibilitas*, refers to the obligation of higher education institutions to comply with applicable regulations, fulfill their educational mandates, protect stakeholder interests, and contribute to the broader social environment in which they operate. Within the GUG framework, responsibility extends beyond legal compliance because universities are expected to demonstrate that their activities generate educational and social value. Higher education institutions exercise significant influence through the development of human capital, the production and dissemination of knowledge, the preparation of professional personnel, and the provision of expertise that can contribute to regional and national development (Hakim et al., 2026). Their responsibilities therefore encompass both the quality of internal educational processes and the consequences of institutional activities for society.

The educational responsibility of universities begins with the provision of learning environments that support students' intellectual, professional, and personal development. This responsibility includes the implementation of relevant curricula, access to qualified academic personnel, appropriate learning facilities, fair academic assessment, and adequate student support. It also includes the protection of students' rights and the establishment of procedures for addressing discrimination, harassment, academic misconduct, and other circumstances that may undermine the educational experience. Responsibility is consequently not limited to the existence of formal policies; it also concerns the extent to which those policies are implemented and experienced by students.

Compliance with higher education regulations constitutes an essential dimension of institutional responsibility. Universities are expected to operate within the applicable legal and regulatory framework governing academic standards, institutional administration, student protection, and educational quality assurance. However, regulatory compliance should be distinguished from the broader concept of social responsibility. Compliance establishes minimum obligations, whereas social responsibility concerns how institutions use their capabilities, knowledge, and resources to address relevant societal needs. A university may comply with formal regulations without necessarily demonstrating substantial engagement with local development, environmental sustainability, educational inequality, or community capacity-building. Consequently, responsibility should be assessed through both regulatory and societal dimensions.

The social responsibility of higher education institutions is particularly relevant because universities operate within communities that provide human resources, cultural knowledge, economic opportunities, and social legitimacy. Institutions may contribute to their surrounding environments through community-based research, professional consultation, public education, health promotion, entrepreneurship development, environmental programs, and partnerships with local organizations. Such activities can create reciprocal relationships in which academic knowledge informs practical problem-solving while community experiences enrich teaching and research. This relationship is important because it demonstrates that the university's institutional value extends beyond the awarding of academic qualifications.

Scholarships and financial assistance represent one dimension of responsibility, particularly in relation to educational access and the reduction of financial barriers. However, responsibility should not be evaluated exclusively through the number of scholarships awarded or the amount of financial assistance distributed. A broader



assessment should consider whether assistance reaches students who need it, whether eligibility criteria are fair, whether the application process is accessible, and whether the support contributes to student retention and academic progression (Xu & Keat, 2024). Other forms of responsibility, including disability accommodation, academic advising, psychological support, career guidance, and emergency assistance, may also contribute to equitable educational participation.

The connection between responsibility and institutional legitimacy can be explained through the alignment between institutional conduct and societal expectations. Legitimacy refers to the perception that an institution's activities and objectives are appropriate within the broader social and normative environment in which it operates. Universities may possess formal authorization to operate, yet their social legitimacy also depends on whether stakeholders believe that they fulfill meaningful educational and societal functions. Institutions that demonstrate sustained engagement with community needs may strengthen their perceived relevance, particularly in regions where educational access, workforce development, and local economic transformation are important priorities.

For prospective students, social responsibility may contribute to institutional attractiveness in several ways. First, community engagement can provide evidence that academic programs have practical relevance beyond classroom instruction. Second, sustained partnerships with local organizations may create opportunities for internships, applied projects, fieldwork, and professional networking. Third, institutional commitment to inclusion and social development may appeal to applicants who seek an educational environment consistent with their personal values. Fourth, community engagement can strengthen institutional relationships with employers and public organizations, potentially creating opportunities for collaborative learning and graduate development.

Nevertheless, the influence of social responsibility on enrollment decisions should not be overstated. Prospective students may value socially responsible institutional behavior without considering it a primary selection criterion. Financial affordability, geographical proximity, family expectations, program availability, institutional reputation, and employment prospects may remain more influential in particular contexts. Furthermore, awareness of social responsibility activities varies among applicants. An institution may conduct meaningful community programs, but those programs may have little influence on prospective students if they are not communicated effectively or if their outcomes cannot be verified. Accordingly, the relationship between responsibility and institutional competitiveness depends on both substantive performance and stakeholder awareness.

A critical distinction must also be made between sustained social responsibility and symbolic institutional communication. Universities may publish photographs of community events, announce partnerships, or report the number of activities conducted without demonstrating whether these activities address identified needs or produce measurable benefits. Such practices may generate short-term visibility but provide limited evidence of meaningful social contribution. A stronger assessment examines the continuity of engagement, the participation of community stakeholders, the relevance of interventions, the resources committed, and the outcomes achieved. For example, a literacy initiative should ideally be evaluated not only by the number of training sessions conducted but also by changes in participants' literacy competencies, continued access to learning resources,



or the development of local educational capacity. Responsibility also has implications for organizational sustainability. Institutions that respond to societal needs can develop stronger relationships with communities, public agencies, employers, and civil society organizations (Manishimwe et al., 2025). These relationships may support collaborative research, student placements, professional development, and the identification of emerging educational needs. In this sense, responsibility can contribute to competitiveness by strengthening the relevance of educational programs and expanding opportunities for collaboration. Nevertheless, such benefits depend on the quality and continuity of partnerships rather than the mere number of institutional agreements.

The empirical assessment of responsibility should therefore distinguish between policy commitments, implemented activities, stakeholder awareness, and demonstrable outcomes. Potential indicators include compliance with educational regulations, accessibility of student support services, fairness of assistance programs, continuity of community engagement, stakeholder participation, and perceived social impact. Where objective evidence is available, program reports, partnership records, beneficiary feedback, and outcome evaluations can complement survey responses. This combination is particularly important because institutional self-reports may emphasize activities while providing insufficient evidence of their effects. Within the proposed GUG model, responsibility may influence prospective students' decisions through perceived institutional legitimacy, social relevance, and educational value. It may also strengthen institutional competitiveness by supporting partnerships, applied learning, and positive stakeholder relationships. However, the proposed relationship requires empirical verification, including an assessment of whether prospective students recognize institutional responsibility and whether that recognition affects their evaluation of competing universities.

Independence and the Integrity of Academic Decision-Making

Independence is a governance principle that protects the integrity of institutional decision-making by requiring academic and organizational judgments to be based on educational purposes, relevant evidence, established procedures, and applicable regulations rather than inappropriate external pressures or private interests. Within higher education, independence is closely connected to academic freedom, professional autonomy, institutional integrity, and the capacity to preserve educational standards when confronted with competing political, economic, or organizational interests. It is particularly important because universities are expected not only to transmit existing knowledge but also to evaluate evidence critically, generate new knowledge, and facilitate intellectual inquiry.

Independence should not be interpreted as institutional isolation or unrestricted autonomy. Universities operate within legal frameworks and depend on relationships with governments, funding agencies, employers, professional associations, communities, and other educational institutions. These relationships can improve educational relevance, provide financial resources, and create opportunities for research and innovation. The governance challenge is therefore not to eliminate external influence but to ensure that such influence is managed through transparent, legitimate, and academically defensible processes. Collaboration with external stakeholders is compatible with independence when



institutional decisions remain consistent with academic standards and when conflicts of interest are appropriately disclosed and managed.

At the academic level, independence concerns the ability of lecturers and researchers to conduct teaching, research, assessment, and scholarly discussion according to professional standards. Academic evaluation should be based on relevant learning outcomes and defensible criteria rather than personal relationships, political affiliations, financial considerations, or other irrelevant factors. Similarly, research priorities may respond to societal and industry needs, but the interpretation and communication of research findings should remain protected from improper interference. Such safeguards are important because the credibility of academic work depends on the perceived and actual integrity of the processes through which knowledge is produced and evaluated. At the institutional level, independence is reflected in the consistency of governance procedures, the professional basis of appointments, the management of conflicts of interest, and the separation of legitimate organizational oversight from inappropriate interference in academic judgments. Clear decision-making procedures can help ensure that institutional authority is exercised according to established responsibilities rather than personal preferences. Where decision-making authority is concentrated without adequate procedural safeguards, stakeholders may question whether academic policies, appointments, resource allocation, or disciplinary decisions are determined by legitimate institutional priorities.

The relationship between independence and institutional credibility is particularly significant because academic quality depends partly on the ability of universities to make difficult decisions according to defensible standards. For example, an institution may face pressure to modify assessment results, prioritize particular applicants, favor specific research findings, or allocate academic opportunities based on personal connections. Effective governance mechanisms should protect decision-making from such pressures and provide procedures for reviewing suspected conflicts of interest. These mechanisms help maintain confidence that academic achievements reflect genuine competence and that institutional decisions can be justified on professional grounds. For prospective students, independence may be less visible than tuition fees, facilities, or administrative convenience. Applicants may have limited access to information about internal governance structures and may not possess sufficient evidence to evaluate the independence of senior institutional decision-making. Consequently, the relationship between independence and enrollment choice may operate indirectly through institutional reputation, perceived academic integrity, confidence in assessment procedures, and the credibility of educational qualifications.

Academic integrity can serve as an observable manifestation of independence. When students believe that academic assessment is conducted consistently, lecturers apply professional standards, and disciplinary procedures are fair, they may infer that the institution protects educational quality from inappropriate personal or external interests. Similarly, public evidence of credible research, professional academic leadership, transparent appointment criteria, and consistent enforcement of academic regulations may contribute to institutional credibility. These indicators do not fully capture organizational independence, but they provide more accessible points of evaluation than asking prospective students to assess internal decision-making processes that they cannot directly



observe. Independence may also support institutional competitiveness over the longer term. Universities that protect academic integrity can strengthen the credibility of their qualifications, research outputs, and professional partnerships. This credibility may improve relationships with employers, academic collaborators, funding organizations, and prospective students. Conversely, perceptions that academic decisions are influenced by favoritism or inappropriate external interests may weaken confidence in the institution's educational standards. The competitive

CONCLUSION

Good University Governance provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how private higher education institutions can strengthen institutional credibility, improve service delivery, and develop sustainable competitiveness. In the context of private higher education institutions in Banten Province, the five principles of transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness offer complementary perspectives on how institutional governance may shape the value perceived by prospective students. These principles should not be regarded merely as administrative requirements but as interconnected organizational practices that can influence the quality, reliability, and legitimacy of higher education services. Transparency can reduce information asymmetry by enabling prospective students and their families to access clear and reliable information about tuition fees, academic programmes, accreditation, administrative procedures, and student services. Accountability can strengthen confidence in institutional performance through consistent standards, traceable decisions, and effective complaint-handling mechanisms. Responsibility can enhance institutional legitimacy through regulatory compliance, student protection, and meaningful contributions to society. Independence can protect academic integrity and the credibility of institutional decision-making, while fairness can promote equitable access, consistent treatment, and an inclusive learning environment. The effectiveness of these principles ultimately depends on their implementation and the extent to which stakeholders can observe and experience their practical consequences.

Institutional competitiveness represents a potential mechanism through which governance practices may influence students' university-selection decisions. Improvements in governance may strengthen perceived institutional value through more reliable services, clearer cost information, credible academic provision, responsive administration, and equitable student support. Nevertheless, university choice is a multidimensional decision influenced by factors beyond governance, including affordability, programme availability, geographical accessibility, family expectations, institutional reputation, scholarship opportunities, and perceived employment prospects. Consequently, GUG should be understood as a potentially important contributor to competitiveness rather than the sole determinant of student choice. The proposed study of Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Universitas Serang Raya, and STAI Syekh Manshur Pandeglang provides a contextual framework for examining these relationships across institutions with different population sizes and institutional settings. The proposed sample of 202 respondents, allocated proportionally across the three institutions, offers an initial sampling plan based on the population figures in the research draft. However, the adequacy of this sample for testing the proposed structural relationships must be assessed in relation to statistical



power, model complexity, and the intended scope of institutional comparisons. The population figures, institutional accreditation information, and other contextual data should also be verified before the final manuscript is submitted.

From a managerial perspective, the framework emphasizes the need to integrate governance improvement with measurable educational and service outcomes. Higher education leaders should ensure that public information is accurate and accessible, institutional commitments are fulfilled, student complaints receive appropriate follow-up, academic decisions are professionally governed, and institutional policies are implemented fairly. Such practices should be evaluated through both stakeholder perceptions and, where feasible, documentary or administrative evidence. This approach would enable institutions to assess whether governance reforms generate meaningful improvements rather than relying exclusively on formal compliance or promotional claims.

Finally, the proposed relationships between GUG, institutional competitiveness, and students' university-selection decisions remain to be established through empirical analysis. The application of PLS-SEM and bootstrapping can be used to assess the measurement model, estimate direct and indirect relationships, and evaluate the proposed mediating role of institutional competitiveness. Because a cross-sectional survey cannot conclusively establish causal relationships, the eventual findings should be interpreted in accordance with the study design. The study's contribution will ultimately depend on whether the empirical evidence supports, qualifies, or challenges the proposed framework. By maintaining a clear distinction between conceptual expectations and verified findings, the research can provide a credible basis for understanding how good governance may contribute to the sustainable competitiveness of private higher education institutions in Banten Province.

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