

# Improving university management efficiency through the active participation of students in decision-making

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## Summary

The doctoral thesis analyzes student involvement in decision-making within Romanian higher education institutions, considering active participation as a tool for improving academic management efficiency. Although the legal framework mandates a minimum formal representation of 25% in decision-making bodies, a regulation common across many European

countries, mixed-method research and the academic literature indicate that real participation is perceived as limited, with minimal impact on university performance and student wellbeing.

By correlating theoretical perspectives with international best practices and empirical realities from Romania, the thesis offers a relevant contribution to a multidimensional understanding of university governance. Bibliometric analysis, mixed research methods, and comparative contextualization help identify how student involvement can influence managerial effectiveness.

Based on the findings, four modern scenarios are proposed, adapted to the national context and analyzed in terms of risks, sensitivity, institutional benefits, and financial impact: increasing students' voting weight in rector elections to 25%, introducing participatory budgeting in universities, establishing joint student–faculty committees for each academic program, and raising the number of student representatives on the board of administration from one to two. These scenarios seek to transform student involvement from a formal exercise into an active mechanism of institutional innovation, contributing to the development of a modern, sustainable university culture grounded in authentic partnership between students and institutions.

**Keywords:** students, efficient university management, higher education, student voice, active participation, decision-making process, university–student partnership, modern scenarios.

**Synthesis:** This doctoral thesis explores the role of student participation in university decision-making and the impact of such involvement on the efficiency of higher education management. The analysis includes a bibliometric review of relevant academic literature, a statistical assessment of the effects of higher education on regional economic development, as well as a mixed-methods research involving stakeholders from the Romanian academic environment. Furthermore, the thesis presents a comparative analysis of the most effective international higher education systems from the perspective of student governance. The results contribute to the development of modern student engagement scenarios, adapted to the Romanian national context, highlighting their role in improving university management efficiency.