

Governance and Management of Malaysian Public Universities Education Waqf: A Qualitative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Reduced government funding for Malaysian public education in the last five years has prompted public universities to find alternative resources. Hence, waqf is (Islamic endowment) suggested as one of the possible solutions. The main purpose of this study is to identify the contemporary waqf governance and management practices at the Malaysian public universities. Secondly, the study is to suggest some recommendations on the governance and management best practices. We apply the qualitative method of grounded theory from Strauss and Corbin and Charmaz and use semi-structured interviews in our data collection. The interviews are analyzed using NVIVO software. We see that the preliminary results are very interesting although it is only from five initial interviews with three public universities and one State Islamic Religious Council situated at the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The public universities cannot do much with the governance structure as the Ministry of Education prescribes it. There are three models, which they can choose. All the three universities have the third model, the education waqf governed by a joint task force formed of half members from the universities and the other half from the State Religious Council. Each universities also have their own committees that managed the education waqf. A common issue between all the universities is the tax relief to the waqif (waqf contributors) as it involved the Inland Revenue Board and there have been some misunderstanding between them, however, this is being under discussion with all the parties involved. We conclude that the third governance model give more power to the state religious council as they hold the universities waqf fund. Therefore, it requires a long process if the universities want to utilize the waqf fund.

Keywords: education waqf; governance; public universities; State Religious Council; waqf management