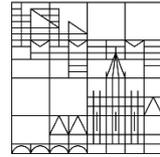




**Universiteit
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Master's Thesis

Student Representatives' Perceived Effectiveness of their Engagement in European University Alliances' Governance Structures

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June 29th, 2022

Abstract

One of the European Commission's main recent policies for intensifying higher education integration is the European Universities Initiative, aiming at establishing transnational higher education alliances for cooperation in research and teaching. A central determinant for the consortia's sustainable success is the university communities' involvement in steering the process within its governance structures – besides academic and administrative staff, this also includes students. This thesis explores student representatives' perceptions of their engagement's effectiveness in alliance governance, operationalized by four dimensions, namely personal, professional, democratic and organizational benefits.

The results of a survey conducted with 67 students from 24 university alliances demonstrate generally high effectiveness ratings in all identified dimensions. Multiple linear regression analysis furthermore shows that higher perceived effectiveness is determined by staff members' positive attitude towards student representatives, an effect which is weaker in alliances with a separate student governance body. A higher discrepancy between expectation and reality regarding the amount of power they are granted in decision-making processes is negatively associated with students' perceived effectiveness. By discussing this contribution both in academic and practical terms, it offers guidance for future research as well as the design of student engagement models in particular and public participation processes in general.

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List of Abbreviations

EEA	European Education Area
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EUI	European Universities Initiative
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution

1 Introduction

I believe we should create European Universities – a network of universities across Europe with programmes that have all their students study abroad and take classes in at least two languages. These European Universities will also be drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence. We should set for ourselves the goal of creating at least 20 of them by 2024. However, we must begin setting up the first of these universities as early as the next academic year, with real European semesters and real European diplomas. (Macron, 2017)

These ambitious goals were part of France's President Emmanuel Macron's comprehensive speech, held at Sorbonne University in 2017. It summarized his vision for the European Union's (EU) future in the realm of higher education (HE) as a vital part of an overall increase in European integration. The significant role that he attributed to HE was swiftly translated into policy action, as the European Commission launched its first call for the establishment of European HE networks in 2019, called the European Universities Initiative (EUI), followed by a second round in 2020. By now, the EUI has resulted in 41 university alliances, including about 280 higher education institutions (HEI) in the EU and beyond (European Commission, 2020b). A third call is currently published and gives opportunity for the formation of more alliances as well as deeper cooperation for the existing ones (European Commission, 2022b). These HE alliances shall contribute to a more innovative, competitive and attractive European HE sector by increasing international cooperation and synergies in education and research.

The selected alliances start their cooperation with a three-year funding period, aiming at establishing the necessary groundwork for continuing and intensifying the joint work in the long term. A central factor for sustainable cooperation between the alliance members is a shared working plan of activities for the first three-year funding period, "supported by the design of relevant and efficient common management structures" (European Commission, 2020a), also referred to as governance structures or governance models (Estermann et al., 2021). Since the 'European universities' are still in their beginning phase, it is crucial to constantly evaluate and, if necessary, adapt the current set-ups to facilitate sustainable long-term cooperation (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2021) – especially because HE has come to be perceived as a driving force for European societal and economic developments (Klemenčič, 2012, p. 632). This pronounced relevance motivates this study's research topic in the context of governance structures as a predictor for successful policy implementation of the European Universities Initiative.

A look at academic literature on the EUI reveals space for new research that the initiative's novelty and its manifold implications have opened up. Recent studies have

explored a number of sub-topics related to the initiative (cf. chapter 2.2); nevertheless there is still a lack of coverage on the alliances' governance models. In one of the few existing pieces of literature, the European Universities Association (EUA) consulted staff members of several alliances and published a report about their governance set-ups (Estermann et al., 2021); yet, proceeding implications of these models are to be examined. The related literature on HE governance focuses almost exclusively on governance models of individual institutions, though the examination of transnational constructs such as those established by the EUI is of considerable significance. However, this particular body of literature can serve as a potential framework to facilitate research on a transnational level, as Bennetot Pruvot and Estermann (2021) point out: "questions revolving around alliance governance remain very close to what is heard in institutional governance debates and reforms across Europe".

In academic debates, HEIs' governance structures have been a salient topic for several decades, initiated by Burton Clark's study on the HE system in 1983 (Dobbins & Jungblut, 2018, p. 1). Nevertheless, the definitions of their organizational specificity are just as heterogenous as the characterizations of universities as a whole (Musselin, 2021, p. 307). This is also associated with the variety of disciplines that have researched HE governance due to its complex character: (1) It is related to historically rooted decision-making structures that entail a variety of stakeholders with diverging interests. (2) Consequently, HE systems are embedded in a multi-level system of supranational, national, regional and institutional processes. (3) Despite a number of specificities, there are parallels to general public sector governance; hence, concepts from political science, public administration, public policy and organizational studies also find application in this area of research. (4) There is an overlap with additional research areas such as HE policy and political economy of education (Dobbins & Jungblut, 2018, pp. 1–2). Derived from these considerations, the bodies of literature are of use for answering research questions in the area HE governance not only on an institutional, but also on a European level – like the question that this study poses.

A closer examination of the EUI framework's policy documents for the design of governance structures shows high flexibility with one clear priority: The Council of the European Union urges the Commission and Member States to "support and encourage the 'European Universities' to increase students and staff involvement in the alliances which is essential for the success, development and implementation of the initiative, namely by including them into the respective governance structure" (Council of the EU, 2021, p. 20). The Commission further states that the alliances should be student-centred and "adopt a challenge-based approach according to which students, academics and external partners

can cooperate in interdisciplinary teams to tackle the biggest issues facing Europe today” (European Commission, 2022b).

In 2020, the Ministerial Communiqué of the Bologna Process, issued by the Ministerial Conference of the European Higher Education Area's member states, defined the participation of students and staff in higher education governance as a fundamental value (Ministerial EHEA Conference, 2020, p. 5), which was included in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, providing guidance to organizations supported by the program (European Commission, 2020a). Hence, student involvement in the alliances is prioritized but the lack of delineation has resulted in various models of its integration in governance structures (Estermann et al., 2021). The focus on young people and their education in EU policy was reinforced by the European Commission's President Ursula von der Leyen's announcement to make 2022 the 'European Year of Youth' (European Commission, 2022d). As Commissioner Mariya Gabriel states, the goal is to “bring a paradigm shift in how we include young people in policy and decision-making” (European Commission, 2021). Considering the importance attributed to a student-centred design, the relevance of effective student representation in the alliances' governance structures as a research topic becomes evident.

Moving from the political to the academic sphere, the significance that researchers attribute to student participation in HE governance structures has changed over time. Again, the institutional university governance level is used as a blueprint for considerations about transnational networks as the latter has not been subject to research so far. Early examples for student participation can be found in the medieval Bologna University, where students had a supervising role equipped with formal power, and at a Paris university during Renaissance, which was co-ruled by a student rector elected by students (Klemenčič, 2012, p. 631).

After a period of little practical and academic attention, the student revolts of the 1960s and 1970s led to a re-emergence of the topic and extensive university governance reforms which resulted in the inclusion of students into governance structures in almost all European countries (ibid.). Student representation in the European Higher Education Area has therefore been titled the strongest in the world (Klemenčič, 2011, p. 1). However, as mentioned above, the historical, political and cultural context of the respective nations have led to a multitude of governance models in European universities (Olier et al., 2021, p. 79), which also applies to the efforts of involving students in decision-making processes (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2018). To combat these national differences, the European Union has made significant attempts to harmonize HE systems, i.a. throughout the Bologna process and the launch of the European Higher Education Area in 2010 (Olier et al., 2021, p. 77). In these processes, the importance of student participation has been stressed

continuously, first and foremost by the umbrella organization of national student unions, the European Student Union, which has been highly involved in policy-making (Klemenčič, 2012, p. 631).

According to prior research, the inclusion of young people in HEI's decision-making bears the potential of bringing significant benefits to both individual students involved and the organization as a whole (explained in detail in chapter 3). Particularly qualitative studies have explored influential factors on the (perceived) effectiveness, role efficacy and satisfaction of student representatives in university governance structures on an institutional level. Another body of literature in the realm of public participation offers both qualitative and quantitative insights into the (perceived) effectiveness of civic participation processes. The studies reveal diverging context-specific definitions of effectiveness, but this study focuses on the success in reaching individual and organizational benefits defined by studies on student participation, a choice that is further explained in chapter 3.2.

Both research areas indicate predictors for student representatives' perceptions of effectiveness, meaning their personal judgement of their engagement's effectiveness. It needs to be noted that high perceived effectiveness can but not necessarily has to imply objective effectiveness as perception is never not subjective. However, the construct is relevant to understand as organizational members' positive perception of their involvement in decision-making procedures contributes significantly to increased motivation, productivity, job satisfaction and consequently to organizational success (Van Loveren, 2007, p. 14). Additionally, studies on public participation define perceived effectiveness as a strong predictor of all kinds of participation: the judgement of whether or not an action will reach its intended outcome determines the likelihood of taking it in the first place (Barrett & Pachi, 2012, p. 347; Hornsey et al., 2006). Hence, understanding the reasons for judging a way of participation as effective or ineffective also helps to explain the motivation to become a student representative and consequently reach a wider and more long-term inclusion of the student body. This wide bottom-up support, in turn, is crucial for sustainable cooperation between the alliances' member institutions (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2021, p. 20). Connecting these considerations back to the policy context mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, this study aims at drawing conclusions on the EUI's claim of a student-centred design. It does so by examining the perceived effectiveness of student representatives in the alliances' governance structures; in particular, the central research question is posed:

How do student representatives in European university alliances' governance structures perceive their engagement's effectiveness?

To answer this question, a survey with student representatives from 24 university alliances is conducted (n=67). Based on the results, effects of variables identified from literature on their perceived effectiveness are tested in a linear regression analysis design. Apart from practical contributions, this study follows up on the existing body of academic literature by testing factors examined through qualitative interviews with student representatives in a quantitative design. Hereby, prior qualitative results can be validated (Stockemer, 2019, p. 9). On the other hand, the transferability of research from the university level as well as public participation and organizational science literature to the novel phenomenon of European university alliances is examined. Capano distills the added value of shedding light on higher education governance from different perspectives into the following quote:

The majority of scholars involved in the analysis of higher education policy tend to be specialists in this particular policy; this means that research findings in the higher education field tend to remain detached from the broader theoretical debate in the political science and public policy sectors. This is rather unfortunate, and a wasted opportunity, since the intrinsic features of higher education policy (the historical survival of universities as institutions, the ongoing internal battle for resources, the intrinsic multilevel-structure of universities and higher education systems, governments' task of coordinating structural needs) are of considerable interest to both political scientists and policy scholars. (Capano, 2011, p. 1622)

Following this introduction, chapter 2 gives an overview of the relevant developments in the higher education policy sector and prior research on the European Universities Initiative. Subsequently, chapter 3 examines the existing body of theoretical literature related to the central phenomena, which leads to the postulation of six hypotheses that are tested by the research design explained in chapter 4. Chapter 5 and 6 present the results of the multiple regression analysis and draw final conclusions and implications for the policy, namely the EUI, and further research.

2 Topic and Research Context

This chapter gives an overview of the EU's role in HE policy. After outlining the historical developments of European HE policy (2.1), the scope and instruments of the European Universities Initiative are outlined (2.2). Subsequently, the limited body of literature, specifically related to EUI governance, is summarized (2.3) and its implications for the present study are presented (2.4).

2.1 History of European Higher Education Policy

In the process of European integration since the 1950s, education has not always taken a central role. In its earlier stages, the focus was limited to economics and trade policy, support for expansion of integration to other policy areas was lacking and therefore, many were not mentioned in the founding treaties. However, this economic cooperation was seen as an interim stage to a more intensive political integration by the EU's 'founding fathers' (De Wit & Verhoeven, 2001, p. 195). This is reflected in the inclusion of vocational training as an economic factor in the treaties establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community (ibid., pp. 195-196). In the 1960s, a number of general statements acknowledged the relevance of educational cooperation, whereas the first meeting of the European Communities' Ministers of Education was only held in 1971. Even then, Member States refused to give up sovereignty due to the national character of educational systems as well the delicate issue of interpreting the founding treaties and therefore, the overall goal of the Communities (ibid., pp. 197-198).

During the following European integration processes in the 1980s and 1990s, EU competences expanded into almost every policy area, including traditionally national sectors. The central steps towards a common higher education policy of the European Community were taken between 1983 and 1992 (ibid., pp. 201-204). Policy involvement increased, motivated by the EU's interest in creating an open European labor market and the attributed role of HEI as a driving force for European identity (Maassen & Musselin, 2009, pp. 4–5). However, due to Member States' hesitance to transfer formal power to the European level with reference to the subsidiarity principle, a focus remained on marginal areas related to mobility programs for staff and students as well as the area of vocational training (ibid.). One of the prime examples is the *European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students* (Erasmus, today: Erasmus+) launched in 1987, which still supports student exchange between universities but has been expanded to further activities which will be outlined later.

With the foundation of the EU by the Treaty on European Union (1992/93), article 126 under the heading "Education, vocational training and youth" established the legal basis for the EU's supporting role in the field of education:

The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. (92/C191/01, 1992)

An intensification of transnational action could be observed with the start of the Bologna Process in 1999, when 29 ministers of education agreed on founding the European Higher Education Area. The support for this declaration on harmonizing higher education qualifications and thereby increasing student mobility across Europe, was most likely higher than for prior supranational efforts because it was an intergovernmental agreement rather than one imposed by the EU. Nevertheless, this convergence effort was complemented by a supranational dimension shortly after, when the Lisbon Summit in 2000 established the European Research Area, dedicated to the integration of research and innovation. Both of these efforts elevated higher education to the top of the EU's agenda (Maassen & Musselin, 2009, pp. 8–9).

Since the 2017 Social Summit in Gothenburg, EU activity in (higher) education policy has peaked once again: EU institutions are aiming at building a European Education Area by 2025, which includes activities in all educational phases – from early childhood to adult training. The efforts, i.a. in the areas of improving quality and equity in education and training as well as digital and green education, are supposed to “build more resilient and inclusive education and training systems” (European Commission, 2022a). The European Commission puts emphasis on HE as a potential driver of societal development in the areas of digitalization, sustainability, social inclusion and democratic participation (European Commission, 2022a). This goes in line with doubling the Erasmus+ budget to €26.2 billion for the funding period 2021-2027 (European Commission, 2022c) with a minimum of 34.6 % reserved for HE (Iskra, 2021). It includes funding for staff and student mobility as well as Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees, Erasmus+ Master Loans and finally the EUI which is explained in the next part.

2.2 The European Universities Initiative

The EUI was launched in 2019 as one of four ‘flagship initiatives’ paving the way for a European Education Area. According to the European Commission, they co-developed the initiative with higher education institutions, student organizations and Member States, with the overarching goal of

strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the emergence by 2024 of some twenty 'European Universities', consisting in bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities. (European Commission, 2022b)

The May 2021 Council Conclusions on the European Universities presented an even more comprehensive set of goals that the alliances shall strive for to contribute to an “innovative,

globally competitive and attractive European Education Area and European Research Area, in full synergy with the European Higher Education Area” (European Commission, 2022b). Namely, these include promoting excellence of higher education, research and innovation, as well as gender equality, inclusiveness and equity. This should facilitate ambitious transnational cooperation and push forward transformation in the higher education sector (ibid.).

Based on award criteria related to the relevance of the EUI proposal, geographical balance, quality of the proposal and implementation, quality of the alliance cooperation arrangements and sustainability and dissemination, 41 alliances were chosen in the first two rounds in 2019 and 2020 (Estermann et al., 2021). A third call closed in March 2022, with the options of funding continuation for existing alliances or the establishment of new ones (European Commission, 2022b). Under the initiative, each selected alliance, consisting of five to eight partner institutions, is funded with €5 million for a period of three years. This timeframe is seen as a pilot phase for developing and testing models for long-term strategic institutional transformation – a process where governance structures take a central role (Estermann et al., 2021, p. 6). The Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020 specifically defines the arrangement of appropriate structures as a selection criterion; they should clearly distribute responsibilities between the alliance partners and facilitate efficient decision-making, conflict resolution, risk management and reporting and communication between the participating organizations (European Commission, 2020a, p. 135).

Due to its recent launch, literature on the EUI is still limited, and most aspects are yet to be researched. The initiative has been predominantly mentioned in contexts of current developments in European higher education policy. More specific studies focus on alliance formation (Gunn, 2020) and the alliances' potentials (Gunn, 2021), particularly in areas such as their contribution to a more sustainable society (Arnaldo Valdés & Gómez Comendador, 2022; Pichler et al., 2021), providing intercultural skills (Boersma, 2021), fostering multilingualism or showing an example of “everyday Europeanhood” (Frame & CuryŁo, 2021). The only study that specifically focuses on the university alliances' governance structures is a report by the European University Association (EUA), an organization representing interests of European higher education institutions at a European level. Evidently, one study cannot draw a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon, but it is a useful place to depart from when trying to understand its characteristics. For that purpose, the study's results are briefly summarized in the following part.

2.3 The Governance Structures of the European University

Alliances

The goal of the EUA report on EUI governance was published in 2021, aiming at providing an overview of the alliance governance structures and challenges within their establishment. Furthermore, the gathered data is supposed to be used to develop recommendations for sustainable and efficient governance set-ups for diverse types of European strategic institutional partnerships (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2021, p. 4). The report is based on a survey conducted with project managers of 20 alliances and provides an overview of their different governance models (p. 7).

As Estermann et al. point out, the chosen governance models differ between alliances and are in some cases changed over time as several set-ups are tested regarding their sustainability beyond the three-year period (p. 9). The authors derive four types of governing bodies present in the structures. Most alliances have a body dedicated to strategic development and oversight, which defines each alliance’s general direction and takes major decisions. A separate body deals with steering and coordination to ensure that the alliance is achieving progress. The daily management is usually taken on by a project management team and the work package leaders. Most alliances also stated the existence of additional bodies such as student councils and advisory boards. Table 1 summarizes the different types as well as their typical tasks and members:

Table 1

Types of Governing Bodies in the Alliances (own Table, based on Estermann, et. al, 2021)

Type	Tasks	Examples	Members
Strategic development & oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of general policy - long-term strategies - policy priorities - decisions of major project changes - acceptance of new members - advice to project management team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governing Board - General Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive university leaders: rectors, vice-presidents, vice-chancellors) - Additional members, e.g. student representatives
Steering & coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on achieving progress - Coordination and implementation of strategic priority agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering Committee - Executive Committee / Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vice-rectors - Vice-presidents - Other senior representatives
Management & implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day-to-day alliance management - Project implementation - Link between member institutions and funding authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project management team - Secretary general - Work package structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managerial staff, e.g. heads of administration, directors of services and departments - In some cases posts are detached from university roles

Other bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributing additional expertise - External policy and project advise - Quality assurance - Diverse stakeholder representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Council - Advisory Board - Local groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-academic representatives - Representatives of associate partners - Regional & local authorities - Citizens’ representatives independent higher education experts
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As this thesis focuses on student representation, it is especially interesting to point out that 16 out of 20 alliances have confirmed the inclusion of students into their governance structures. While the remaining ones did not deny this, they did not specifically mention it either (Estermann et al., 2021, p. 10). Furthermore, the authors state that student involvement highly differs throughout the alliances: While in some alliances, students only take an observing role for the governing bodies, others established a separate student board or include students in their steering committee. In those alliances which have most strongly embedded students in their governance structures, student representatives are also members of the highest decision-making bodies, where they “help steer the project, together with the executive leadership and operational management teams” (ibid.).

In addition to the survey results, the EUA publication includes three case studies on different governance models. They demonstrate the variety of paths the alliances decided to take – in general but particularly regarding student representation: all three selected cases share that they have established a student board ensuring student representation. However, one only includes one student from each university, among which two are elected to represent the student voice in the steering committee. The students’ role is described as quality assurance and monitoring instance. Similarly, in the other case presented, the student board advises the Alliance Board; however, in this case there are no students elected to participate in this highest decision-making body. The third case includes representatives of the student board – which has several members per university – already in the management and implementation of the alliance on the institutional level, namely in each University’s Executive Office. Additionally, the student board selects two students to represent their views at the university building taskforce, responsible for ensuring a co-creation process with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (Estermann et al., 2021, pp. 12–13).

One of their concluding remarks refers to the inclusion of all relevant actors, including students as “an important factor in meeting the project objectives” (Estermann et al., 2021, p. 20). They see a bottom-up inclusive approach as a necessary condition for a

university-wide continued support for the alliance and subsequently the sustainability of the initiative.

2.4 Contribution of this Study

This study aims at filling the research gap of effective student representation in the governance structures of the EUI university alliances. The EUA report shows the diversity of models including students and provides an indication for their level of influence. Nevertheless, details remain unclear, including e.g. concerning the students' formal voting rights, appointment procedures and terms of office. Since the report confirms the importance of the academic communities' involvement for their support for the alliances' activities, it is relevant to determine the ways in which students are involved and whether their participation is perceived as effective on a broader quantitative level. The intention of this contribution can further be derived from public participation literature, which suggests that judgement about whether or not participatory processes are leading to the intended outcome significantly influences the probability of continuing to pursue this action (Barrett & Pachi, 2012, p. 347).

The limited research on EUI governance and governance of transnational higher education consortia in general reveals the need for consulting other bodies of literature to grasp the phenomenon. There is quite a variety of studies on higher education governance on an individual university level which provides examples of governance structures with possibly similar characteristics and dynamics as those of the HE alliances. For additional insights into the perception of participation processes as well as its antecedents and consequences, public participation research and organizational studies are consulted. The next chapter summarizes the theoretical views from different disciplinary areas which lead to a number of hypotheses about factors influencing perceived effectiveness of student representatives in the governance structures of European University Alliances.

3 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

As a basis for the development of an appropriate research design, the central theoretical constructs and relevant variables need to be defined. Given that, the following chapter reviews literature related to student representation in HE governance structures as well as relevant surrounding disciplines that contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon. Regarding that, it needs to be pointed out that this chapter relies partly on reports and grey literature as they provide meaningful perspectives on the research issue where the availability of peer-reviewed literature is limited.

3.1 Student Representation in Higher Education Governance

To draw conclusions about the role of students in the European university alliances' governance structures, this study relies on insights into their role in institutional university governance, as this expectably similar construct provides an indication of the expectations that can be derived for the transnational level. Yet, before examining this, it is necessary to define the governance term itself. As pointed out in the introduction, the literature does not provide one distinct definition that is generally agreed upon. For example, Capano (2011) describes governance in higher education generally as “the possible ways in which policy actors combine to solve collective problems and thus to the ways in which the policy-making process is steered” (p. 1625). His definition includes not only actors of the HEI, but also considers regional, national and supranational entities. In contrast, much cited higher education scholar Philip Altbach once wrote:

Recently, the term 'governance' has been used to describe the ways in which universities are managed and organized. Such factors as the structures of decisionmaking [*sic*] within an academic institution, the roles of various participants in the academic community (faculty, administrators, and occasionally students) have in its functioning, and the general effectiveness of these structures in the way in which the institution works are included under the theme of governance. (1973, p. 26)

Following this, higher education governance can either be defined in a narrow institutional sense or including a wider range of actors external to the institution. In this study, governance is referred to as “structural models for implementing and achieving this ambitious long-term vision of 'European Universities'. The joint strategy pursues a high level of enhanced and sustainable cooperation across various levels of the organisation (e.g., management, academics, professional/support staff and students), and across different areas of activity” (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2021, p. 6). This coincides with the criteria for EUI alliances in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission, 2020a, pp. 131–132). For this purpose, the alliances have found different structures, consisting of several governing bodies (cf. chapter 2.3).

In organizational theory, the inclusion of all stakeholders into decision-making procedures is generally referred to as shared governance (Menon, 2003, p. 236). In higher education literature, this is mostly limited to shared responsibility between academic and administrative staff members. Some studies, however, also include students as stakeholders or, as Menon stresses, the key factor in higher education (2003, p. 237). As early as 1970, Kenberry attributed a fundamental role to collaboration between faculty, students and administrative staff in HE organizational structures in “reestablishing [*sic*]

meaning and purpose in American higher education.” (Ikenberry, 1970, p. 4). Literature on students' roles in higher education finds several terms afflicted with diverging implications, yet often lacking clear-cut definitions. This can pose problems regarding its research and implications. Referring to student engagement, Buckley states:

If we are not clear about what student engagement is, then our ability to improve, increase, support and encourage it through well-designed interventions will be severely diminished. On a more fundamental level, it will remain unclear what benefits an increase in student engagement will produce, and who incurs those benefits. (2014, p. 2)

Trowler (2010) worked out a comprehensive literature review on student engagement where she distinguishes between three foci of engagement. The first one is the *student learning* dimension, including a student-centred curriculum design and participation in the classroom. The second dimension is labelled *structure and process* and deals with the student role in governance and feedback mechanisms. The third focus is *identity* and is concerned with how to create a sense of belonging and engage certain groups of (particularly marginalized) students (p. 10). Despite the fact that the author uses the categorization as overlapping axes, they help to understand which area this study is located in. Although students can be engaged in various ways in university alliances, e.g. by participating in alliance course offers or taking student assistant positions in the implementation of sub-projects, this thesis only focuses on the involvement in governance structures as student representatives. Therefore, only the *structure and process* dimension and the corresponding literature is relevant. Concluding back to the different terms, representation can be seen as a subcategory of engagement, in the sense that a student speaks for the student body's interests on a governing body.

Examining different conceptualizations, parallels to citizen participation can be observed, which is defined as “the social process of taking part (voluntarily) in either formal or informal activities, programmes and/or discussions to bring about a planned change or improvement in community life, services and/or resources.” (Bracht & Tsouros, 1990, p. 201). However, Trowler (2010) states that engagement in a higher education context goes one step further than participation and involvement because it implies a feeling of sense-making whereas participation without this can be seen as mere compliance (p. 5). This additional layer is confirmed by other engagement definitions such as “the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes” (Krause & Coates, 2008, p. 493) or “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (Hu & Kuh, 2002, p. 555).

A more institution-focused approach defines engagement as “the process whereby institutions and sector bodies make deliberate attempts to involve and empower students in the process of shaping the learning experience” (HEFCE, 2008, in: Trowler, 2010, p. 4). The combination of both perspectives shows that student engagement is always connected to efforts by both the institution and its students. Taking this into account, this thesis focuses on student representation in governance structures as a subdimension of student engagement and specifically on the perception of the engagement process as a student representative. The next part elaborates on the meaning and dimensions of perceived effectiveness in this context.

3.2 Perceived Effectiveness

In a broader sense, effectiveness is defined as “the ability to be successful and produce the intended results” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). This already implies that the definition of effectiveness is highly context-specific and depends on the given intended results. Hence, due to the diversity of goals defined for public participation procedures, by the processes' initiators, involved stakeholders and scholars, a common definition of what makes them effective is difficult to determine (Bobbio, 2019, p. 43; Chess & Purcell, 1999, p. 2685). The examination of the relevant bodies of literature reveals that many studies fail to explicitly define effectiveness within their research context. This insufficient understanding of implications and measurement of effectiveness is also reflected in higher education governance research: In a survey conducted in the framework of a study for the Higher Education Funding Council for England conducted a survey with student and staff members of English universities, respondents generally stated that student engagement processes should be more effective (Little et al., 2009, p. 42). However, when they were asked about the meaning and measurement of effectiveness, there was great uncertainty (ibid.). Hornsey et al. (2006, pp. 1705–1706) state that effectiveness of public participation processes is oftentimes measured in terms of influence on decision makers, whereas they might be perceived as effective by engaged citizens based on other indicators as well.

Barrett and Pachi (2012) define perceived effectiveness as “judgements concerning the likelihood that the participatory actions will actually achieve their intended goals” (p. 347). Hornsey et al. suggest indicators related to intragroup, broader, societal and individual motivators (2006, p. 1705). The authors also point out that research has found no relationship between the influence on decision-making as an effectiveness criterion and the intentions of participating in a specific action again. In contrast, an increased likelihood of participating again can be explained by a broadened definition of what is perceived as effective by participants (ibid., p. 1717). Their line of thought reaffirms Beierle's (1999) who refrains from narrowly defining effective participation processes through decisions that were made. Instead, he suggests a focus on “social goals”, i.e. (1) “educating and informing the

public”, (2) “incorporating public value into decision-making”, (3) “increasing trust in institutions”, and (4) “reducing conflict” (Beierle, 1999, p. 81). These positive effects benefit both the individual as well as spilling over into the entire institution (ibid.).

A similar approach is followed by Zuo and Ratsoy's (1999) study on student participation in university governance. By applying insights from participatory decision-making, including theories on human growth and democracy, the authors develop a number of alternative, not influence-based rationales for i.e. benefits of student participation in university governance (p. 2). In combination with other sources of literature, these can be utilized to define perceived effectiveness criteria from a human and organizational development perspective in this study. For that purpose, they are categorized into individual criteria, benefitting the student representatives themselves, and organizational criteria, including benefits for the university alliances and HEI respectively.

Individual Benefits

The benefits that participation in HE governance can bring to the individual student representatives can be divided into three categories: Firstly, it can contribute to personal growth (Diorio, 2007, p. 42), e.g. by increasing confidence and a positive academic, social and artistic self-concept (Diorio, 2007; Kuh & Lund, 1994, p. 13). Another aspect is an increased feeling of satisfaction due to the positive feeling of *fulfilling* the purpose of representing and supporting fellow students (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009, p. 81).

Secondly, functioning as a student representative can improve career prospects since professional skills such as teamwork, perceived leadership competence and critical thinking can be acquired (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009, p. 70; Mozhgan et al., 2011, p. 1619). Making and maintaining professional contacts is also regarded an individual benefit that elevates career perspectives (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009, p. 81; Meeuwissen et al., 2019, p. 679). This is supported by the human growth theory approach reflected in Zuo and Ratsoy's finding that “most of the respondents believed student involvement is beneficially related to the future careers of students” (1999, p. 19).

A third dimension is the adoption and cultivation of a citizenship identity, including debating and decision-making skills (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 120; Kuh & Lund, 1994, p. 14; Luescher-Mamashela, 2010, p. 260; Menon, 2003, p. 237). As Boland (2005) puts it: „Involvement in democratic decision-making processes within the higher education institution presents an important opportunity to counteract democratic fatigue and to contribute to the preparation of students for their future role as democratic citizens and as members of civil society” (p. 210). This argumentation was also used in the general context of participatory democracy theory, which claims that the goals of political learning and improvement of democratic processes depend on the inclusion of all members of a political

community – specifically not only in a democratic state, but also other social structures such as workplaces and universities (Vitale, 2006, pp. 751–752).

Organizational Benefits

Besides the benefits for individual students, effective student involvement can also be beneficial to the organizational level. Akomolafe and Ibijola’s (2012, p. 17) findings from a study conducted at Nigerian universities imply that increased student participation in university governance can facilitate organizational effectiveness. Students contribute to “closing the generation gap” and “keeping staff alert” (Meeuwissen et al., 2019, p. 680). They open up new perspectives and their evaluation can help to reveal and correct weaknesses in the organizations’ activities (Menon, 2003, p. 238). Consequently, this leads to better decisions and higher quality outcomes (Buckley, 2014; Luescher-Mamashela, 2010), or as put by Akomolafe and Ibijola (2012, p. 16), improved policy formulation and implementation.

Furthermore, the inclusion of all stakeholders increases transparency and trust in governance processes by reducing unrest in the student body through dialogue (Akomolafe & Ibijola, 2012, p. 16). Thereby, a healthier and more peaceful organizational climate can be established (Carey, 2013b, 120f.; Menon, 2005, p. 169). The dynamic of higher acceptance rates among students contributes to the pursuit of a university’s purposes (Luescher-Mamashela, 2010, p. 260) and a more democratic ethos (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 122; Persson, 2004, p. 38). Table 2 provides an overview of the dimensions of perceived effectiveness used in this study and their individual indicators extracted from literature.

Table 2

Dimensions of Perceived Effectiveness (own table)

Organizational Benefits		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bringing a young perspective into governance structures - Enhancing transparency of decision-making processes for students - Improving students’ trust in decision-making - Representing the student body’s interests in the governance structures - Contributing to better decision-making - Increasing the quality of decision-making procedures’ outcomes 		
Individual Benefits		
<p><i>Personal Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved self-confidence - Improved picture of oneself - Feeling of satisfaction 	<p><i>Professional Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of teamwork skills - Improvement of leadership skills - Improvement of critical thinking skills - Making valuable contacts 	<p><i>Democratic Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of debating skills - Improvement of decision-making skills - Improved understanding of democratic processes

After outlining the benefits that can be reached through student representation in higher education governance and are used in this study as effectiveness indicators, one cannot go without mentioning critical voices on this issue. One of the main difficulties mentioned in literature is the lack of sufficient knowledge or expertise about issues that student representatives are asked to voice their opinion on (Carey, 2013b, p. 122; Luescher-Mamashela, 2013, p. 1449). This can make decision-making processes quite complicated, especially in the light of academic demands that students are subject to, which do not necessarily grant them enough time to acquire additional knowledge (Carey, 2013b, p. 122). The additional tasks might even have negative consequences for their academic performance (Carey, 2013b, p. 135). As Kezar and Eckel (2004, p. 372) argue, shared governance models can negatively impact an organization's agility and flexibility, resulting in a tendency to stick with the status quo.

Scholars have consequently raised concerns that a shift of power balances towards students may lead to lower academic standards (Menon, 2003, p. 236). Lastly, issues regarding legitimacy and representativeness have been brought to attention: It is questionable whether students can adequately represent the interests of a whole student body, which become even more difficult with its recent diversification (ibid.). Carey (2013b) states in this context that "there is the risk that the student voice will be that of the confident and articulate, with the powerless rendered silent" (p. 29), from which he deduces a danger of increasing social inequality among students. However, this study focuses on the benefits of student engagement in HE governance as the inclusion of students into the European university alliances' governance structures was formulated as a goal of the EUI which leads to the conclusion that it is generally regarded positive. The next chapter introduces possible influences on perceived effectiveness that have been identified from prior studies.

3.3 Influences on Perceived Effectiveness

After conceptualizing the meaning of perceived effectiveness, the follow-up question deals with the way in which these individual and organizational benefits can be reached. This part elaborates four areas, namely the composition of governing bodies, student empowerment, perceived staff attitudes and the provision of information and training. It introduces results from related studies and deduces hypotheses from the theoretical and empirical insights about factors determining student representatives' perception of their engagements' effectiveness.

Composition of Governing Bodies

Qualitative studies demonstrate that the ratio between students and staff on university committees can impact their role perception: In many governing bodies, a minority of students tries to verbalize their requests to a majority of academic and administrative staff

members. This committee set-up can be intimidating and alienate students instead of encouraging them to participate, especially those with little familiarity with the structures (Carey, 2013b, p. 39). A sufficient number of student members is necessary to “develop a teamspirit [*sic*] and maintain momentum” (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 122). This goes in line with Akomolafe and Ibijola's (2012, p. 17) recommendation to increase the number of students in higher education committees to raise the significance of contributions at their meetings. Following that, the first hypothesis postulates:

H1a: The more students there are in governing bodies, in relation to staff members, the higher their perceived effectiveness.

Public participation literature argues that separating a marginalized or less influential group from a powerful group in the first step of a participation procedure, before subsequently coming together in one plenary, can increase participation (Pagatpatan & Ward, 2017, p. 524). The opportunity to discuss issues separately beforehand reduces anxiousness and gives confidence to those, who are part of the ‘inferior’ group as they feel their position is backed up by their own group, which they can transport into plenary discussions (Sultana & Abeyasekera, 2008, p. 210). In contrast, in absence of a separate forum, participants might feel more intimidated by opinions and attitudes of the more powerful groups and do not directly voice their interests (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Meeuwissen et al. (2019, p. 684) argue that regular meetings of student representatives in an organized manner gives them space to discuss opinions and strategies which eventually equips them to plan a cohesive course of action. This suggests that a separate governing body for students instead of a common one with staff members could be perceived as more effective. Therefore, it is postulated:

H1b: In alliances with a separate student body, student representatives show a higher perceived effectiveness than in alliances without a separate student body.

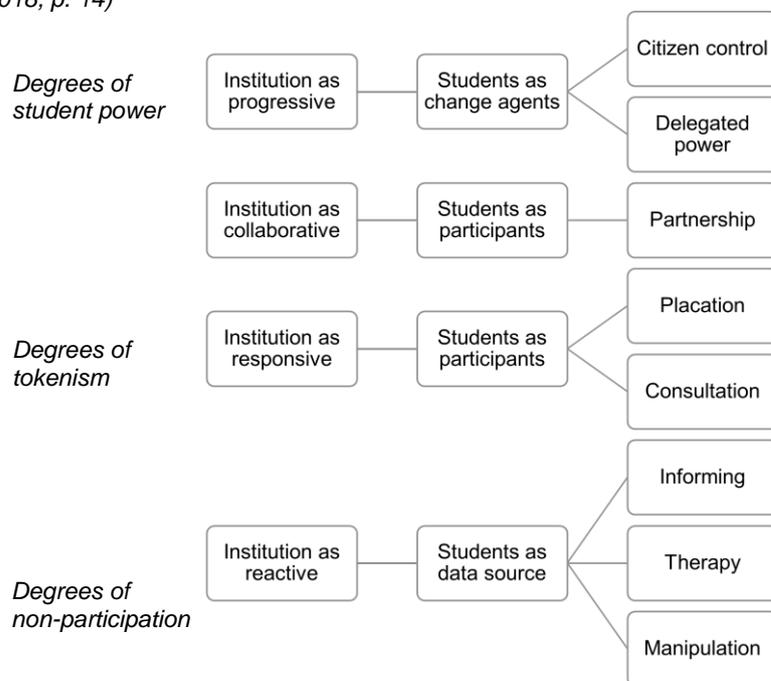
Empowerment

This dimension is rooted in public participation theory, specifically in Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969). The instrument was developed to assess the degree of power that is attributed to citizens in a public participation process and has been used in various contexts since then, including (higher) education research. It includes eight levels of participation, which are grouped into three categories: The lowest levels are considered “non-participation” with no formal power transferred to citizens. The middle ground, degrees of tokenism, offers possibilities to respond to pre-set plans without meaningful exchange. Only the top rungs grant real decision-making power to citizens (Carey, 2018, p. 14). Carey (2018) applies Arnstein's ladder to higher education contexts: According to his approach, the role prescribed to students range from using them just as a data source up to

empowering them to be change agents, depending on the present institutional culture. Figure 1 shows the way, Carey applies the ladder to student engagement and institutional culture.

Figure 1

The Nested Hierarchy of Student Engagement Interactions Mapped to Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation (Carey, 2018, p. 14)



Arnstein (1969) argues that “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit” (p. 216). The more recent public participation spectrum by the international association for public participation (iap2) follows a similar logic but suggests a reduction to five levels of public impact and labels it in more neutral terms that are less value-driven (Bobbio, 2019, p. 45). Therefore, this adapted scale counteracts the main criticism that Arnstein’s concept is confronted with, namely its normative notion that upper ranks of the ladder are automatically perceived as “better” (Weymouth & Hartz-Karp, 2019, p. 3). Figure 2 shows a version of the spectrum, applied to the context of this study.

Figure 2

Spectrum of Student Participation (Own Figure, Based on IAP2 (2018))

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Student representatives are provided with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions	Student representatives are asked to provide feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	Student representatives work directly with staff members throughout the process to ensure that students' concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	Staff members partner with student representatives in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	The final decision making is put into the hand of student representatives

Studies in organizational sciences show that allowing employees to participate in decision-making procedures improves their perception of the organizations' ability to help them be effective at their jobs and their superiors' commitment to their long-term success (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999). Additionally, they are more satisfied with their jobs and more effective at reaching goals (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). In the HE context, Klemenčič states that "the degree of participation is another defining element in the social meaning and effects of student participation" (Klemenčič, 2012, p. 636). This notion is also reflected in Boland's statement: "if students are to play an effective role in governance, then they need to be positioned, not merely as clients, but as partners in the academic community" (Boland, 2005, pp. 200–201).

Further, survey results also imply a discrepancy between formal and actual influence: In some institutions, participation rights are not formally anchored but still strong in practice and vice versa (Persson, 2004, pp. 38–39). Empirical studies in public participation provide evidence for two mechanisms, leading to two hypotheses: One the one hand, participants who are taking a merely consultative role rather than being formally involved in decision-making are less satisfied with the participation process (Germain et al., 2001, p. 123). In the higher education context, Diorio's study on student government members show that those who are involved in the university's executive committee, hence obtain more power, show higher perceived academic, social, personal benefits and higher skills development (Diorio, 2007, p. 43).

H2a: The higher the degree of empowerment, the higher the perceived effectiveness.

On the other hand, the role of expectation becomes evident: Civic participation studies show participants' unrealistic expectations of their influence as an obstacle for perceiving a participatory process as effective (Ianniello et al., 2019, p. 27). Unmet expectations about transferred power can lead to frustration and disappointment for both administrators and citizens, especially if they have a strong opinion about how things should be done (Buckwalter, 2014, p. 578). Applying the IAP2 Spectrum, Brown and Chin (2013, p. 579) show that a gap between the intensity of citizen participation and the degree to which they would prefer to participate can lead to deficiencies in the perceived effectiveness of the participation process. Following this premise of the importance of individual expectation, the following can be postulated:

H2b: The bigger the gap between perceived empowerment and preferred empowerment, the lower the perceived effectiveness.

Perceived staff attitudes

Apart from formal power transfer, institutional, or put differently, organizational culture can influence student participation in another way: organizational culture of a HE institution is characterized by “deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work” (Bartell, 2003, pp. 44–45). These values fundamentally influence both verbal and non-verbal communication styles (Bartell, 2003, p. 55) and decision-making processes (Tierney, 1988, in: *ibid.*), which is especially visible in the student-staff-relationship.

The way university employees approach and make students feel impacts confidence and satisfaction in their roles: Negative impact on their sense of efficacy and legitimacy has been reported for subtle, dismissive or patronizing comments (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009, p. 76). These are rooted in the perception of students as immature, potential adversary or merely self-interested (*ibid.*). Following Carey (2018, p. 15), student-staff relationships' character becomes particularly evident in committee structures that are built on inherent power dynamics and might discourage students to participate which, then again, draws back to considerations about the composition of governing bodies in H1a and H1b. Notions of valuing and encouraging their views as legitimate stakeholders and seeing them as equal members or colleagues can, on the other hand, empower students and their sense of efficacy (*ibid.*, p. 82). Faculty members who act as mentors and advisors positively contribute to students' extracurricular engagement (Borhan, 2020, p. 20). As the ESU states:

Organisations have genuine influence. Despite the near-universal legislation on student participation across Europe, the overall perception of student representatives still is that students are ‘not regarded as equal partners by HEIs and other stakeholders’ and that this is ‘a major obstacle to greater, and meaningful, student participation’. (Klemenčič, 2011, p. 10)

Furthermore, those who perceive their university as accepting, supportive and with a sense of belonging, are more likely to experience a successful engagement process (Zepke & Leach, 2010). Another study found a positive correlation between the perceived support from the university environment and student leaders' sense of self-efficacy (Bardou et al., 2003, pp. 41–42). Therefore, it can be postulated:

H3: The more positive the perceived staff attitudes, the higher the perceived effectiveness.

Information and Training

As already mentioned, one of the main difficulties of student representation lies in asymmetry of information, since students are by nature less informed and skilled in some of the relevant areas when entering their function than staff members and can be confused about university structures and processes (Carey, 2013b, p. 122; Planas et al., 2013, p. 579). Consequently, the provision of courses and training, e.g. in relationship management, consultation processes, understanding learning environments, bears the potential of providing them with a necessary toolbox to act as equal members of governing bodies (Hassan et al., 2020, p. 3; Lizzio & Wilson, 2009; O’Leary et al., 2021). Akomolafe and Ibijola (2012, p. 17) suggest the organization of courses for student leaders to provide assistance in the execution of their role. Following others, this training should also include the clear explanation of their roles, expectations and responsibilities (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 125).

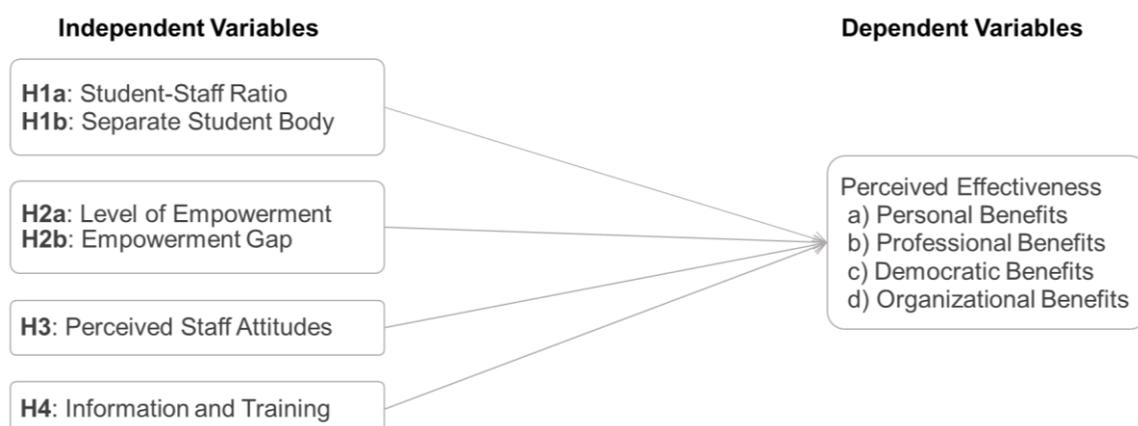
Additionally, the provision of information is the basis for rational decision-making and legitimate participation (Arnstein, 1969) that is necessary for active citizenship in a democracy (Bergan, 2004, p. 22). Therefore, participants need to be provided with resources to stay informed and “develop a deep engagement with the topic in question, which result[s] in the commitment of the participants to, and their continued interest in, the process” (Pagatpatan & Ward, 2017, p. 524). Structured support programs are expected to have the potential to enhance students’ perception of effectiveness (Lizzio & Wilson, 2009, p. 82). Therefore, the following can be postulated:

H4: *The more information and training are made available to student representatives, the higher the perceived effectiveness.*

Figure 3 provides an overview of all independent and dependent variables, sorted by the number of hypotheses.

Figure 3

Overview of Variables and Hypotheses (own Figure)



3.4 Possible Confounding Variables

In order to rule out unintentional effects that impact and bias the results of this study, the literature review also includes a search for additional possible influences on the perceived effectiveness of student representatives. Furthermore, conclusions from theoretical considerations fill the gap where empirical research is not available. The process revealed that they can be categorized into (1) characteristics of the higher education alliances, national higher education systems and universities, (2) characteristics of the student representative position and (3) characteristics of the individual respondent.

The year that the respective alliance was founded should be considered as a possible variable. The alliances established in 2019 might have already found a more effective governance model whereas those which started one year later might still search for the best set-up. Hence, those established earlier might be perceived as more effective.

There are several ways in which higher education systems and individual institutions are categorized in literature. A prominent example is Dobbins' and Knill's (2016) typology on higher education governance, defining the way that control, coordination and autonomy are distributed among the three levels of state, faculty and university administration (p. 37). They categorize European higher education systems into three ideal types, namely the state-centred model, academic self-government and the market-oriented model. This variable can be expected to influence student representatives' perceived effectiveness as they impact internal governance processes and organizational culture of higher education institutions. This includes responsibilities attributed to staff and students – both in terms of power and areas of functioning. Furthermore, the level of marketization is likely to affect the student-staff relationship as more marketized HEI perceive students in the role of a as customers or clients whose influence is limited to the evaluation of their 'service experience' (Carey, 2013a, p. 251). This dynamic can lead to a tokenistic role of students in governance structures, which is used as 'external currency' on the HE market rather than granting real influence (Komljenovic & Raaper, 2022, p. 7).

Although this typology is undoubtedly useful for categorizing higher education systems, the latest available data is from the year 2010 and only available for a fraction of EUI countries. Therefore, this study builds on the similar concept of university autonomy by Bennetot Pruvot and Estermann (2017). The authors regularly update the Autonomy Scoreboard for the dimensions organizational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy, with the latest one from 2017 providing scores for 29 countries (*ibid.*, p. 6). Although the HEIs within the alliances belong to several countries and therefore higher education governance models, students' participation experience and their perceived effectiveness might still vary on an individual institutional level within an alliance.

Additionally, factors related to the student representative position may affect how its effectiveness is perceived: The appointment procedure is included as it might affect the level to which the representative position is seen as a political office. An elected student might feel more legitimate to represent students' interests and might thus perceive the decision-making procedure as more effective. Having a fixed term might contribute to this effect. Another factor that is included into the analysis is the incentive that students are receiving for taking the position, which might affect how seriously they take it and are taken. Furthermore, the frequency of meetings and the individual time invested in the position could lead to higher perceived effectiveness as "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (Astin, 1984, pp. 528–529).

Lastly, there are also characteristics of the individual respondents that might impact how they perceive the participation process. Astin (1993) argues that male student leaders assess their leadership skill development as higher than girls which was confirmed by Mozghan et al. (2011, p. 1619). Bardou (2003, p. 36) shows the same effect for self-efficacy. However, according to Diorio, female students found their involvement in student government for helpful for gaining confidence than males (2007, p. 41). Age and study cycle are additional socio-demographic variables that might shape perceptions due to different life experience. The next chapter gives an overview about the operationalization of this as well as the other independent, dependent and control variables.

4 Methodology

This study builds on a deductive approach, aiming at testing hypothesis derived from theory and literature research. In this chapter, the process of data collection and the generated data is presented. Subsequently, it explains the measurement as well as statistical analysis approaches.

4.1 Data Collection and Sample

The central construct of this thesis is perceived effectiveness. As discussed, it is context-specific and subjective. Therefore, the only way of examining student representatives' perception of their effectiveness is to ask them directly about their experience. This was conducted in the form of an online survey (see Appendix A) with student representatives from different European university alliances. The survey was operated by Qualtrics which offers pre-settings in line with Utrecht University's guidelines and design, contributing to a smoother execution and a more trustworthy impression to respondents. The advantages of using a web-based survey are the short field phase as well as geographical and timely flexibility, which is important for the short timeframe and geographical distribution of

respondents. It keeps costs per respondent low and enables the inclusion of visual supporting elements. Furthermore, the anonymity of the setting prevents effects of social desirability which reduces bias (Tausendpfund, 2018, p. 241). The tool's limitation of restricted representativeness due to the exclusion of 'offliners' can be disregarded as those active in international university alliances can be expected to be digitally competent. Also, the comparably short maximum timeframe of 15 minutes that an online-survey should not exceed is complied with – with an estimated duration of 10 minutes. The survey was conducted in English as this is the working language of international higher education collaboration. It consists of close-ended questions which are the most useful for hypothesis-testing in deductive research (Stockemer, 2018, p. 43).

Currently, 280 HEIs are organized in 41 EUI alliances. Since the alliances are expected to include students from all member organizations in their governance structures, it can be assumed that the population comprises a minimum of 280 student representatives (N=280). As recommended by Baur and Blasius (2014), the survey was pre-tested to improve its quality and increase the response rate (p. 333). In order to avoid a further limitation of the population, the pre-test was not conducted with the alliances' student representatives but rather with students engaged in other areas of their universities to reach a similar target group. After having adapted the survey according to the pre-test subjects' feedback, its distribution was handled via a discord server including student representatives of most alliances to answer the survey themselves and forward it to the remaining representatives. In addition, the alliances' project managers were contacted and asked to forward the request (the messages can be found in Appendix A).

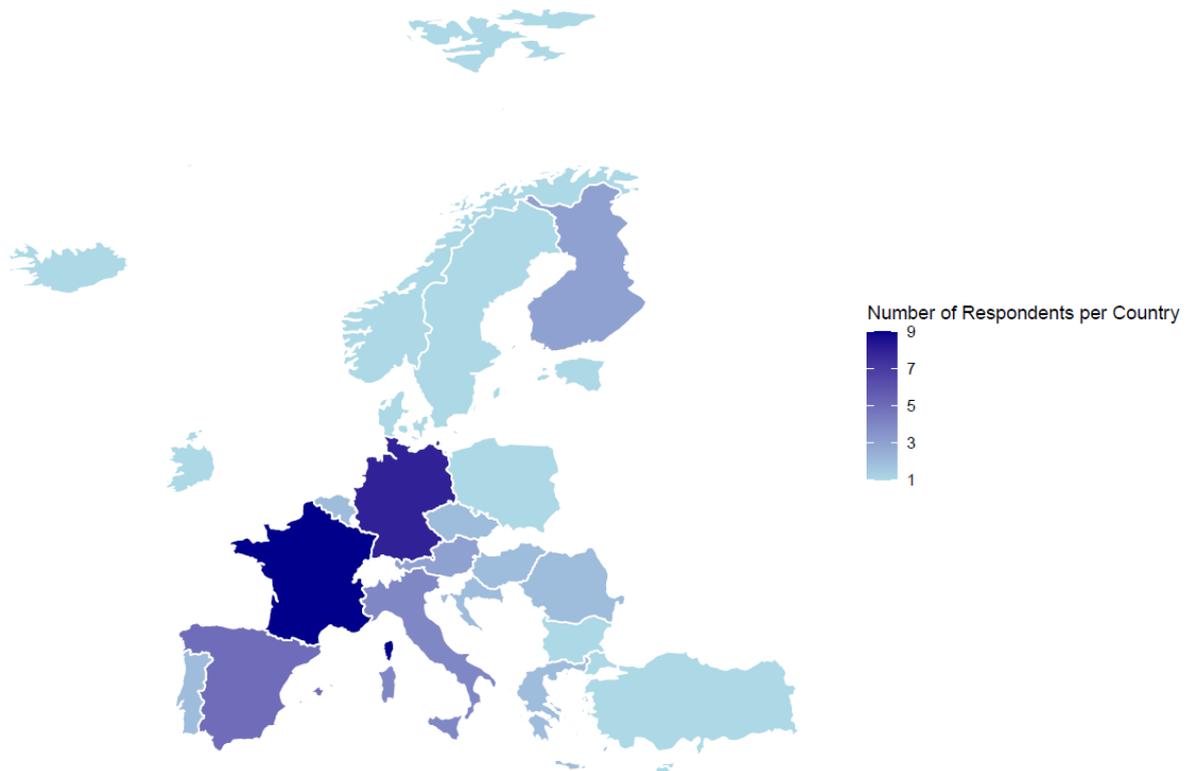
Both methods were repeated weekly to reach a maximum sample. This snowball sampling method is used when the study population is unknown or consists of hard-to-reach groups (Stockemer, 2018, p. 63). Here, it was applied because there is no common database of all alliances' student representatives, and they are not presented on the majority of the alliances' individual websites either. The advantage of this method is the reachability of a bigger sample even without knowing all of the population's members. However, the produced results are subject to selection bias because not every person has the same probability to be selected which ultimately limits the sample's representativeness (Carey, 2013b, p. 58). Nevertheless, research related to education often needs to rely on "a sampling framework that falls between probability and non-probability approaches" (ibid.). Consequently, despite maximal effort to reach all student representatives equally, the external validity concern needs to be considered when analysing the results.

Furthermore, non-response bias occurring in voluntary surveys needs to be acknowledged: Those students who decide to respond to the survey are likely to have different characteristics than those who do not. Among others, this can also include

variables that might alter this study's results (Stockemer, 2018, p. 59). For example, respondents who are more engaged in the alliance, might also be more motivated to voice their opinion in the survey than those who do not identify with it as strongly. Other relevant factors could be the regularity of checking one's e-mails or the available time besides the respondents' daily obligations (ibid., p. 60).

From April 8th to May 20th, 2022, the survey was accessed a total of 172 times. However, most of these accesses only consisted of examining the introduction page or terminating the survey after a few questions. The high dropout rate may be explained due to the recruitment procedure of the specific target audience, as the request for participation also reached project managers and students who are not holding a student representative position. These groups might have realized only after opening the survey that they are not part of the target group. Another explanation could be the lack of "I do not know" options for most of the questions which could have frustrated those who are not fully informed about the formalities of their alliance's governance structures. This critical point is a limitation of this study's data collection as it might have skewed the results towards more engaged and informed students. Furthermore, an internal technical problem occurred at Qualtrics which led to a dysfunction of the provided hyperlink for survey access. Although an alternative link was provided shortly after the problem was reported by several students, this difficulty might have disheartened some potential respondents. The final sample of this study consists of the respondents who fully finished the online survey (n=67), which makes up 39.0 % of all survey accesses and 23.9 % of the estimated study population. The choice to limit the sample size to those who fully completed the survey lies in the fact that the vast majority of respondents only finished a small percentage of the survey. There were only five more respondent who filled out more than 50 % of the questions, of who only one filled out more than 70 %, hence, for the sake of consistency, only fully finished surveys were taken into account.

The respondents are enrolled in 62 different HEIs from 24 European countries (cf. figure 1). One respondent did not specify their university and one university could not be identified from the provided acronym. The HEIs in the sample are organized in 25 alliances, therefore 61.0 % of the 41 EUI alliances are represented in this study. 44.0 % of the alliances in the sample were established after the first EUI call in 2019 and 56.0 % were part of the second call in 2020.

Figure 4*Number of Respondents per Country (n = 67, own Figure)*

Moving to the individual level, 52.2 % of the respondents are female, whereas 41.8 % are male. 6 % did not specify their gender. None of the respondents stated a non-binary gender identity. The respondents' age varies between 20 and 47 years with a median of 24 years and a mean of 25.5 years. With 41.8 % and 43.3 %, a similar number of respondents are studying each at an undergraduate and a graduate level. Additionally, 14.9 % are pursuing a doctoral program. The student representatives have been in their position from 0 to 2.5 years, with a mean of 1.2 years.

4.2 Measurement

This chapter provides an overview of the way the questionnaire collected data on the dependent, independent and control variables. It provides the respective scales and the subsequent steps of preparing the variables for univariate and multivariate statistical analysis.

Measurement of the Dependent Variables

In line with the corresponding literature, the dependent variable of perceived effectiveness was operationalized by four areas of benefits that can be reached through student

representation. The respondents rated whether their position contributed to achieving these benefits on 5-point Likert scales ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. This type of scale is commonly used for measuring attitudes and opinions and assumes their intensity’s linearity (Stockemer, 2018, p. 44). Two aspects need to be considered when designing Likert scales: Firstly, the inclusion of a neutral middle-category can lead respondents to ‘take the easy way’ instead of reflecting upon and stating their position. On the other hand, no neutral category might force those who are torn or really do not have a position to choose a side which can be frustrating and lead to termination of the responding process (Stockemer, 2018, p. 44). Secondly, one can consider including an “I don’t know” option. Similarly, respondents might choose this out of comfort which can reduce the number of relevant answers. However, on more complex issue, respondents might actually not know what to answer, therefore, excluding this option could push for arbitrary answers, reducing reliability and validity of the achieved results (ibid., p. 45). Considering that this survey asks predominantly for subjective perceptions, an “I don’t know” option is not included as these questions do not require prior knowledge. Nevertheless, a neutral option is provided to reduce the risk of survey termination due to a lack of accommodation of genuinely neutral positions.

To ensure equidistance between the answer options for later analysis, the options in the middle of the scale were only labelled with numbers. Several items were included in the opposite semantic direction to control for respondents arbitrarily choosing options on the same side of the scale. These were subsequently recoded to a mutual direction to build additive indices for each area.

Table 3

Measurement of the Dependent Variables (own figure)

Index	Variable name	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach’s α)
Personal benefits	personal_index	3	0.9
Professional benefits	professional_index	4	0.83
Democratic benefits	democratic_index	3	0.78
Organizational benefits	organizational_index	6	0.87

Cronbach’s alpha was calculated as an internal consistency reliability measure. The values between 0.78 and 0.9 lay within in the satisfactory margin for all four indices visible in table 3 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 54). All items used per index are specified in Appendix B.

Measurement of the Independent Variables

The number of students in relation to staff members in the governing bodies (H1a) was measured by a numeric variable *ratio* calculated through the answers provided on number of members of the highest governing body and the number of students respectively. If

respondents stated that students are not represented in the body and therefore were not shown the question on the number of members, the variable was recoded to 0. For hypothesis 1b, the binary factor variable *fseparate* (0 = no separate student body, 1 = separate student body) considers whether the alliance has a separate student body.

For H2a, the formal power of student representatives was taken into consideration by an ordinal scale with the values 0 = no voting right, 1 = only voting right, 2 = voting and veto right. To capture subjective perception of empowerment, which can vary from the formally provided level of power, the IAP2 scale was slightly adapted to the subject, asking respondents to rank their perceived empowerment on a 5-point scale, in the variable *level_real_1*. In a second question, the same scale was used to ask how much power respondents would prefer to have in their position (*level_ideal_1*). From these two responses, the numeric variable *level_gap* was created to capture the discrepancy between perceived and ideal level of empowerment as it was performed in Brown and Chin (2013) to explore H2b.

The independent variables for the last two hypotheses were measured, again, by additive indices. The index for the perceived attitude of staff members (H4) and the information and training index (H5) both show satisfactory reliability measures. Again, some items were recoded because they were included in the opposite direction to avoid arbitrary responses.

Table 4

Measurement of the Independent Variables (own figure)

Index	Variable name	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach's α)
Staff attitudes	staff_index	6	0.79
Information and training	information_index	5	0.83

Measurement of the Control Variables

In addition to the variables related to the postulated hypotheses, a number of control variables were measured. Whether the university alliance was established by the first (1) or the second (2) round of the European Universities Initiative was captured by another binary factor. University marketization was measured by the amount of yearly tuition fees as a numerical variable. The University Autonomy Scoreboard 2017 measures (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2017) were included for the dimensions organizational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy. However, since values were not available for all countries represented in the sample, a mean imputation for missing values was conducted. To account for potential distortion of the results due to this process, the analysis introduced in the next section was additionally applied to the subset to observations from countries with available values (see Appendix B). The comparison of the results shows only minimal difference.

A binary variable measure whether student representatives were democratically elected to their position (1) or not (0). A numerical variable defines how many hours per month they spend on activities related to their position. Age was included as a numeric variable calculated from the respondents' year of birth, the study cycle as a factor with the levels 0 = undergraduate (bachelor's or compatible), 1 = graduate (master's or comparable) and 2 = doctoral studies. The factor variable for the respondents' gender included level 0 for male and 1 for female, the option "I prefer not to say" was recoded as a missing value. Other options were not included in the analysis as they were not represented among the respondents. Although a number of questions related to other possible confounding variables were included in the survey, their measurement is not being discussed here as they have proven to not adding any explanatory value to the statistical models and were thus excluded from further analysis.

4.3 Analytical Methods

After importing the data from Qualtrics into the statistics software RStudio, the dataset was restricted to those respondents who finished the survey and the variables relevant for this study. Afterwards, the data was prepared for analysis by calculating the indicators for the dependent and independent variables as well as assigning respective additional information to the observations (country, EUI round, university autonomy score, age of respondent). The examination of frequency tables and summary statistics for all relevant variables provided insights into descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix as well as a t-test, where relevant, give a first indication for the way that independent and dependent variables are related.

To isolate the independent variables' individual effects on the dependent variable from confounding factors, they are added into four multiple linear regression models according to the dimensions. In addition, the control variables related to respondent (gender, age and study cycle), student representative position (amount of time they spend on their position, whether they were democratically elected) as well as higher education system and alliance (tuition fees, autonomy score, EUI round) were added into the model. The advantage of a multiple linear regression is the observability of changes when adding variables step-by-step. From the personal benefits model, two observations were omitted due to missing values ($n = 65$). From the organizational model, six observations were omitted ($n = 61$) and from the other two models, seven observations were not added into the model due to missing values. Hence, the regression models were calculated with a sample size of 60. This process revealed that the goodness-of-fit was reduced by the addition of the independent variables student-staff ratio and perceived empowerment in every dimension. Additionally, the control variables term duration and incentive did not add to any models' goodness-of-fit and other variables only showed added value for some of

the models. Therefore, these variables were excluded from parts of the analysis and the respective models were restricted to those improving their explanatory power.

Additionally, as the line of argumentation related to hypothesis 4 suggests, an interaction term between a separate student body and the perceived staff attitudes was added into each model. This controls for a possible moderator effect of a separate student body on the importance of staff attitudes for the level of perceived effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the effect of this interaction needs to be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size of this study. As interactions require a larger sample size than regression models without a higher term, their regression coefficients are likely to be overestimated in this case. However, they can still provide an indication of the existence of a moderator effect and failing to include interactions with relations to the outcomes can likewise cause bias (Eberly, 2007, pp. 177–178).

For the democratic and the professional model, the interaction was excluded as it reduced the adjusted R^2 . An overview of the iterative process executed to find the best fitted model can be found in Appendix B. To test the preconditions for fitting a linear model, a number of tests were executed: Homoskedasticity was checked using the Breusch-Pagan test, variance inflation factors were calculated to account for multicollinearity among the independent variables, the examination of a histogram, in addition to a Shapiro-Wilk Test tested the normal distribution of residuals and the Rainbow Test checked the general linearity of relationships in the regression models. All models passed the four tests, with one exception: the result of the Breusch-Pagan-Test demonstrated heteroskedasticity in the model for the personal dimension. More details on the test results are presented in the next chapter.

5 Results

In the first part of this chapter (5.1), univariate statistics summarize the answers on perceived effectiveness and the independent variables among survey respondents. Moreover, a correlation matrix gives a first indication about the relationships between variables. The second part (5.2) then dives into the results of the multiple linear regression models and relates them back to the hypotheses derived in the scope of the literature review.

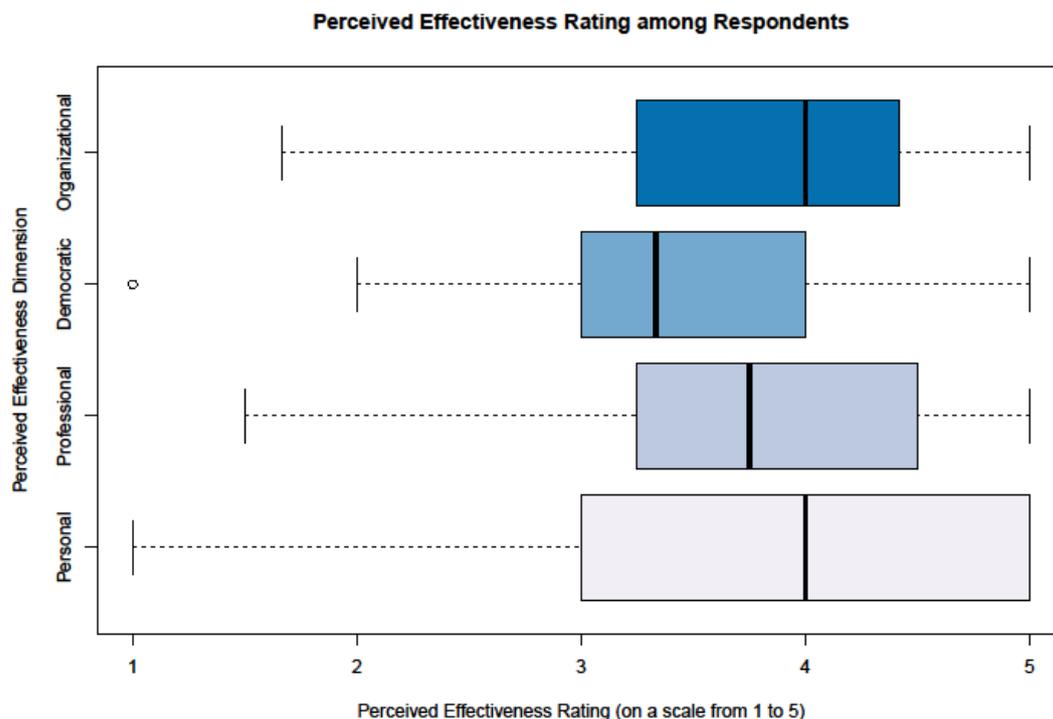
5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Examining the values for this study's dependent variable, more specifically the perceived effectiveness subdimensions first, it becomes clear that the respondents generally give high ratings. The lowest effectiveness ratings are given for achieving democratic benefits. However, even these scores average at 3.54. In comparison, the student representatives'

contribution to personal and professional benefits is rated with means of 3.80 and 3.86. The organizational dimension is perceived as almost equally effective with a mean of 3.83. The boxplots in figure 5 provide further information about the distribution of answers for the separate categories.

Figure 5

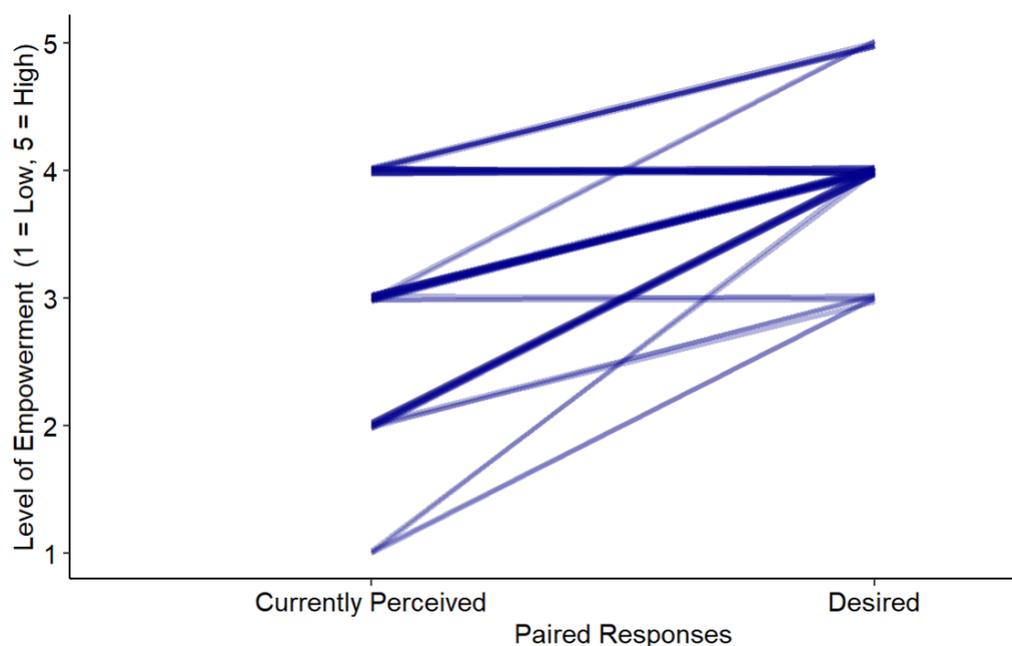
Perceived Effectiveness Ratings Among Respondents (Own Figure)



Moving on to the independent variables, the student-staff ratio in the alliances' governing bodies averages at 18.8 % students out of all members. 76.1 % of respondents stated that their alliance has a separate student body, whereas 23.9 % stated that it does not. The average perceived level of empowerment on the adapted IAP2 spectrum from 1 to 5 lies at 2.99, with a minimum of 1 ("We are provided with information to understand problems and possible solutions.") and a maximum of 4 ("We co-develop alternatives and solutions with staff members and express our preferences."). Comparing these numbers with the preferred level of empowerment shows a mean difference of 1.02 points. Figure 6 demonstrates that the majority of respondents would prefer a higher level of empowerment than they currently perceive, while 28.4 % choose equal ratings. The maximum gap is 3 and no respondents stated a preference in the opposite direction.

Figure 6

Currently Perceived vs. Desired Level of Empowerment Among Respondents (Own Figure)



The degree that respondents feel like they are seen by staff members varied from 1.83 to 5.00 on the 1 to 5 scale. On average, student representatives ranked perceived staff attitudes at 3.80, therefore, they seem to feel generally quite supported and taken seriously, as higher numbers on the scale indicates more positive experiences. In contrast, the provision of sufficient training and information to base their decisions on was evaluated more negatively: while the minimum given score was 1.40 and the maximum 4.80, the scores averaged at 2.92.

As a first step in examining the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, a correlation matrix based on Pearson's product-moment correlation (r) was produced. Although correlations do not provide a full picture of the present effects, especially considering interdependencies of explanatory variables and the direction of the effect (Stockemer, 2018, p. 144), they are helpful to gain a first idea of what can be expected from further statistical analysis.

Table 5 shows significant correlations for almost all explanatory variables derived from the literature. Merely the student-staff ratio does not show a significant relationship with any of the perceived effectiveness dimensions, which indicates a lack of support for H1a. For the role of the binary variable separate student body postulated in H1b, a t-test comparing the student representatives in alliances without a student body to those with a student body was conducted separately. It displays a significantly higher perceived effectiveness in the personal (4.00 vs. 3.13 points), democratic (3.66 vs. 3.17 points) and organizational (3.98 vs. 3.36 points) dimensions for student representatives of alliances with a separate student body than without. No difference was found for professional benefits.

The perceived level of empowerment according to the IAP2 scale is significantly positively related to all indices except for professional benefits. The correlation coefficients range between 0.28 ($p = 0.012$) for personal benefits and 0.49** ($p < 0.001$) for organizational benefits. This hints at higher perceived effectiveness in case of higher power transfers to students which was postulated in H2a. Furthermore, H2b postulates a negative relationship between the gap of perceived and ideal power and perceived effectiveness, which is enforced by the negative significant correlations shown in the matrix. The correlation coefficients between the empowerment gap and the perceived effectiveness dimensions all show a negative relationship, ranging from a medium -0.25 ($p = 0.021$) for personal benefits, up to a strong -0.50 ($p < 0.001$) for organizational benefits. Again, the relationship with professional benefits is not significant.

Perceived staff attitudes and provision of information and training both show significant positive correlations with all dimensions. Both show the weakest relationship with professional benefits (0.26 with $p = 0.015$ and 0.30 with $p = 0.006$) and the strongest relationship with organizational benefits (0.49 with $p < 0.001$ and 0.51 with $p < 0.001$).

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations (Pearson's r , Own Table)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Student-Staff Ratio	18.75	23.13								
2. Perceived Empowerment	2.98	0.91	.12							
3. Empowerment Gap	1.02	0.82	-.09	-.84**						
4. Perceived Staff Attitudes	3.80	0.82	.08	.53**	-.55**					
5. Information and Training	2.92	0.93	.11	.46**	-.47**	.66**				
6. Democratic Benefits	3.54	0.88	.05	.29*	-.35**	.36**	.37**			
7. Personal Benefits	3.80	1.08	.18	.28*	-.25*	.31*	.43**	.65**		
8. Professional Benefits	3.86	0.87	.05	.14	-.21	.26*	.30*	.58**	.71**	
9. Organizational Benefits	3.83	0.83	.18	.49**	-.50**	.49**	.51**	.59**	.74**	.50**

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Overall, the correlations are the weakest and least significant for the professional effectiveness dimension, suggesting the weakest association between the independent variables and this dimension compared to the others. As mentioned, the examination of correlation coefficients is not sufficient in order to draw conclusions on causal relationships. However, this first step demonstrates that there seem to be associations between the independent and dependent variables, as derived from corresponding literature and postulated in the hypotheses of this study. It also gives an indication of the factors that should be included into the multiple linear regression models, which will be discussed in the next section.

5.2 Multiple Linear Regression

This section discusses the results of the multiple linear regression analysis and their implication for the postulated hypotheses. As mentioned in the chapter on methodology chapter, it is necessary to test each of the four models, corresponding to the perceived effectiveness dimensions, regarding the requirements for fitting a linear regression. Firstly, variance inflation factors were calculated to account for multicollinearity. All factors showed values far below the threshold of 10, from which an acceptable degree of multicollinearity can be derived (Eid et al., 2017, pp. 712–713). Secondly, the Breusch-Pagan test was applied to check for homoskedasticity, hence the constancy of the error term (Breusch & Pagan, 1979). The null hypothesis of heteroskedasticity could be rejected for each model, except for the model on personal benefits for which H_0 is significant on a 5%-level ($p = 0.018$). Therefore, the error term of this model is characterized by heteroskedasticity which can lead to an overestimation of significance levels. To counteract this effect, robust standard errors were calculated and a heteroskedasticity consistent personal model was fitted (Zeileis, 2004, p. 2). Although the standard errors became slightly larger, the significant levels stayed the same for those variables that were already significant in the first model. The examination of a histogram, in addition to the execution of a Shapiro-Wilk Test demonstrates the normal distribution of residuals, fulfilling another necessary condition of linear regression analysis (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). Finally, an insignificant result of the Rainbow Test can be interpreted as a general linearity of relationships in the regression models (Utts, 1982). Hence, all necessary tests proved the application of multiple linear regression models to be appropriate.

As a next step, the models' f -statistics show that all models have a significant explanatory value on a 1 % or 0.1 % level. The adjusted determination coefficients (R^2) furthermore reveal that the independent variables can explain 18.7 % of variance of student representatives' perception of reaching professional benefits, 25.3 % of personal benefits, 45.8 % of democratic benefits and 56.5 % of organizational benefits. This shows that the model fits best for the organizational dimension of perceived effectiveness, which is also

visible in the lowest residual standard error. Table 6 provides an overview of the regression models, including unstandardized regression coefficients *b* for all predictors, their significance levels as well as summary statistics on the bottom.

Table 6

Linear Regression Models for Student Representatives' Perceived Effectiveness in Achieving Personal, Professional, Democratic and Organizational Benefits (Own Table)

	Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness			
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Personal (1)	Professional (2)	Democratic (3)	Organizational (4)
Formal Power - Voting Right ^a	0.160	-0.498	-0.604*	0.038
Formal Power - Veto Right ^a	-0.446	-0.952**	-1.080***	-0.354
Separate Student Body - Yes ^b	3.411*	0.090	0.577*	2.751**
Empowerment Gap ^c	-0.085	-0.245	-0.578***	-0.328***
Staff Attitudes ^d	0.827*	0.077	0.295*	0.777**
Information and Training ^e	0.237	0.225		0.062
Age		-0.093**	-0.061**	
Gender – Male ^f		-0.207	0.004	0.199
Study Cycle – Master ^g		-0.226	-0.301	
Study Cycle – Doctor ^g		0.713	0.126	
Time spent on Position			-0.010**	
Democratic Election – Yes ^h			0.492**	0.372*
Tuition Fees	0.00005		0.00005	
Organizational Autonomy ⁱ				0.430
Financial Autonomy ⁱ	0.827			0.150
Staffing Autonomy ⁱ				1.376
Academic Autonomy ⁱ		0.904		-0.658
Separate Student Body:Staff Attitudes	-0.789*			-0.657**
Constant	-0.728	5.403***	4.650***	-0.105
Observations	65	60	60	61
R ²	0.358	0.338	0.568	0.660
Adjusted R ²	0.253	0.187	0.458	0.565
Residual Std. Error	0.941 (df = 55)	0.807 (df = 48)	0.654 (df = 47)	0.551 (df = 47)
F Statistic	3.409*** (df = 9; 55)	2.230** (df = 11; 48)	5.148*** (df = 12; 47)	7.003*** (df = 13; 47)

Note:

^a Reference category: no voting right; ^b Reference category: no separate student body; ^c Gap on the IAP2 scale; ^d Scale from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive); ^e Scale from 1 (not sufficient) to 5 (sufficient); ^f Reference category: female; ^g Reference category: bachelor; ^h Reference category: no democratic election; ⁱ Score according to Autonomy Scoreboard: 0 (low autonomy) to 1 (high autonomy)

*p<0.5; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

As explained, each model was fitted by iteratively adding independent variables and restricting the models to those increasing explanatory power to reach the best-fitted multiple regression models.

The independent variable associated with H1a, namely the student-staff ratio in the alliances' governing bodies, could not be included into any of the models, as it reduced the adjusted determination coefficient R^2 . This goes in line with the finding of the bivariate correlation beforehand, which was not significant for any effectiveness subdimension. Therefore, H1a has to be rejected: there is no significant positive relationship between the number of students in relation to staff members in governing bodies and perceived effectiveness

However, proceeding to hypothesis 1b provides a different picture: The personal, democratic and organizational models show a significant positive effect of a separate student body on perceived effectiveness, except for professional benefits. But only for democratic benefits, this result can be interpreted without concern: Student representatives in alliances that have a separate student body, give, on average, a 0.577 points higher index score than those in alliances without a separate student body ($p = 0.013$). Therefore, a separate governing body for student representatives has a positive effect on their debating skills, capability of making good decisions and understanding of democratic processes. Despite the significant coefficient in both other models, they cannot be interpreted without caution as there is a significant interaction between a separate student body and perceived staff attitudes. This indicates a moderating effect of a separate student body's existence. This effect will be discussed in the context of hypothesis 4 as it predominantly affects staff attitudes' impact on perceived effectiveness.

Accordingly, hypothesis 1b is supported by the results as the multiple linear regression model shows a positive significant effect of a separate student body on perceived effectiveness for every dimension except the professional one. This goes in line with the t-test that was conducted beforehand: it showed a significant mean difference between the students active in governing bodies of alliances that provide them with a separate forum and those who do not. Only the significant interaction term between a separate student body and perceived staff attitudes requires careful interpretation of the main effects in the models on personal and organizational benefits.

Although the bivariate correlations were significant, the perceived level of empowerment had to be excluded from the regression models due to its lack of explanatory power and reduction of the models' goodness-of-fit. Having said this, another measure related to power relations added significant explanatory value to all models: the ordinal variable formal power, ranging from no voting right (0), over voting right (1) to veto right (2) was added into the model, as literature pointed out a possible difference between formal

and perceived empowerment. Unexpectedly, it demonstrates the opposite effect than the one postulated in H2a: while literature hinted at a positive relationship between the level of empowerment and perceived effectiveness, the models at hand suggest a negative effect. Those with a formal voting right perceive their role as a student representative as 0.604 units less effective regarding democratic benefits than with no voting right ($p = 0.012$). For the alternate models, there is no significant effect. For those with a veto right, the negative effect is even more striking: in two areas, namely the professional and democratic ones, students with a veto right show, on average, much lower effectiveness scores. The regression coefficients of -0.952 ($p = 0.005$) and -1.080 ($p < 0.001$) compared to the reference category of no formal voting right are highly significant. This means that hypothesis 2a needs to be rejected. The reasons and implications of this surprising result will be discussed in the next chapter.

The descriptive statistics on the gap between perceived and desired level of empowerment show that student representatives are mostly wishing for more power in their positions. Judging from the results of the regression models, this discrepancy has a negative effect on their perception of effectiveness: for both the democratic and the organizational model, the empowerment gap shows highly significant regression coefficients. This demonstrates that a wider gap between perceived and desired level of empowerment goes in line with lower perceived effectiveness. One unit increase of the empowerment gap is associated with a decrease of 0.578 ($p < 0.001$) on the democratic benefits scale, including good decision-making, debating and the understanding of democratic processes. For the organizational dimension, one point increase of the gap translates to an average -0.328 ($p = 0.007$) points for the dependent variable. Put differently, the closer expectations and reality are, the more students feel like they can add to organizational development by bringing in a young perspective, increasing other students' trust in governance processes and contributing to higher quality outcomes. This result provides evidence for H2b.

The regression coefficients for perceived staff attitudes indicate a significant positive relationship between those and perceived personal, democratic and organizational effectiveness. Only for professional benefits, it does not have a significant effect. The positive effects in the other three models indicate that the more positive student representatives perceive staff members' attitudes towards them in the alliances' governance structures, the more they feel like they effectively achieve personal, democratic and organizational benefits. However, parallel to the effect of a separate student body, these main effects need to be interpreted with caution in the areas of personal and organizational benefits as the interaction between the two is significant. For the democratic and professional dimension, the interaction effect between staff attitudes and a separate

student body is not significant and does not add any explanatory value to the models. For democratic benefits it can be stated that a unit increase in perceived positivity of staff members towards student representatives, is associated with a 0.295 unit increase in perceived effectiveness ($p = 0.034$).

The significant interaction effects in the personal and organizational model can be interpreted as follows: Perceived staff attitudes towards student representatives have a significantly lower effect on their perceived effectiveness in alliances with a separate student body than in those without. The difference amounts to -0.789 ($p = 0.034$) for personal benefits and -0.657 ($p = 0.004$) for organizational benefits. Consequently, hypothesis 3 is supported: The more positively student representatives feel like they are seen by staff members, the higher their perceived effectiveness in the fields of personal and organizational benefits. However, concluding from the significant interaction, this relationship is moderated by the variable defining whether there is a separate student body. If there is, the influence of staff attitudes on students' perceived effectiveness is weaker.

Regarding the last hypothesis, postulating a positive relationship effect of the provision of information and training to student representatives on their perception of effectiveness, it becomes clear that there is no statistical support: while significant correlations could be observed with all indices in the first step, the correlation matrix, these effects did not hold in the multiple linear regression. For democratic benefits, the variable's lack of explanatory power led to its exclusion, whereas no significant effect could be observed in the other three models. Therefore, hypothesis 4 needs to be rejected.

Control Variables

Lastly, there remains the interpretation of the control variables' effects. Out of the control variables related to the respondents' characteristics, the only factor affecting their perceived effectiveness is their age. It shows a negative effect of age on professional and democratic benefits. Since it does not add any explanatory value to the other two dimensions, it was not added to these models. One year increase of age is associated with a decrease of 0.093 ($p = 0.005$) for professional benefits and 0.061 ($p = 0.013$) for democratic benefits. The other individual variables gender and study cycle do not influence the perceived effectiveness of the student representatives in the sample.

Proceeding to the control variables regarding the student assistant position, the time that student representatives spend on their position has a marginal, yet highly significant negative effect on their perception of effectively reaching democratic benefits (-0.010 , $p = 0.001$). Those who have been democratically elected to their position furthermore show a significantly higher perceived effectiveness in the areas of democratic and organizational benefits compared to those who were not. With a coefficient of 0.492 ($p = 0.008$), the effect

is especially strong and highly significant for the democratic dimension. For organizational benefits, it amounts to 0.372 ($p = 0.020$).

The control variables related to the HEI, alliance and higher education system do not show any significant effect. The only result which is close to significant is a positive relationship between staffing autonomy on perceived organizational effectiveness (1.376, $p = 0.052$). This association can also be observed, with 1.392 ($p = 0.063$) only differing marginally, for the subset of countries for which the Autonomy Scoreboard provides data for. This shows that the mean imputation did not distort effect sizes (see regression table for the autonomy scoreboard subset in Appendix B).

6 Conclusion

After presenting the results of the statistical analysis, this chapter moves back to the beginning of this thesis and discusses its implications for the answer to the research question (6.1). To draw final conclusions, it takes, once again, a look back at the academic literature and places the results in the context of the theoretical framework and state of research. Even further, it locates the findings in the wider context of the European Universities Initiative, European HE policy and university governance for the development of practical recommendation based on the scientific findings (6.2). And finally, a reflection on the research process demonstrates the limitations of this study and provides suggestions for future research (6.3).

6.1 Summary and Implications for the Research Question

This study has examined the role of student representation in the governance structures of European university alliances established by the European Commission's EUI in 2019 and 2020. Specifically, the question posed was 'how do student representatives in European university alliances' governance structures perceive their engagement's individual and organizational effectiveness?'. Insights from relevant bodies of literature were used to operationalize perceived effectiveness in this context in four dimensions: personal, professional and democratic benefits on the individual level as well as the macro-level organizational benefits. Concluding from this study's descriptive and causal analysis of 67 responses by student representatives from different European university alliances, its central research question can be answered.

On an individual level, student representatives see the least benefits of their engagement for their democratic development. They evaluate the effectiveness in improving their debating and decision-making skills and understanding of democratic processes with an average of 3.54 on a scale from 1 to 5. Following the results of the

regression analysis, student representatives in alliances with a separate student body perceive a stronger improvement of these abilities than in those without. Additionally, the more their level of power deviates from the level of power they would ideally like to have, the lower they evaluate their effectiveness. Formal power arrangements (voting and veto power) on the other hand, surprisingly showed a negative effect on students perceiving improvements in their democratic skills.

Respondents evaluated the achievement of personal benefits through their position with an average of 3.80 points. The main factors positively influencing this score seem to be the positivity of staff members towards student representatives and the existence of a separate student body as part of the alliance's governance model. The latter has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived staff attitudes and perceived personal effectiveness, which results in a weaker impact of staff attitudes on the improvement of self-confidence, a positive image of oneself and a feeling of satisfaction in alliances where students can discuss among each other in a separate entity without the interference of university staff members.

Gaining leadership and teamwork skills as well as making valuable contacts reached an average of 3.86 – the highest of all effectiveness dimensions in this study. However, the considered independent variables showed the weakest impact on the perceived achievement of professional benefits. None of the hypotheses could be confirmed, as no significant effects could be detected. Though, parallel to the results for democratic benefits, the degree of formal power is negatively associated with the respondent's perceived effectiveness.

Student representatives perceive their engagement almost equally effective for the achievement of benefits on an organizational level, which include making decision-making processes more transparent for students, representing their interests and therefore increasing their trust. Additionally, they feel like they are contributing to higher quality decisions and outcomes by bringing in a young perspective. The level of effectiveness they perceive, which averages at 3.83 on a scale from 1 to 5, tends to be higher when they feel supported and taken seriously by staff members who are part of their alliance's governance. The impact of their perceived attitudes is weaker when students are provided with a separate forum where they can discuss and form opinions and strategies among each other before presenting them in a mixed governing body in front of university staff. Finally, they feel like their contribution to organizational development is higher if their expectation of empowerment matches the actual empowerment in their position as a student representative.

Hence, it can be concluded that student representatives in European university alliances perceive their engagement as generally more effective in case they have the

opportunity to work together in a separate body rather than being confronted with the opinions of staff members in mixed committees from the beginning on. This does not only facilitate positive outcomes related to their individual development as a person and citizen in a democracy and within the alliance, but also seems to increase resistance against negative attitudes they are sensing from staff members towards them. While the formal provision of power had surprisingly no effect on perceived personal and organizational development and even a negative effect on achieving professional and democratic benefits, the empowerment gap seems to be of major importance: the further away expectations and reality are in terms of perceived empowerment, the lower respondents perceive their effectiveness in reaching democratic and organizational benefits. The next part reflects on these results and their theoretical, academic and practical implications.

6.2 Discussion

In the only comprehensive study discussing European university alliances' governance models yet, the authors conclude that the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders is crucial to reaching the project objectives. Long-term cooperation and impact beyond the project duration can be achieved only if actors of all groups, who are convinced of the concept, are engaged and communicate their support to other members of the university community. The governance structures should be constantly evaluated in terms of these goals to be able to find the best set-ups (Estermann et al., 2021, p. 20). Also, the alliances are characterized by the specificity that “‘exit costs’ for alliance members are low, [...], [so] the continued relevance and perceived added value of the governance structure is a crucial matter for consideration” (Bennetot Pruvot & Estermann, 2021). In the light of the focus on student inclusion which was a formulated goal of the European initiative (Council of the EU, 2021; European Commission, 2020b), this study inspected the perception of members of the numerically largest group of stakeholders in the university alliances and their role in governance. But the rationale lies not only in the fulfilment of this formulated policy focus but more importantly in the potential of student involvement in HE governance as a contribution to reaching organizational goals (Akomolafe & Ibijola, 2012, p. 16; Luescher-Mamashela, 2010, p. 260).

First of all, student representatives in this study's survey, on average, confirmed the achievement of personal and professional benefits through their engagement in alliance's governance structures postulated by prior studies on the basis of human growth theory (Diorio, 2007; Lizzio & Wilson, 2009; Meeuwissen et al., 2019). The increased satisfaction with the decision-making process can lead to higher motivation to engage again and “spill-over” (Beierle, 1999, p. 81) to the whole organization. More specifically, sharing positive experiences with other students and reporting from alliances' governance activities can increase transparency and trust among the student body, which are exactly the factors

determining sustainable cooperation (Estermann et al., 2021, p. 20) and reaching organizational objectives (Luescher-Mamashela, 2010, p. 260). Furthermore, by contributing to better decision-making and higher-quality outcomes (Buckley, 2014) through their young perspective (Meeuwissen et al., 2019), students benefit from the achievement of alliance goals in another, more direct manner.

On a broader societal level, this study suggests a contribution of obtaining a student representative position to the understanding of democratic processes as well as debating and decision-making skills (Griebler & Nowak, 2012; Menon, 2005). These are important qualities of citizens in a democratic society and go in line with the rising societal responsibility attributed to European HE (European Commission, 2022a).

However, this study also reveals variance in the perceived effectiveness in reaching these benefits among student representatives. Therefore, the aim was to uncover factors determining judgements of effectiveness among representatives which grant insights into possible strategies to increase those and consequently unfold their full potential on an individual and organizational development level. Not all predictors for high perceived effectiveness derived from public participation and HE governance literature as well as organizational studies could be confirmed in this study for the context of student representation in European university alliances. Nonetheless, especially three factors indicate results according to expectations that can be developed into recommendations to increase perceived effectiveness.

Firstly, to reach personal, democratic and organizational benefits, it seems to be important for student representatives to have a separate student body, meaning a forum to exchange among each other, discuss and strengthen their opinions before facing other governance members such as administrative and academic staff as well as the university leadership in a mixed committee set-up. This result goes in line with earlier studies suggesting a separation of less powerful groups in the first step of a public participation process because committee structures can be intimidating and a feeling of being backed up by others might be necessary to build confidence to voice an opinion (Carey, 2013b; Sultana & Abeyasekera, 2008).

On the other hand, the interaction with perceived staff attitudes requires special attention here: negative staff attitudes are negatively associated with perceived effectiveness, but this effect is weaker in alliances with a separate student body. This implies that students are less affected by staff members who make them feel like they are not equal partners, they are not taken seriously or that their opinion is not valued. Therefore, a student body can be regarded as a "safe space" where students are protected from patronizing judgements. This result can be interpreted in terms of Habermas' deliberation theory which, applied to public participation processes, stresses that they should facilitate

“political opinion- and will-formation through the institutionalization of a system of rights that assures equal participation to each individual in a process of legislation” (Vitale, 2006, p. 745). Or, as Cohen puts it: “we cannot simply assume that large gatherings with open-ended agendas [...] will encourage participants to regard one another as equals in a free deliberative procedure” (in: *ibid*, p. 756). The process might thus be seen as more effective in the student body setting as students see each other as equal members, whereas they are facing a patronizing attitude from seemingly more powerful university staff members in a mixed committee which limits effective deliberation.

Concluding from these results, alliances should provide staff as well as students with training for communication skills and deliberative decision-making. Furthermore, institutionalized rules should anchor the equality between members of the governance bodies, regardless of the part of the academic community they belong to. These rules need to be known and accepted by everyone who is involved. However, a reduction of perceived power imbalances in HE governance is a very difficult endeavour as these hierarchies are deeply rooted in institutional culture (Bartell, 2003) that affects the way that students are perceived (Carey, 2018). Therefore, the provision of a separate student body can be an intermediate solution to encourage effective student engagement.

The concept of power is also the central theme of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, which resumes that a process of involving citizens into decision-making processes needs to include power transfer because it will lead to frustration among participations otherwise (Arnstein, 1969). Interestingly, this study could not confirm a positive relationship between the level of empowerment and perceived effectiveness. This leads to the assumption that a feeling of effectiveness does not necessarily depend on the amount of decision-making power that is transferred to student representatives but rather other factors, such as the argument brought forward by Pateman in the context of participatory democracy theory that “the educational function, which constitutes processes of political learning, depends on public debate preceding the decision-making moment” (Vitale, 2006, p. 751).

Another result of this study sheds light on an additional alternative explanation: it confirms Brown's and Chin's (2013) finding that a low level of empowerment per se does not lead to frustration with the decision-making process, but a wrong expectation of how much power one would have. This, once again, resonates with the idea mentioned earlier, that institutionalized and, even more importantly, well-known rules about governance members' roles need to be established. There should be an open dialogue about expectations, rights and responsibilities early on in the process. This enables the development of a realistic perspective, reduction of frustration and facilitation of effective engagement. Included in these delineated rules should also be a democratic election

process of representatives, as this study's results show higher perceived democratic learning for representatives who were democratically elected than those who were merely appointed by staff members.

To address shortcomings of student representation mentioned by literature, one additionally needs to point out the importance of representing the diversity of the student body in university governance. The exclusion of certain groups can reinforce inequalities and attribute a subsidiary role to interests of marginalized students (Carey, 2013b). Although not at the centre of this study, the survey responses reveal that those who already participated in alliance opportunities such as course offers, are more likely to also participate in alliance governance. Following that, increasing diversity in alliance course participants bears the potential of motivating less represented group to also engage in decision-making processes and reach a more equal distribution of power.

Referring these considerations back to the beginning of this thesis, or rather to the beginning of the idea of European universities, initiated by France's president Emmanuel Macron in 2017, the importance of effective inclusion of the whole university community is decisive for his formulated goal of long-term cooperation and integration. If the European university alliances are successful in creating synergies in teaching and research, work together on contemporary societal issues and increase student mobility, they can be a central driver for the integration of European higher education systems and hence for an intended contribution to societal development.

However, the present results are not only relevant for this specific context: as this thesis applied insights from research on public participation and university governance equally, but they can also provide guidance for the design of participation processes on an institutional level as well as other forms of national and international civic engagement. And especially for including young people into decision-making, a goal at the centre of the 2022 European Year of Youth. The last part addresses further possible areas of research while simultaneously pointing towards this study's weaknesses and limitation.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While drawing conclusions from the results of this study, it is also important to address its limitations that are brought forth with the design of this study. Starting with the conceptualization of the central construct of perceived effectiveness: already when deriving its operationalization from literature, its divergent meanings became apparent. As discussed, it lies in the nature of its definition as it always depends on the intended outcomes of an action. Therefore, the dimensions of personal, professional, democratic and organizational effectiveness that this study centred around, only represent a fraction of what effectiveness can mean. Apart from this personal and organizational development perspective, a variety of other outcomes might be intended by student representatives when

deciding to take the position which would consequently change their definition of perceived effectiveness. For this purpose, a more exploratory approach, using qualitative interviews would have been interesting in order to get more detailed insights into student representatives' positions. Especially in the light of the initiative's novelty, this would have provided more perspectives onto the comparability between student engagement on an institutional level and in the transnational university consortia, which this study took as a given. For example, the internationality of these constructs might lead to the additional or diverging benefits for student representatives, such as international communication competence and intercultural understanding. Supplementing the quantitative results with a qualitative approach would have also been appropriate considering the restricted population and therefore relatively small sample size.

As already discussed in the methodology chapter, the data collection process was based on a snowball method which could have led to an unrepresentative sample as not every subject in the population had the same chance to enter the sample. Furthermore, the results are likely to be skewed towards students who identify more with their role in the alliance and therefore perceive it as more effective than those who decided not to answer the survey. This is reflected in the generally high perceived effectiveness values.

Evidently, multiple linear regression analysis furthermore falls short in proving a causal relationship between the models' independent and dependent variables because an association between two variables is no evidence for a causal effect (Bortz und Döring 2006, p. 11 in: Tausendpfund, 2018, p. 174). Schnell et al. (2013, in: Tausendpfund, 2018, pp. 175–176) establish a list of criteria which should be fulfilled in order to interpret a relationship in a causal manner: all relationship examined in this study are theoretically backed up – so one criterion is fulfilled. However, many of the “causes” do not clearly precede the “outcomes”, not all relationships can be interpreted as strong, and the relationships have not been tested in different contexts among different populations. Therefore, concerns regarding causality are present.

Following these considerations, future research could use this thesis' findings as a starting point for future studies, e.g. with a larger sample. Also, it needs to be considered that the alliances are still in their beginning phase, hence, it could be interesting to repeat a similar study after the first funding period is over and the alliances have moved towards more long-term cooperation models. This might change governance structures on the one hand, and the types of decisions to be made on the other. Furthermore, this study has only focused on one group of stakeholders in the alliances' governance structures. Studying the perception of administrative and academic staff members who engage in alliance governance respectively, would open up the opportunity for a comparison between the groups' experiences.

7 References

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Appendix A: Survey and Distribution

E-Mail to Project Managers

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am currently writing my master's thesis for the double degree in European Governance at Utrecht University and the University of Konstanz. I am focusing on student representation in the governance structures of the European university alliances.

For that purpose, I developed a survey to ask student representatives about their roles and experiences in the alliances' governance bodies. I would be very grateful, if you would promote the survey among the students participating in your alliance. Since the focus is on governance, the target group are only those holding a position as student representatives, rather than students participating in other alliance activities, work packages, etc.

The survey can be accessed [here](#).

Alternatively, this link can be copied directly into the browser:

https://survey.uu.nl/jfe/form/SV_5uQx4PgfmMHZp8a

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or would be interested in receiving the study's results once it is finished.

Thank you very much in advance and best regards,

Kathrin Ebel

Message to Student Representatives

Dear fellow students,

I am currently writing my master's thesis for the double degree in European Governance at Utrecht University and the University of Konstanz. I am focusing on student representation in the governance structures of the European university alliances.

For that purpose, I developed a survey to ask student representatives about their roles and experiences in the alliances' governance bodies. I would be very grateful, if you would answer the questionnaire as you are exactly my target group, and your opinions are what I am looking for! Since the focus is on governance, the survey is only for those holding a position as student representatives, rather than students participating in other alliance activities, work packages, or those who are only in their own university's student parliaments.

You can reach the survey via this link:

https://survey.uu.nl/jfe/form/SV_5uQx4PgfmMHZp8a

It would also be lovely if you could forward the link to the other representatives in your alliance!

Please just let me know if you have any questions or would be interested in the results!

Thank you so much in advance and best,

Kathrin

Questionnaire

Student Representation in the European University Alliances

Intro

Dear participant,

thank you very much for your willingness to answer this questionnaire for my Master's Thesis in European Governance! It addresses students who are participating in the governance structures of one of the 41 higher education alliances launched by the European Universities Initiative. Please only participate in this survey if you obtain a role as a student representative in your alliance.

If you are ready, start the survey by skipping to the next page. Please read the questions carefully. Some will ask for information about your alliance's governance set-up and some will ask for your personal opinion. Please answer honestly - there are no right or wrong answers and participation is anonymous.

Answering all questions will take around **10 minutes**.

Have fun with the questionnaire and thank you again for your support!

Kathrin Ebel

Contact: k.ebel@students.uu.nl

-

Q1 Does your alliance have a separate student body?

For example, these bodies are called:

- Student Board
- Student Council
- Student Forum

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Does your alliance have a separate student body? For example, these bodies are called: - Student... = Yes

Q2 Are you a student representative in this student body?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Q3 Are students represented in the highest decision-making body of your alliance?

For example, these bodies are called:

- Governing Board
- General Assembly
- University Council

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Are students represented in the highest decision-making body of your alliance? For example, these... = Yes

Q4 Are you a student representative in this highest decision-making body of your alliance?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Are students represented in the highest decision-making body of your alliance?For example, these... = Yes

Q5 How many members does the highest decision-making body of your alliance have?

▼ 1 (1) ... more than 50 (51)

Display This Question:

If Are students represented in the highest decision-making body of your alliance?For example, these... = Yes

Q6 How many of those members are students?

▼ 1 (1) ... more than 50 (51)

Display This Question:

If Does your alliance have a seperate student body?For example, these bodies are called: - Student... = Yes

Q7 Do members of the student council have a formal voting right?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Are students represented in the highest decision-making body of your alliance? For example, these... = Yes

Q8 Do student representatives in the highest decision-making body have a formal voting right?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Do student representatives in the highest decision-making body have a formal voting right? = Yes

Q9 Do student representatives' votes have the same weight as the other members' votes?

For example: staff members and students all have one vote that count the same

Yes (1)

No (0)

Display This Question:

If Do members of the student council have a formal voting right? = Yes

Or Do student representatives in the highest decision-making body have a formal voting right? = Yes

Q10 Do students have the right to veto a decision?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Q11 What motivated you to become a student representative in your alliance?

I already participated in offers provided by my alliance before (e.g. events, courses, mobilities) (1)

I was already involved in other tasks within the alliance before (e.g. as a student assistant in one of the work packages) (2)

I am/was already involved in the governance or student parliament of my university (3)

other: (4) _____

Q12 Which description fits best for the role of student representatives in your alliance's decision-making procedures?

We are provided with information to understand problems and possible solutions.	We are consulted / asked for feedback on pre-set alternatives and decisions.	We are involved throughout decision-making processes to ensure that our concerns are considered.	We co-develop alternatives and solutions with staff members and express our preferences.	The final decisions are placed in our hands.
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1 2 3 4 5



Q13 What would you ideally want the role of student representatives to look like in your alliance's decision-making procedures?

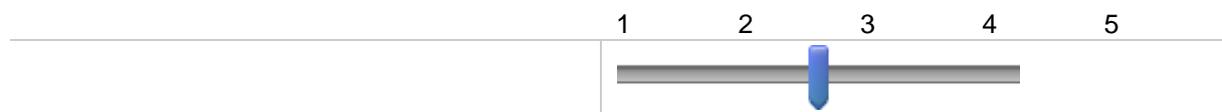
We are provided with information to understand problems and possible solutions.

We are consulted / asked for feedback on pre-set alternatives and decisions.

We are involved throughout decision-making processes to ensure that our concerns are considered.

We co-develop alternatives and solutions with staff members and express our preferences.

The final decisions are placed in our hands.



Q14 Please express your attitude towards the following statements. They all refer to staff members involved in the governance structures of your alliance:

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
I feel taken seriously by staff members. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members act patronizing towards me. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like my opinion is valued by staff members. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I am perceived as an equal partner by staff members. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like staff members see me as potential adversary or 'trouble-maker'. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members are encouraging me to participate. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15 Please express your attitude towards the following statements:

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
I am being informed about upcoming debates and decisions in time. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am provided with the necessary information to make well-prepared decisions within the alliances' governance procedures. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My alliance offers sufficient training for student representatives. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often confused about governance processes in my alliance. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often confused about the content of debates during alliance meetings. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q16 Please express your attitude towards the following statements:**My participation in the alliance's governance structures ...**

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
... has made me more confident. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... has improved the picture I have of myself. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... gives me a feeling of satisfaction. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Please express your attitude towards the following statements:**Through my participation in the alliance's governance structures, I have ...**

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
... learned to work better in teams. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... developed leadership skills. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... improved my competence of thinking critically. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... made valuable new contacts. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Please express your attitude towards the following statements:**My participation in the alliance's governance structures has improved**

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
... my debating skills. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... my competence of making good decisions. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... my understanding of democratic processes. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 Please express your attitude towards the following statements:**I believe that my participation ...**

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Strongly agree (5)
... brings a young perspective into the alliance's governance structures (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... helps to make the alliance's decision-making process more transparent to students. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... improves students' trust in the alliance's decision-making. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... enables me to represent the student body's interest in the alliance's governance structures. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... contributes to better decisions of the alliance's governance . (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... increases the quality of outcomes of the alliance's decision-making procedures. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 How long have you been in your current position as a student representative (in years)?

Q21 Were you appointed for a fixed period of time?

Yes (1)

No (4)

Display This Question:

If Were you appointed for a fixed period of time? = Yes

Q22 How long is that period in years?

Q23 Were you democratically elected into your position?

Yes (1)

No (0)

Q24 Do you get any reward for your participation?

I receive monetary compensation / salary (3)

I receive ECTS (2)

I receive a certificate (1)

I receive a different kind of reward, namely: (4)

I do not receive any reward (0)

Q25 On average, how many hours a month do you spend on tasks related to your position?

Q26 On average, how frequently do you participate in meetings of the governance body you are a part of?

- Once a week or more (1)
- less than once a week, up to once a month (2)
- several times a year (3)
- Once a year (4)

Q27 Which alliance are you participating in?

▼ una Europa (1) ... UNIVERSEH (41)

Q28 What is the name of your university?

Q29 How high are your yearly tuition fees in Euro?

Q30 What gender do you identify with?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q31 What is your year of birth? (Please state as YYYY)

Q32 Which study cycle are you in?

- Undergraduate (Bachelor's or comparable) (1)
- Graduate (Master's or comparable) (2)
- Doctoral Studies (3)

Q33 Is this your first position as a representative in the university or a different context (workplace, political organization, high school, ...)

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

Display This Question:

If Is this your first position as a representative in the university or a different context (workpla... = No

Q34 How many years of experience as a representative in the university or a different context (workplace, political organization, high school, ...) did you have prior to your current position?

Appendix B: Additional Tables

Indices

Index	Items
Personal Benefits	<i>My participation in the alliance's governance structures ...</i> ... has made me more confident. (1) ... has improved the picture I have of myself. (2) ... gives me a feeling of satisfaction. (3)
Professional Benefits	<i>Through my participation in the alliance's governance structures, I have ...</i> ... learned to work better in teams. (1) ... developed leadership skills. (2) ... improved my competence of thinking critically. (3) ... made valuable new contacts. (4)

Democratic Benefits	<p><i>My participation in the alliance's governance structures has improved</i></p> <p>... my debating skills. (1)</p> <p>... my competence of making good decisions. (2)</p> <p>... my understanding of democratic processes. (3)</p>
Organizational Benefits	<p><i>I believe that my participation ...</i></p> <p>... brings a young perspective into the alliance's governance structures (1)</p> <p>... helps to make the alliance's decision-making process more transparent to students. (2)</p> <p>... improves students' trust in the alliance's decision-making. (3)</p> <p>... enables me to represent the student body's interest in the alliance's governance structures. (4)</p> <p>... contributes to better decisions of the alliance's governance . (5)</p> <p>... increases the quality of outcomes of the alliance's decision-making procedures. (6)</p>
Perceived Staff Attitudes	<p>I feel taken seriously by staff members. (1)</p> <p>Staff members act patronizing towards me. (2)</p> <p>I feel like my opinion is valued by staff members. (3)</p> <p>I feel like I am perceived as an equal partner by staff members. (4)</p> <p>I feel like staff members see me as potential adversary or 'trouble-maker'. (5)</p> <p>Staff members are encouraging me to participate. (6)</p>
Information and Training	<p>I am being informed about upcoming debates and decisions in time. (1)</p> <p>I am provided with the necessary information to make well-prepared decisions within the alliances' governance procedures. (2)</p> <p>My alliance offers sufficient training for student representatives. (3)</p> <p>I am often confused about governance processes in my alliance. (4)</p> <p>I am often confused about the content of debates during alliance meetings. (5)</p>

Regression Table – Personal Benefits

Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness: Personal Benefits								
Dependent variable:								
Personal Benefits Index								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Formal Power - Voting Right	0.488*	0.292	0.095	0.139	0.093	0.049	0.062	0.160

	(0.284)	(0.283)	(0.304)	(0.301)	(0.298)	(0.298)	(0.298)	(0.292)
Formal Power - Veto Right	-0.165	-0.231	-0.466	-0.496	-0.467	-0.487	-0.499	-0.446
	(0.379)	(0.364)	(0.378)	(0.374)	(0.368)	(0.367)	(0.366)	(0.356)
Separate Student Body - Yes		0.786**	0.770**	0.680**	0.576*	0.535*	0.549*	3.411**
		(0.303)	(0.305)	(0.307)	(0.308)	(0.308)	(0.308)	(1.348)
Empowerment Gap			-0.323*	-0.156	-0.109	-0.119	-0.139	-0.085
			(0.168)	(0.196)	(0.195)	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.190)
Staff Attitudes				0.302	0.106	0.173	0.214	0.827**
				(0.187)	(0.218)	(0.223)	(0.226)	(0.357)
Information and Training				0.307*	0.277	0.244	0.237	
				(0.182)	(0.182)	(0.184)	(0.179)	
Tuition Fees					0.0001	0.0001	0.00005	
					(0.00005)	(0.00005)	(0.00005)	
Financial Autonomy						1.163	0.827	
						(1.066)	(1.044)	
Seperate Student Body:Staff Attitudes								-0.789**
								(0.362)
Constant	3.619***	3.114***	3.596***	2.330***	2.220**	2.046**	1.318	-0.728
	(0.201)	(0.274)	(0.367)	(0.866)	(0.855)	(0.862)	(1.089)	(1.412)
Observations	67	67	65	65	65	65	65	65
R ²	0.063	0.153	0.199	0.232	0.268	0.288	0.303	0.358
Adjusted R ²	0.034	0.113	0.145	0.167	0.193	0.201	0.203	0.253
Residual Std. Error	1.064 (df = 64)	1.019 (df = 63)	1.006 (df = 60)	0.993 (df = 59)	0.978 (df = 58)	0.973 (df = 57)	0.971 (df = 56)	0.941 (df = 55)
F Statistic	2.151 (df = 2; 64)	3.800** (df = 3; 63)	3.715*** (df = 4; 60)	3.570*** (df = 5; 59)	3.546*** (df = 6; 58)	3.293*** (df = 7; 57)	3.040*** (df = 8; 56)	3.409*** (df = 9; 55)

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Regression Table – Professional Benefits

Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness: Professional Benefits

	Dependent variable:								
	Professional Benefits Index								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Formal Power - Voting Right	-0.009	-0.079	-0.274	-0.241	-0.265	-0.242	-0.347	-0.469*	-0.498*
	(0.231)	(0.239)	(0.254)	(0.253)	(0.254)	(0.279)	(0.284)	(0.277)	(0.275)
Formal Power - Veto Right	-0.438	-0.461	-0.691**	-0.713**	-0.698**	-0.748**	-0.824**	-0.965***	-0.952***
	(0.307)	(0.307)	(0.316)	(0.314)	(0.314)	(0.330)	(0.332)	(0.323)	(0.320)

Separate Student Body - Yes	0.280 (0.257)	0.258 (0.256)	0.191 (0.258)	0.137 (0.263)	0.169 (0.274)	0.186 (0.273)	0.147 (0.270)	0.090 (0.270)	
Empowerment Gap		-0.312** (0.141)	-0.185 (0.165)	-0.162 (0.166)	-0.143 (0.177)	-0.164 (0.176)	-0.232 (0.177)	-0.245 (0.175)	
Staff Attitudes			0.227 (0.158)	0.126 (0.186)	0.130 (0.193)	0.212 (0.199)	0.144 (0.195)	0.077 (0.199)	
Information and Training				0.158 (0.155)	0.179 (0.165)	0.146 (0.167)	0.197 (0.162)	0.225 (0.162)	
Gender - Male					-0.248 (0.229)	-0.249 (0.232)	-0.214 (0.224)	-0.207 (0.222)	
Study Cycle: Master						-0.411 (0.252)	-0.272 (0.249)	-0.226 (0.249)	
Study Cycle: Doctor						-0.267 (0.352)	0.503 (0.468)	0.713 (0.488)	
Age							-0.075** (0.030)	-0.093*** (0.032)	
Academic Autonomy								0.904 (0.646)	
Constant	3.937*** (0.163)	3.758*** (0.232)	4.230*** (0.307)	3.277*** (0.727)	3.220*** (0.729)	3.222*** (0.763)	3.301*** (0.764)	5.338*** (1.085)	5.403*** (1.076)
Observations	67	67	65	65	65	61	61	60	
R ²	0.035	0.053	0.126	0.156	0.171	0.193	0.233	0.311	
Adjusted R ²	0.005	0.008	0.068	0.084	0.085	0.086	0.097	0.171	
Residual Std. Error	0.863 (df = 64)	0.862 (df = 63)	0.842 (df = 60)	0.834 (df = 59)	0.834 (df = 58)	0.856 (df = 53)	0.850 (df = 51)	0.815 (df = 49)	0.807 (df = 48)
F Statistic	1.158 (df = 2; 64)	1.171 (df = 3; 63)	2.158* (df = 4; 60)	2.173* (df = 5; 59)	1.987* (df = 6; 58)	1.808 (df = 7; 53)	1.720 (df = 9; 51)	2.214** (df = 10; 49)	2.230** (df = 11; 48)

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Regression Table – Democratic Benefits

Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness: Democratic Benefits

	Dependent variable:									
	Democratic Benefits Index									
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Formal Power - Voting Right	0.250 (0.233)	0.139 (0.239)	-0.129 (0.246)	-0.093 (0.243)	-0.155 (0.238)	-0.205 (0.238)	-0.314 (0.237)	-0.415* (0.241)	-0.535** (0.228)	-0.604** (0.231)
Formal Power - Veto Right	-0.234	-0.271	-0.559*	-0.584*	-0.670**	-0.726**	-0.836***	-0.904***	-1.042***	-1.080***

	(0.311)	(0.307)	(0.306)	(0.302)	(0.295)	(0.295)	(0.281)	(0.281)	(0.265)	(0.264)
Separate Student Body - Yes	0.443*	0.459*	0.385	0.536**	0.466*	0.509**	0.506**	0.599**	0.577**	
	(0.256)	(0.247)	(0.248)	(0.250)	(0.253)	(0.238)	(0.235)	(0.225)	(0.223)	
Empowerment Gap		-0.430***	-0.292*	-0.332**	-0.357**	-0.403***	-0.418***	-0.558***	-0.578***	
		(0.136)	(0.158)	(0.155)	(0.154)	(0.147)	(0.146)	(0.143)	(0.142)	
Staff Attitudes			0.248	0.220	0.209	0.199	0.255*	0.260*	0.295**	
			(0.152)	(0.147)	(0.146)	(0.139)	(0.143)	(0.134)	(0.135)	
Time spent of Position				-0.007**	-0.007**	-0.009***	-0.009***	-0.009***	-0.010***	
				(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	
Democratic Election: Yes					0.287	0.411**	0.437**	0.488***	0.492***	
					(0.200)	(0.193)	(0.192)	(0.180)	(0.178)	
Gender - Male						-0.002	0.0002	-0.009	0.004	
						(0.194)	(0.195)	(0.183)	(0.181)	
Study Cycle: Master							-0.370*	-0.307	-0.301	
							(0.210)	(0.200)	(0.198)	
Study Cycle: Doctor							-0.269	0.078	0.126	
							(0.296)	(0.381)	(0.378)	
Age								-0.057**	-0.061**	
								(0.024)	(0.024)	
Tuition Fees									0.00005	
									(0.00003)	
Constant	3.476*	3.191*	3.780***	2.742***	2.987***	2.997***	3.113***	3.162***	4.657***	4.650***
	(0.165)	(0.231)	(0.297)	(0.700)	(0.688)	(0.682)	(0.645)	(0.642)	(0.884)	(0.876)
Observations	67	67	65	65	65	65	61	61	60	60
R ²	0.040	0.084	0.217	0.251	0.308	0.332	0.427	0.461	0.550	0.568
Adjusted R ²	0.010	0.040	0.165	0.188	0.236	0.250	0.339	0.354	0.447	0.458
Residual Std. Error	0.873 (df = 64)	0.860 (df = 63)	0.814 (df = 60)	0.803 (df = 59)	0.778 (df = 58)	0.771 (df = 57)	0.718 (df = 52)	0.711 (df = 50)	0.661 (df = 48)	0.654 (df = 47)
F Statistic	1.350 (df = 2; 64)	1.927 (df = 3; 63)	4.164*** (df = 4; 60)	3.958*** (df = 5; 59)	4.301*** (df = 6; 58)	4.046*** (df = 7; 57)	4.851*** (df = 8; 52)	4.281*** (df = 10; 50)	5.335*** (df = 11; 48)	5.148*** (df = 12; 47)

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Regression Table – Organizational Benefits

Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness: Organizational Benefits

Dependent variable:

Organizational Benefits Index

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Formal Power - Voting Right	0.36 ₉ [*]	0.232	-0.097	-0.055	-0.083	-0.121	-0.183	-0.145	-0.127	-0.086	-0.057	0.038
	(0.21 ₉)	(0.220)	(0.210)	(0.204)	(0.202)	(0.203)	(0.204)	(0.203)	(0.201)	(0.200)	(0.201)	(0.188)
Formal Power - Veto Right	0.07 ₆	0.030	-0.309	-0.337	-0.320	-0.368	-0.430 [*]	-0.435 [*]	-0.429 [*]	-0.379	-0.402 [*]	-0.354
	(0.29 ₂)	(0.283)	(0.261)	(0.253)	(0.250)	(0.252)	(0.242)	(0.239)	(0.237)	(0.235)	(0.236)	(0.218)
Separate Student Body - Yes		0.546 ^{**}	0.595 ^{***}	0.509 ^{**}	0.446 ^{**}	0.402 [*]	0.413 ^{**}	0.417 ^{**}	0.442 ^{**}	0.377 [*]	0.396 [*]	2.751 ^{***}
		(0.236)	(0.211)	(0.208)	(0.209)	(0.211)	(0.201)	(0.199)	(0.198)	(0.199)	(0.199)	(0.793)
Empowerment Gap			-0.531 ^{***}	-0.371 ^{***}	-0.343 ^{**}	-0.367 ^{***}	-0.370 ^{***}	-0.382 ^{***}	-0.390 ^{***}	-0.375 ^{***}	-0.370 ^{***}	-0.328 ^{***}
			(0.116)	(0.133)	(0.132)	(0.133)	(0.129)	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.116)
Staff Attitudes			0.287 ^{**}	0.168	0.175	0.181	0.162	0.199	0.250 [*]	0.267 [*]	0.777 ^{***}	
			(0.127)	(0.148)	(0.147)	(0.140)	(0.139)	(0.140)	(0.142)	(0.142)	(0.213)	
Information and Training				0.188	0.162	0.152	0.154	0.131	0.079	0.075	0.062	
				(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.113)	
Democratic Election: Yes					0.229	0.369 ^{**}	0.376 ^{**}	0.323 [*]	0.341 ^{**}	0.331 [*]	0.372 ^{**}	
					(0.174)	(0.169)	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.167)	(0.167)	(0.155)	
Gender - Male						0.160	0.154	0.118	0.159	0.177	0.199	
						(0.167)	(0.165)	(0.166)	(0.166)	(0.166)	(0.153)	
Organizational Autonomy							1.180	0.611	-0.660	0.032	0.430	
							(0.787)	(0.877)	(1.181)	(1.333)	(1.237)	
Financial Autonomy								1.088	1.058	0.569	0.150	
								(0.769)	(0.758)	(0.875)	(0.819)	
Staffing Autonomy									1.149	1.343 [*]	1.376 [*]	
									(0.728)	(0.747)	(0.689)	
Academic Autonomy										-0.690	-0.658	
										(0.620)	(0.572)	
Separate Student Body: Staff Attitudes												-0.657 ^{***}
												(0.215)
Constant	3.66 ₇ ^{***}	3.315 ^{***}	4.005 ^{***}	2.799 ^{***}	2.731 ^{***}	2.754 ^{***}	2.695 ^{***}	1.942 ^{**}	1.659 ^{**}	1.792 ^{**}	1.842 ^{**}	-0.105
	(0.15 ₅)	(0.213)	(0.253)	(0.586)	(0.581)	(0.578)	(0.553)	(0.742)	(0.762)	(0.756)	(0.755)	(0.945)

Observations	67	67	65	65	65	65	61	61	61	61	61	61
R ²	0.045	0.120	0.356	0.408	0.431	0.447	0.522	0.542	0.560	0.581	0.592	0.660
Adjusted R ²	0.015	0.078	0.313	0.358	0.372	0.379	0.449	0.462	0.472	0.487	0.490	0.565
Residual Std. Error	0.820 (df = 64)	0.794 (df = 63)	0.695 (df = 60)	0.672 (df = 59)	0.665 (df = 58)	0.661 (df = 57)	0.620 (df = 52)	0.613 (df = 51)	0.607 (df = 50)	0.598 (df = 49)	0.597 (df = 48)	0.551 (df = 47)
F Statistic	1.499 (df = 2; 64)	2.851** (df = 3; 63)	8.301*** (df = 4; 60)	8.123*** (df = 5; 59)	7.308*** (df = 6; 58)	6.590*** (df = 7; 57)	7.107*** (df = 8; 52)	6.719*** (df = 9; 51)	6.366*** (df = 10; 50)	6.187*** (df = 11; 49)	5.802*** (df = 12; 48)	7.003*** (df = 13; 47)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Regression Table – Organizational Benefits (Autonomy Subset)

Linear Regression Results - Perceived Effectiveness: Organizational Benefits (Autonomy Subset)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>											
	Organizational Benefits Index											
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Formal Power - Voting Right	0.384	0.276	-0.035	0.008	-0.031	-0.114	-0.217	-0.175	-0.144	-0.093	-0.044	0.090
	(0.251)	(0.251)	(0.234)	(0.230)	(0.232)	(0.235)	(0.231)	(0.229)	(0.228)	(0.227)	(0.229)	(0.222)
Formal Power - Veto Right	-0.041	-0.045	-0.351	-0.383	-0.380	-0.462	-0.513*	-0.524**	-0.516*	-0.457*	-0.481*	-0.448*
	(0.314)	(0.306)	(0.281)	(0.275)	(0.274)	(0.276)	(0.263)	(0.259)	(0.257)	(0.256)	(0.256)	(0.240)
Separate Student Body - Yes		0.519*	0.681***	0.563**	0.478*	0.452*	0.460*	0.473**	0.505**	0.436*	0.465*	2.782***
		(0.268)	(0.242)	(0.245)	(0.256)	(0.253)	(0.238)	(0.234)	(0.234)	(0.235)	(0.234)	(0.945)
Empowerment Gap			-0.539***	-0.391**	-0.354**	-0.413**	-0.411***	-0.430***	-0.441***	-0.420***	-0.415***	-0.363**
			(0.129)	(0.150)	(0.154)	(0.156)	(0.151)	(0.150)	(0.149)	(0.147)	(0.146)	(0.139)
Staff Attitudes				0.262*	0.170	0.163	0.168	0.148	0.192	0.249	0.273*	0.807***
				(0.144)	(0.166)	(0.164)	(0.154)	(0.152)	(0.154)	(0.157)	(0.157)	(0.258)
Information and Training					0.159	0.122	0.129	0.126	0.097	0.041	0.031	0.030
					(0.144)	(0.145)	(0.140)	(0.137)	(0.138)	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.132)
Democratic Election: Yes						0.311	0.444**	0.455**	0.396**	0.404**	0.386*	0.402**
						(0.203)	(0.193)	(0.190)	(0.194)	(0.191)	(0.191)	(0.179)
Gender - Male							0.205	0.198	0.155	0.201	0.224	0.184
							(0.190)	(0.187)	(0.188)	(0.188)	(0.188)	(0.177)

Organizational Autonomy	1.247 (0.814)	0.708 (0.910)	-0.567 (1.231)	0.217 (1.381)	0.606 (1.304)							
Financial Autonomy		1.041 (0.808)	1.019 (0.796)	0.478 (0.907)	0.136 (0.861)							
Staffing Autonomy			1.144 (0.758)	1.372* (0.777)	1.392* (0.728)							
Academic Autonomy				-0.790 (0.646)	-0.770 (0.606)							
Separate Student Body:Staff Attitudes											-0.654** (0.259)	
Constant	3.724*** (0.166)	3.365** (0.246)	3.935*** (0.271)	2.872*** (0.640)	2.797*** (0.643)	2.894*** (0.637)	2.774*** (0.598)	1.992** (0.779)	1.705** (0.804)	1.828** (0.796)	1.869** (0.792)	-0.185 (1.102)
Observations	56	56	55	55	55	55	52	52	52	52	52	52
R ²	0.051	0.114	0.351	0.392	0.407	0.435	0.523	0.548	0.566	0.589	0.604	0.661
Adjusted R ²	0.015	0.063	0.299	0.330	0.333	0.351	0.434	0.452	0.460	0.476	0.483	0.545
Residual Std. Error	0.845 (df = 53)	0.824 (df = 52)	0.719 (df = 50)	0.703 (df = 49)	0.701 (df = 48)	0.692 (df = 47)	0.641 (df = 43)	0.631 (df = 42)	0.626 (df = 41)	0.617 (df = 40)	0.613 (df = 39)	0.575 (df = 38)
F Statistic	1.417 (df = 2; 53)	2.241* (df = 3; 52)	6.752*** (df = 4; 50)	6.317*** (df = 5; 49)	5.490*** (df = 6; 48)	5.175*** (df = 7; 47)	5.896*** (df = 8; 43)	5.666*** (df = 9; 42)	5.346*** (df = 10; 41)	5.218*** (df = 11; 40)	4.967*** (df = 12; 39)	5.704*** (df = 13; 38)

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01