

Foreign Experience in Organizing the Management System of Higher Education Institutions: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations for improving the management system of higher education institutions and offers a comparative study of global and regional experience. Alongside the principal organizational and managerial models of the global education system (the Anglo-American, European Continental and Asian models), it provides the first systematic analysis of how higher education management is being transformed in the Central Asian states. The article identifies the distinctive features of each model with respect to institutional autonomy, financial management and quality assurance. On the basis of the findings, scientific proposals and practical recommendations are developed for transforming higher education management in New Uzbekistan, strengthening the financial and academic independence of universities, and introducing modern principles of corporate governance.

Keywords: Higher education management, institutional autonomy, corporate governance, Central Asian models, “hybrid” model, quality of education, human capital.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the knowledge economy and Industry 5.0, higher education institutions (HEIs) have become a principal institutional driver of national competitiveness and of the formation of high-tech human capital. Modern universities are no longer merely centers of knowledge transmission; they are complex organizational and economic entities that generate innovation, commercialize intellectual property and integrate into entrepreneurial ecosystems (the “University 3.0” and “University 4.0” concepts).

Improving the governance of HEIs is currently a strategic priority for Uzbekistan’s education sector. In New Uzbekistan, the development of higher education is closely linked to the reforms carried out under the “Uzbekistan–2030” Strategy, to recent decrees and

resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on transforming the higher education system and granting HEIs institutional independence, and to the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 26 December 2025 [5.P.____].

These policy documents set out the core objectives of expanding the strategic autonomy of educational institutions, strengthening research, developing human resources, increasing financial independence and introducing efficiency- and performance-based management models. HEIs have been granted broad financial and academic independence. However, the transition from the traditional “administrative-command” system of governance to performance-oriented management is giving rise to a number of systemic contradictions. Resolving them requires

drawing on foreign experience in building modern HEI management systems, particularly in ensuring the academic and financial independence of universities, introducing digital governance and strengthening quality management. The relevance of this study therefore lies in the need to compare global and regional models of higher education management through the lens of economic and organizational theory and to design an optimal “hybrid” governance mechanism suited to the national educational environment. Such a mechanism, supported by the innovative development of HEIs, would help bring the national education system into line with those of the leading countries. To this end, the article analyzes the principal organizational and managerial models of the global education system (the Anglo-American, European Continental and Asian models) together with the transformation of higher education management in the Central Asian states, which is examined systematically here for the first time.

2. Literature Review

In the global education space, the organizational and economic governance systems of HEIs are commonly divided into three classical models according to the institutional balance between state control and market mechanisms. The Anglo-American model, studied by B. Clark [2.P.5] and P. Altbach [1.P.], draws on corporate management and the concept of New Public Management and treats universities as highly decentralized “entrepreneurial” entities with financial and academic autonomy. According to the resource dependence theory of J. Pfeffer [7.P.], universities in this model do not rely solely on state budgets but diversify their resources through endowment funds and venture capital.

By contrast, the European Continental model (Germany, France), which J. Enders and H. de Boer analyze from the standpoint of institutional theory [3.P.543–561], regards education as a public good and is oriented toward strong centralized state control and bureaucratic balance. The Asian model (Japan, South Korea, Singapore), as shown in the research of M. Kits and K. Tan, is a balanced model that combines the state’s strategic objectives (the priority of human capital) with corporate and digital governance instruments.

Researchers from Central Asia and the CIS, including M. Lukashenko [4.P.211–225], A. Gruzdev and V. Kataev, have examined how the strongly centralized, Continental-type education systems inherited from the

Soviet era are being transformed to meet the demands of a market economy, with particular attention to the organizational environment and economic competition. Drawing on agency theory, they explain the contradictions between the state and educational institutions in HEI governance, emphasizing that insufficient delegation of powers from the state as principal (controller) to HEI leadership as agent (executor) weakens innovation in the governance system.

A systematic analysis of the transformation of higher education management in the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) in terms of regional institutional and socio-economic factors shows that a distinctive “transitional” model is taking shape in the region. Kazakh economists A. Sarinzhypov and Ye. Aryn have provided an economic rationale for the region’s pioneering experience of introducing elements of the Anglo-American model, notably independent supervisory boards, by converting HEIs into non-profit joint-stock companies (NAOs) [10.P.45–58]. They note, however, that administrative restrictions on the distribution of state subsidies persist during this transformation.

The theoretical and methodological aspects of these problems in the national context have been studied extensively by Uzbek economists. A.V. Vakhobov and M.B. Khamidulin have examined the improvement of financial management at HEIs and corporate methods of managing extrabudgetary funds [14.P.45–56], while K.S. Sharipov has substantiated a mechanism for integrating universities with industry on the basis of an “innovation cluster” model. The works of I. Turaeva [12.P.] and A. Shadiyev [11.P.] provide an empirical analysis of the links between industry and higher education, the development of management strategies in the public and private education sectors, competitiveness, and the adaptation of foreign university governance practices to the national environment. The interrelation between organizational structures and the development strategy of an HEI has been examined by N.I. Saidakhmedova and Sh.K. Kurbaniyazov [9.P.23–31]. In particular, Professor N.I. Saidakhmedova and A.S. Aripov have revealed the methodological significance of post-industrial economic theory and knowledge management theory in shaping the HEI governance system. They have demonstrated the need to align organizational structures with development strategy now that HEIs in Uzbekistan have been granted financial and academic independence, and have shown that applying economic efficiency criteria to governance

decisions helps build a solid foundation for institutional autonomy in national universities [8.P.106–110].

3. Methodology

The methodological basis of the study comprises the systems approach, institutional theory and theories of corporate governance. The empirical base consists of official reports and statistical compilations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [13.P.], the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [6.P.], the World Bank and the relevant sectoral ministries of various countries.

Comparative analysis, institutional analysis, cluster grouping and content analysis were used to assess global and regional education models and to identify the specific features of their transformation in the national context.

4. Results

Under Industry 5.0, the international higher education system is being reshaped into an organizational and institutional ecosystem, which calls for a fundamental reconsideration of the organizational and economic governance systems of HEIs.

Comparative Analysis of Global and Regional Models of Higher Education Management

Table 1

Analysis criteria	Anglo-American model (USA, United Kingdom)	European Continental model (Germany, France)	Asian model (Japan, Singapore)	Central Asian models (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan)
Governance structure	Decentralized. Boards of trustees or visitors play the leading role; the rector acts as a top manager.	Centralized. A combination of bureaucratic state control and academic oligarchy.	Mixed (corporate governance under the state's strategic control).	In transition. State control remains strong, but the role of supervisory boards is growing.
Institutional autonomy	High (academic, financial and staffing autonomy is firmly guaranteed).	Limited (state educational standards and plans take priority).	Balanced (autonomy is oriented toward national strategic objectives).	Partial or transitional. High in Kazakhstan through NAO status; being introduced gradually in Uzbekistan.
Financial management system	Highly diversified (endowment funds, research grants, tuition fees).	Mainly state-budget funding (tuition is free or minimal).	State subsidies combined with private-sector investment partnerships.	Heavy dependence on tuition fees (85–90%). Endowment funds and commercialization

Analysis criteria	Anglo-American model (USA, United Kingdom)	European Continental model (Germany, France)	Asian model (Japan, Singapore)	Central Asian models (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan)
				are at an early stage.
Quality control	Independent accreditation agencies and market competition.	State control and ministerial inspection.	Strict ranking systems within a state–society partnership.	Transition from ministerial control toward independent, internationally recognized accreditation.

The results of the systemic and comparative analysis show that global and regional models of HEI management differ fundamentally in the balance they strike between state control (centralization) and market mechanisms (Table 1).

As Table 1 shows, the ongoing transformation of Uzbekistan's national education system is producing a "hybrid" of foreign models. Following the granting of academic independence to HEIs, supervisory boards have been established. However, because economic and organizational theories have not yet been applied to higher education governance comprehensively and systematically, the powers of supervisory boards remain largely formal in practice, and strategic decision-making and financial management are still concentrated at the ministerial level.

A key strategic task for the higher education systems of the Central Asian states is to diversify their sources of funding. Tuition fees account for 85–90% of universities' revenues. Unlike in the United States or Singapore, this reflects weak integration with business and limited commercialization of research and start-up activity.

Although the transitional patterns in the countries of the region are broadly similar, the pace of organizational and legal transformation differs. In Kazakhstan, corporate governance was introduced earlier through the conversion of HEIs into non-profit joint-stock companies

(NAOs), whereas in Uzbekistan the process is evolutionary, with academic and financial autonomy being expanded gradually.

The development of the management system in New Uzbekistan therefore requires a new governance mechanism that balances state control with market mechanisms and is consistent with the human-centered principles of Industry 5.0.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on a systemic and comparative analysis of global and regional trends, the following conceptual foundations and organizational and managerial solutions are proposed for modernizing the governance of HEIs in Uzbekistan:

- Modernizing the HEI management system is not merely an administrative reform but the creation of a new institutional balance of powers between the state (principal) and the university (agent), grounded in resource dependence theory and agency theory.
- Higher education in Central Asia, and in Uzbekistan in particular, is currently in a phase of institutional dualism, moving from the strongly centralized Continental model toward elements of the corporate Anglo-American model.
- The dependence of national HEIs on tuition fees

(85–90% of revenue) poses a strategic risk to their financial sustainability. Addressing this requires a legal framework for alternative instruments, such as endowment funds and spin-off companies, in higher education management.

- The existing HEMIS digital system should be developed beyond basic academic monitoring into a fully automated corporate governance (ERP) system that evaluates and incentivizes staff performance through digital KPIs.

- The most effective solution for New Uzbekistan's educational environment is the consistent implementation of a national "hybrid" governance mechanism that preserves the state's strategic control (the Asian model) while granting universities internal academic, organizational and financial freedom (the Anglo-American model).

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