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# Identifying the Dimensions and Components of Good Governance and Organizational Development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences

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A B S T R A C T

**Purpose:** Good governance and organizational development can create a competitive advantage for any organization, including educational institutions. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to identify the dimensions and components of good governance and organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences.

**Methodology:** This study was applied in purpose and qualitative in approach. The study population consisted of experts familiar with the research field at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences. The research sample included 10 managers and professors at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, selected through purposive sampling based on the principle of theoretical saturation. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, the validity of which was confirmed based on confirmability, credibility, and transferability, and reliability was calculated using a Holsti coefficient of 0.76. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis in MAXQDA-2020 software.

**Findings:** The analysis results showed that good governance comprises 20 components across five dimensions: desirable governance, value orientation, capacity building, transparency, and accountability; and organizational development consists of 19 components across three dimensions: non-financial performance, financial performance, and organizational growth. Ultimately, a model of the dimensions and components of good governance and organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences was developed.

**Conclusion:** Utilizing the model designed in this study can assist professionals and officials at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences in improving conditions and creating a competitive advantage.

*Keywords: Academic Buoyancy Training, Psychological Capital Training, Academic Procrastination, Female Students*

## 1. Introduction

The higher education system plays a vital role in the economic, social, and cultural advancement and development of societies, and developed countries believe that the primary basis for production and development is the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the higher education system (Biswas et al., 2019). Education and educational systems are important tools for the social and economic progress of countries and, for this reason, are considered a primary priority for governance. Therefore, educational systems must maintain their current role in responding to the needs and priorities of the government and the nation on one hand, and on the other hand, must continuously compete for development and training citizens to meet emerging global needs (Khalkhali et al., 2020). Good governance in higher education and universities is recognized as a form of internal and external coordination. Since identifying the internal elements of the higher education system is related to the topic of internal governance of universities, understanding these elements and their performance can significantly affect many governmental policies and methods closely related to the participation and non-participation of higher education in national decision-making processes (Bourrel et al., 2018). Governance is a process through which a private or public institution or organization is managed at a national or supranational level, based on the collaboration of a network of stakeholders in which decisions are made to conduct affairs and improve conditions (Anginer et al., 2022). Governance comprises a mix of traditions, values, and institutions used in a country, such as the process of election, accountability, and replacement of the government, respect for citizens' rights, and the government's capacity for policy formulation and implementation, playing a vital role in implementing solutions and managing organizations and societies (Radee et al., 2019).

Good governance is a system through which organizations are managed, and it refers to the process of formulating and implementing public policies in economic, social, political, and cultural fields with the participation of societal organizations, adhering to the principles of transparency and accountability in such a way that, while meeting the basic needs of society, leads to the realization of justice, security, and development (Klimach et al., 2018). Good governance includes mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens, groups, and civil society organizations pursue their interests, enforce their legal rights, and fulfill their obligations, duties, and responsibilities (Gómez-Gallego et al., 2022). Good governance, a concept derived from governance, indicates the quality of the governance process, especially in connection with the effectiveness of government or governing organization performance (Dijkstra, 2018). The concept of good governance requires that all stakeholders participate in decision-making directly or indirectly through other institutions and make decisions for their own interests (Park & Dreamson, 2023). Good governance is not merely an internal issue but a complex and outward-looking activity that plays a significant role in interacting with the social and political environment. Academic governance emphasizes the rules and mechanisms through which various academic stakeholders influence decisions. In the higher education environment, this type of governance refers to the formal and informal exercise of power within the framework of laws, policies, and regulations that indicate the rights and responsibilities of various university stakeholders, and these multiple academic actors interact with each other (Bakhshi et al., 2021).

Good governance is considered an important indicator in the development process of countries, and the establishment of good governance leads to the emergence of conditions for government agility, government intelligence, government interaction with the global community, enhancement of national production, and increase in domestic and foreign investment, achieving sustainable development (Omri & Ben Mabrouk, 2020). An important dimension of development in an organization is organizational development, which means the process of melting traditional ideas, beliefs, and behaviors, establishing new values, implementing new systems, and aligning organizations with the latest phenomena (Micán et al., 2023). Organizational development means changing the personality and identity of the organization through interaction with the environment, which necessitates the organization's internal capacity and internal interaction for effective environmental communication and self-renewal activities (Moser & Smaldino, 2022). This construct represents the application of behavioral science knowledge across the organization for planned development and strengthening strategies, structures, and organizational processes to improve organizational effectiveness, creating a better fit between organizational capabilities and environmental demands, promoting organizational advancement, and achieving competitive advantage (Taute & Taute, 2012). The development of any organization largely depends on the

proper use of human resources and establishing appropriate relationships among them, and organizational development is a long-term, planned change that can increase productivity, efficiency, and organizational effectiveness (Olszak, 2022). Therefore, organizational development, with appropriate theoretical and empirical backing and in evolution, paves the way for adaptation to organizational changes and transformations, requiring a move towards new and advanced organizations and an effort to achieve organizational excellence by integrating organizational goals with the aspirations of individuals and employees (Parameswaran, 2023).

Organizational development is an applied and developing effort whose actual scope is equivalent to the practical application of knowledge in organizations. For this reason, it is appropriate for the development or emergence of organizational and managerial challenges, the transformation of dominant paradigms in the field of organization and management, and responding to specific organizational issues or situations in which it is employed (Jokar et al., 2018). This construct is a process consisting of successive and interconnected stages in a specific direction and within a specific time frame towards a goal or goals, a continuous and ongoing process with dynamic characteristics, mobility, and flexibility aimed at the improvement and renovation of the organization (Oncioiu et al., 2022). Organizational development is a change that ultimately leads to the creation and transformation of the personality and identity of the organization, transforming the behavior and performance of individuals and enhancing organizational performance (Asalkhanova et al., 2022). Organizational development programs have several common features. First, these programs are long-term, often taking one to three years. Second, organizational development emphasizes participatory management, meaning managers and employees at various organizational hierarchy levels participate in problem-solving. Third, the uniqueness of each organization is recognized in organizational development, and it is not the case that a uniform prescription is given to all companies. Fourth, organizational development programs emphasize the value of teamwork and small groups. In fact, most systems with organizational development utilize small units as tools for implementing changes and broad organizational transformations (Jena & Nayak, 2023).

Salehi (2023) concluded that good governance indicators, including accountability of all institutions, achieving transparency, an active civil society, combating corruption and administrative integrity, active citizen participation, the rule of law, consensus orientation, and officials' accountability, played an effective role towards development (Salehi, 2023). Althwaini, Darboe, Alshahrani, and Alharbi (2021) found that three dimensions of governance, including accountability, transparency, and participation, had a direct and significant impact on university development (Althwaini et al., 2021). Ghorbanian, Ghahramani, and Abolghasemi (2021) showed that there were 30 concepts in three components of civil accountability and sustainable development (with components including the establishment of civil accountability and sustainable development committees in universities, defining research fields with priority to regional issues, strengthening and encouraging interdisciplinary education and studies in response to societal needs, implementing joint projects with society and companies, providing public education for all community members in needed areas, creating new knowledge and innovation in needed areas, focusing on local indicators and challenges in universities' goals and policies and higher education system, considering sustainable development goals in the vision, mission, goals, and policies of the higher education system and education, research, and outreach with a focus on sustainable development and social responsibility), continuous and effective evaluation (with components including regular review of evaluation standards in the higher education system, meritocratic selection, regular financial auditing, linking the outcomes of the higher education system and budget, attention to quality assurance programs in the higher education system, regular publication of university evaluation results and making them accessible to applicants, use of performance contracts, establishing a mechanism for verifying performance reports, considering the university's role in sustainable development and civil responsibility in university rankings and regular evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the higher education system), and good management and leadership (with components including independence of universities and the separation of higher education system management from governance, stabilization and diversification of financial resources, creating an environment of justice, equality, and diversity in programs, policies, and practices of universities and the higher education system, participation of all higher education system stakeholders in management decision-making, the rule of law in institutional and administrative structures, interaction with international institutions, interaction with national and local institutions, integration of

the higher education institution, management stability in the higher education system, defining specific quantitative and qualitative goals, and using a decentralized approach) were identified (Ghorbanian et al., 2021).

Hajiloo, Mohammadi, Doroudi, and Mansori (2021) demonstrated that the model for human resource development based on good governance in medical universities under the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education included factors of accountability, transparency, governance capacity building and development, attitude and identity formation, coordination, results orientation, effectiveness of roles and responsibilities, socio-cultural development, individual development, and educational development (Hajiloo et al., 2021). Sameti, Ranjbar, and Mohseni (2012), in a study titled "Analysis of the Impact of Good Governance Indicators on the Human Development Index Case Study: Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN)," found that the quality of good governance, calculated through the weighted average of governance indicators, had a positive and significant effect on the human development index. Additionally, among the six indicators of good governance, political stability, government effectiveness, quality of regulations, and rule of law had a positive and significant impact on the human development index (Sameti et al., 2012).

Despite the centrality of good governance in achieving success and development in universities, many universities in developing countries like Iran have faced a type of governance crisis, often manifesting as conflicts between management, students, and staff over issues such as living stipends, wages and salaries, service conditions and terms, limited representation in university governing bodies, and the perception of university powers as defenders of government interests rather than university interests. Evidence suggests that the principles of good governance in third-world universities have remained merely a slogan and are not visible in practice in the university and society (Ghorbanian et al., 2021). Furthermore, the 2025 Vision Document envisions Iran as a leader in economy, science, and technology in the Southwest Asian region, necessitating the study of organizational development processes. The study of organizational development processes worldwide indicates that higher education systems have always been a fundamental factor in economic, social, and cultural evolution and development. Therefore, countries seeking comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable organizational development must develop their higher education systems in

a balanced and sustainable manner and consider a set of indicators for their governance. Hence, attention to good governance and organizational development in universities, including medical universities, is of great importance and can provide ideal conditions for outlining a bright future. Good governance and organizational development can create a competitive advantage for any organization, including educational institutions. Consequently, the purpose of this research was to identify the dimensions and components of good governance and organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was applied in purpose and qualitative in approach. The study population consisted of experts familiar with the research field at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences. The research sample included 10 managers and professors at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, selected through purposive sampling based on the principle of theoretical saturation. The samples were chosen based on five key characteristics: being key and influential individuals in the research field, confirmed by others in the research topic, theoretical understanding of the academic field and specialized texts of the current research, diversity (having experience in various companies and different sub-branches of the current research topic), and willingness to cooperate (interest and willingness to participate in the research and honesty in speech). Additionally, the samples had to be managers and academic professors at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences with research and specialized publications in the current research field.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

In this study, data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The research interviews were conducted individually, and after each interview, the data were analyzed and coded. The process of selecting samples for semi-structured interviews and analyzing the resulting data continued until new samples could not add new information to the previous information obtained from interviews with experts. In other words, the research or the interviews with experts concluded when the research reached saturation in terms of information and findings. The average duration of

each individual interview with the experts was about 40 minutes. Before conducting interviews with the experts and after selecting them, the importance and necessity of the research were explained, and they were assured about ethical considerations, including confidentiality, anonymity of interviewees, etc. The interviews were conducted as previously arranged, and in addition to taking notes during the interview process, the interviews were recorded with a voice recorder for review at a suitable time after the interview to document and note forgotten and unrecorded information and findings. It is worth mentioning that the validity of the interview findings was confirmed based on confirmability, credibility, and transferability, and their reliability was calculated using a Holsti coefficient of 0.76.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis in MAXQDA-2020 software was used for data analysis. For this purpose, and to familiarize the researcher with the depth and breadth of the data content, immersion in the data was performed. Immersing in the data typically involves repeatedly reading the data and actively reading them, meaning searching for meanings and patterns. At this stage, the identification of good governance and organizational development indicators at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences was addressed. Subsequently, initial codes were extracted, and

these codes represent a feature of the data that seemed interesting to the analyst. The next stage involved searching for themes, which includes categorizing different codes into potential contents and organizing them. The following stage is theme review, which starts when the analyst has created a set of contents and reviews them. This stage involves two steps of content review and refinement, where the first step involves review at the level of coded summaries, and the second step involves validating the contents in relation to the dataset. The fifth stage is defining and naming the themes, which starts when there is a satisfactory map of contents. The analyst defines the contents presented for analysis, reviews them again, and then analyzes the data within them. Also, in this stage, the naming of main and sub-categories or dimensions and components is formed, and for each set of codes extracted from interview texts, a specific category is considered. The last stage is report preparation, which starts when the analyst has a fully analyzed and coherent set of contents. This stage involves the final analysis and writing of the report.

### 3. Findings and Results

In the current study, theoretical saturation was achieved after the sampling process and interviewing the tenth participant, and the results and frequency percentage of their demographic information were reported in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Frequency and percentage frequency results of demographic information of the samples in this study*

| Demographic Characteristics | | Frequency | (%) Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 6 | 60 |
| | Female | 4 | 40 |
| Age | <35 | 1 | 10 |
| | 35 – 44 | 4 | 40 |
| | >44 | 5 | 50 |
| Education | Master's Degree | 3 | 30 |
| | PhD | 7 | 70 |
| Work Experience | 11-20 | 7 | 70 |
| | >20 | 3 | 30 |

According to the results of Table 1, among the samples of this study, 60% were male, 50% were older than 45 years, 70% had doctoral degrees, and 70% had work experience of 11 to 20 years. The results of the thematic analysis of good

governance at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences were reported in Table 2, and the model of the dimensions and components of good governance at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences was reported in Figure 1.
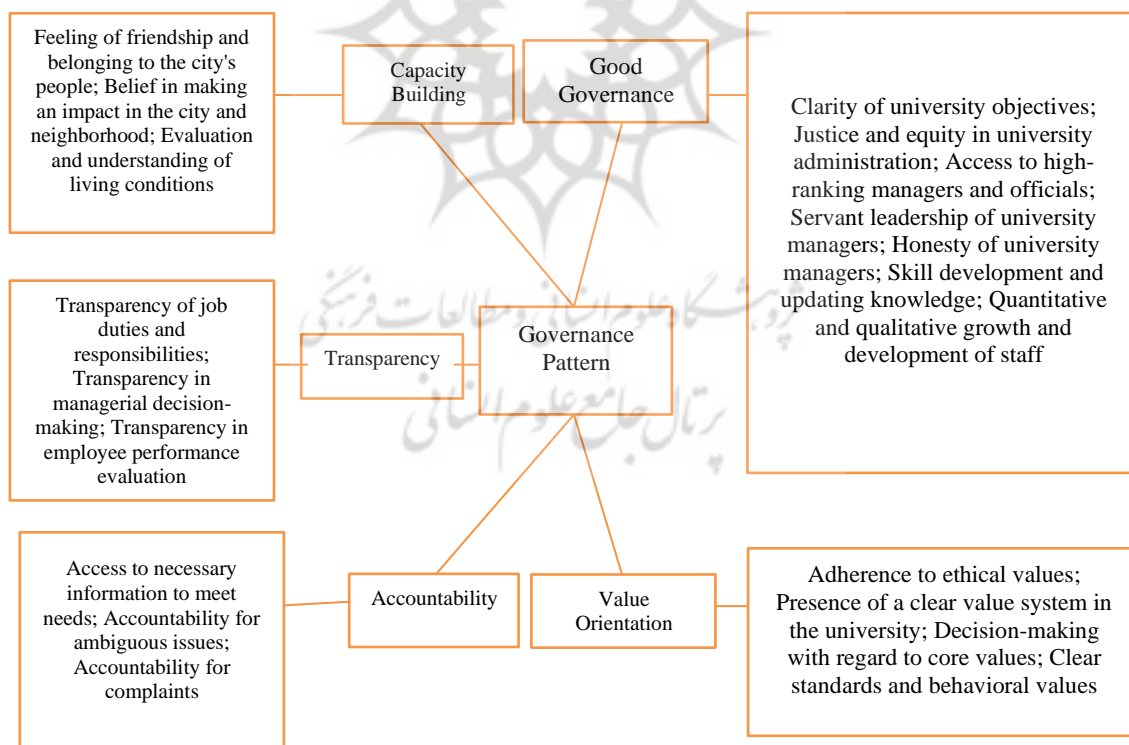
**Table 2**

*Results of the thematic analysis of good governance at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences*

| Dimension | Component |
|---|---|
| Good Governance | Clarity of academic objectives |
| | Justice and equality in university administration |
| | Access to high-ranking managers and officials |
| | Servant leadership of university managers |
| | Integrity of university managers |
| | Skill development and knowledge updating |
| | Quantitative and qualitative growth and development of staff |
| Value Orientation | Adherence to ethical values |
| | Presence of a clear value system in the university |
| | Decision-making with regard to core values |
| | Clear standards and behavioral values |
| Capacity Building | Sense of friendship and belonging to the city's people |
| | Belief in making an impact on the city and neighborhood |
| | Evaluation and understanding of living conditions |
| Transparency | Transparency of job duties and responsibilities |
| | Transparency in managerial decision-making |
| | Transparency in employee performance evaluation |
| Accountability | Access to necessary information to meet needs |
| | Accountability for ambiguous issues |
| | Accountability for complaints |

**Figure 1**

*The model of dimensions and components of good governance at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences*



According to the results of Table 2 and Figure 1, good governance at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences consisted of 20 components in five dimensions: desirable governance, value orientation, capacity building, transparency, and accountability. The results of the thematic analysis of organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences were reported in Table 3, and the model of the dimensions and components of

organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences was reported in Figure 2.
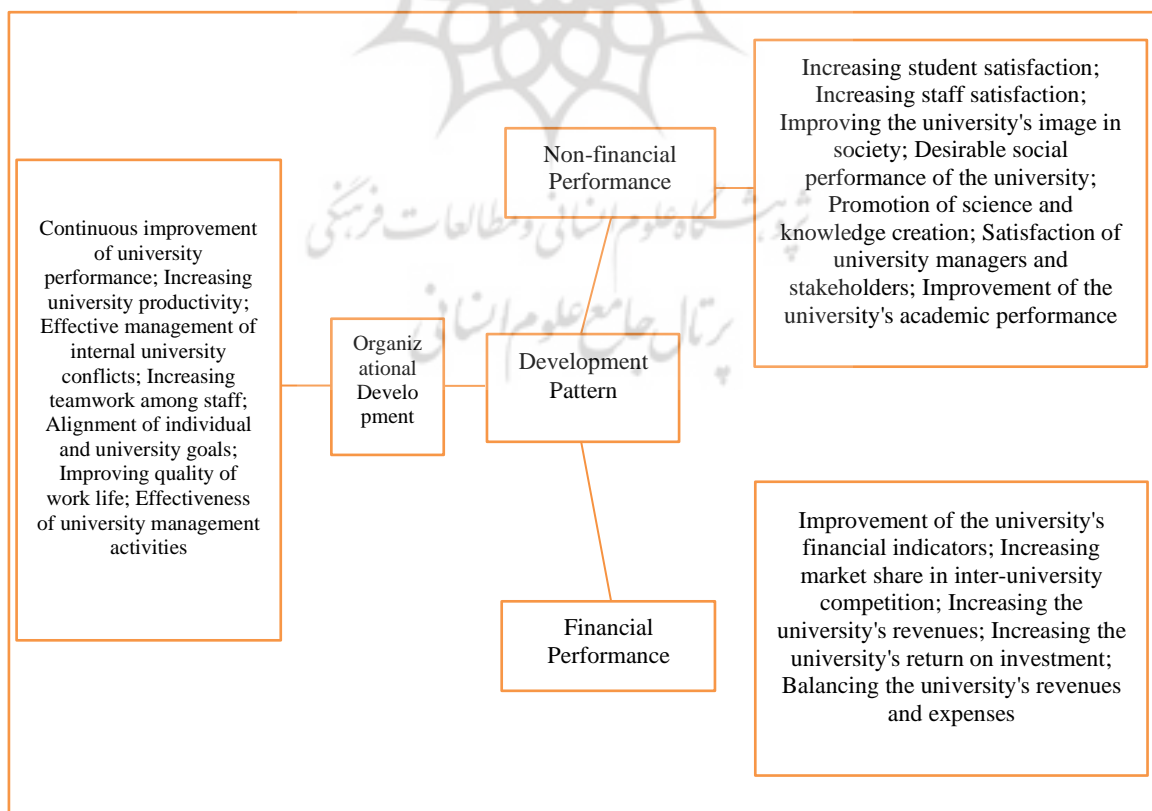
**Table 3**

*Results of the thematic analysis of organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences*

| Dimension | Component |
|---|---|
| Non-financial Performance | Increasing student satisfaction |
| | Increasing staff satisfaction |
| | Improving the university's image in society |
| | Desirable social performance of the university |
| | Promotion of science and knowledge creation |
| | Satisfaction of university managers and stakeholders |
| | Improvement of academic performance of the university |
| Financial Performance | Improvement of the university's financial indicators |
| | Increasing market share in inter-university competition |
| | Increasing the university's revenues |
| | Increasing the university's return on investment |
| | Balancing the university's revenues and expenses |
| Organizational Development | Continuous improvement of university performance |
| | Increasing university productivity |
| | Effective management of internal university conflicts |
| | Increasing teamwork among staff |
| | Aligning individual and university goals |
| | Improving quality of work life |
| | Effectiveness of university management activities |

**Figure 2**

*The model of dimensions and components of organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences*

According to the results of Table 3 and Figure 2, organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences consisted of 19 components in three dimensions: non-financial performance, financial performance, and organizational growth.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Reviews indicate that good governance and organizational development play an effective role in improving the status of organizations, including educational institutions. Given the lack of research in this area in medical universities in the country, the purpose of this research was to identify the dimensions and components of good governance and organizational development at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences. The results showed that good governance consisted of 20 components in five dimensions: desirable governance, value orientation, capacity building, transparency, and accountability, and organizational development consisted of 19 components in three dimensions: non-financial performance, financial performance, and organizational development. The results of the current research analysis were consistent with the results of the analyses of studies by several researchers (Hajiloo et al., 2021; Salehi, 2023; Sameti et al., 2012). (Hajiloo et al., 2021; Salehi, 2023; Sameti et al., 2012)

Good governance had twenty components and five dimensions: desirable governance, value orientation, capacity building, transparency, and accountability. Explaining desirable governance, governance refers to the administration and regulation of affairs, indicating the relationship between citizens and governors, and desirable governance means managing public affairs based on the rule of law, an efficient and fair judiciary, and widespread public participation in the governance process. In other words, the more the rule of law, the more efficient and fair the judiciary, and the higher the level of participation in a country, the more good governance is realized in that country. Good governance also means mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens, groups, and civil society organizations pursue their civil interests, enforce their legal rights, and fulfill their commitments. Explaining value orientation, local organizations are responsible for mobilizing, organizing, and applying indigenous cultures. A good and smooth interaction between the aforementioned components creates the conditions for the realization of good governance in various dimensions. Good governance is not just about performing tasks but also includes how tasks are

performed. Both objectives and methods are equally important for good governance, and any organization can integrate good governance conditions with its own cultures, values, and norms. Good governance should not impose specific cultures and values or promote incorrect values. Also, good governance with a normative and value-oriented approach considers a new concept of the state that refers to a modern process of managing society. Explaining capacity building, it is important that growth is accompanied by an increase in productive capacities, including physical, human, and social capacities, and in this growth, attitudes should change, and the ability to utilize existing resources should continuously increase. Explaining transparency, this component refers to decisions and their implementation subject to specific, approved, and valid laws and regulations in the environment, and organizations must have a completely transparent process, while at the same time, everyone affected by these decisions and their implementation will have the opportunity to access relevant information in the decision-making and implementation process directly, regularly, and freely. This ensures that sufficient information is easily accessible to the media, and all institutions and elements involved in decision-making are identifiable and visible, enjoy legitimacy, and are accountable for their decisions and behaviors. Explaining accountability, this concept is an important factor that accelerates the process of social transformations and creates space for receiving individual and social rights. As a result, it facilitates access to social justice, government accountability, and national inquiry into their legitimate demands. Therefore, one of the key and impactful discussions in all sections of the political, cultural, economic, and social system is the importance of the issue of accountability, and fundamentally, unless accountability becomes a culture in society and the social system, there cannot be much hope for individuals to access individual and social rights. Without a doubt, this factor, along with other factors or components, will make society dynamic, thriving, and prosperous and pave the way for the realization of social justice and good governance.

Also, organizational development had nineteen components and three dimensions: non-financial performance, financial performance, and organizational development. Explaining non-financial performance, job satisfaction is a concept related to non-financial performance and is very complex, studied in various areas. Job satisfaction is a positive and satisfying emotional state resulting from job evaluation or job experiences. Since job

satisfaction includes feelings and emotions, it thus has a major message in life and can be a reaction to a job. This satisfaction in the university environment must be realized for students, staff, managers, and stakeholders to improve the university's social image through desirable social performance, the promotion of science and knowledge creation, and the improvement of academic performance. Explaining financial performance, achieving economic growth is one of the most important goals of countries, and most statesmen strive to provide suitable conditions for achieving economic growth. To achieve this goal, recognizing the factors affecting economic growth is very necessary and essential. For this reason, one of the discussions among economists is the examination of the factors that affect economic growth and improve financial performance. Some economists argue that the development of financial and monetary systems plays no role in long-term economic growth, and the development of financial intermediaries is the result of increased economic growth. Explaining organizational development, organizational development is a process used to enhance an organization's effectiveness and the well-being of its members through designed interventions. Organizational development enhances an organization's effectiveness, and effectiveness here is defined as success in achieving organizational goals and objectives. Many efforts made in the way of organizational development focus on increasing organizational learning to influence organizational performance. Organizational development increases the well-being and health of organizational members, and well-being refers to the overall satisfaction of each organization member with their job and work environment. Generally, having a challenging and meaningful job leads to higher job satisfaction, and if rewarded by the organization, it leads to an increased satisfaction from the reward. Organizational development is used to increase and enhance the effectiveness of the organization and the welfare of employees through planned interventions. This development is supported by managers at all levels to improve the organization's ability to solve problems and achieve organizational renewal processes through effective management of organizational culture, increasing health, efficiency, and productivity of the organization.

The study population of the current study was experts familiar with the research field at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences. Since this study was conducted on experts at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results, and the

results of this study cannot be generalized to all medical universities in Iran. Another limitation was the difficulty of conducting interviews with managers and even university professors due to the adverse conditions of the coronavirus and limitations in time and cost for the student. As a result, it is suggested that research on identifying the dimensions and components of good governance and organizational development in other medical universities and even non-medical universities be conducted under the title of the current research and their results compared with the results of the analyses of this study. The results of this study indicated five dimensions of desirable governance, value orientation, capacity building, transparency, and accountability for good governance and three dimensions of non-financial performance, financial performance, and organizational development for organizational development, which has many practical implications. Without a doubt, utilizing the model designed in this study can assist professionals and officials at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences in improving conditions and creating a competitive advantage.

## Authors' Contributions

The authors contributed equally and all activities of this study were carried out collaboratively and consultatively.

## Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

## Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

## Acknowledgments

## Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

Before conducting interviews with experts and after their selection, they were explained the importance and necessity of the research, and they were reassured about the adherence to ethical considerations, including confidentiality, the non-disclosure of interviewees' names, and so on. The researcher committed to observing all ethical standards, including confidentiality, non-disclosure of the interviewees' names, and others.

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