

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INNOVATIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF UZBEKISTAN AND THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

This paper presents a comparative analysis of modern and innovative mechanisms for managing general secondary education schools in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United States. The study examines the roles of various mechanisms in school management, including centralization and decentralization, the managerial authority of school principals, teacher participation in decision-making, performance-based management, KPIs, digitalization, human resource management, and distributed leadership. It highlights that while educational management in the US relies primarily on the authority of states and local school districts, Uzbekistan has recently been strengthening mechanisms aimed at enhancing the professional status of school principals, performance indicators, and management efficiency. The comparative analysis identifies expanding school-level autonomy, data-driven management, involving the teaching staff in decision-making, and strengthening professional development systems for principals as key areas for improving school management in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: school management, innovative management, school principal, educational management, decentralization, KPI, digital management, distributed leadership, pedagogical autonomy, US education system, Uzbekistan's education system.

Introduction. In the 21st century, the competitiveness of the education system depends directly not only on curricula and the professional expertise of educators but also on mechanisms for the effective management of educational institutions. The modern school principal is viewed not merely as an administrator performing traditional duties, but as a leader who strategically manages the quality of education, develops the teaching staff, implements innovations, and collaborates with the school community.

According to OECD data, a school leader's involvement in guiding the educational process, collaborating with teachers, and having the authority to make school-level decisions is closely linked to the effectiveness of the educational environment [1]. Furthermore, school autonomy yields the expected results only when combined with effective leadership and accountability mechanisms, rather than operating in isolation [1].

The process of modernizing school management is also accelerating in Uzbekistan. Notably, new mechanisms aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the management system in the preschool and school education sectors have been outlined for 2025. Notably, it has been stipulated that, starting January 1, 2026, a mechanism for paying additional remuneration to principals and deputy principals of general secondary education institutions based on performance efficiency indicators—specifically KPI results—

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will be introduced [2]. This reinforces the trend of linking the work of school administrators to a results-based management model.

Research Methodology. The study employed comparative-pedagogical analysis, a systems approach, the review of regulatory and legal documents, the analysis of international statistical data, and content analysis methods.

The comparative analysis was conducted based on the following criteria:

1. degree of centralization in education management;
2. powers of the school principal;
3. school autonomy;
4. participation of educators in management;
5. performance and KPI mechanisms;
6. digital management;
7. human resource management;
8. cooperation with the school community;
9. professional development of principals;
10. monitoring of education quality.

Innovative mechanisms in school management in Uzbekistan. The process of improving school management within Uzbekistan's education system is becoming a key priority of state policy. Recent reforms place special emphasis on strengthening the status of the school principal, linking management activities to performance outcomes, and incentivizing the work of school leaders. According to new management measures announced in March 2025, plans have been established to increase the base salary rates for principals of general secondary education institutions and to introduce monthly bonuses based on KPI results starting in 2026 [2]. This approach serves to link a school principal's performance not merely to administrative duties, but to measurable outcomes.

Another significant aspect of innovative management is the functional differentiation of school leadership. For instance, a "dual-component management system" is envisaged for the Al-Biruni International Boarding School. Under this model, the educational process is to be managed by an academic director, while administrative and financial operations are overseen by an executive director [3]. Such an approach enables a professional separation of the academic and administrative functions within the educational process.

Furthermore, there is growing emphasis within the education system on HR management, digitalization, and the strategic management of human capital. Practical experience is also being gained in the application of HR tools and the integration of modern technologies into staff recruitment and development processes within educational institutions [4]. At the same time, OECD TALIS 2024 data indicates that the participation of educators in school-level decision-making in Uzbekistan's schools is relatively high. However, from the perspective of principals, teachers' authority regarding decisions on curricula, instruction, and school policy is limited in certain areas compared to the OECD average [5]. Therefore, in the next stage of modernizing school management in Uzbekistan, it is important to strengthen the teaching staff's actual participation in management alongside expanding the principal's authority.

Innovative features of school management in the USA. One of the key characteristics of the United States education system is the high degree of decentralization in educational governance. According to

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the U.S. Department of Education, education falls primarily under the jurisdiction of state and local authorities; curricula, school organization, and many administrative matters are not directly managed by the federal government [6].

This model provides schools and school districts with considerable scope to make decisions based on local needs. In this context, the school principal acts not only as an organizer of the educational process but also as the strategic leader of the school.

In the US experience, the concept of school-based management holds particular significance. This model entails shifting decision-making authority from central governing bodies closer to the school level. Management powers may encompass areas such as the budget, personnel, the curriculum, and specific aspects of the educational process [7].

Another important trend in US school management is "distributed leadership." Under this approach, leadership responsibilities are not borne solely by the principal but are shared among teachers, school administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. OECD studies indicate that principals who involve school staff, parents, and students in decision-making processes are more likely to engage in "instructional leadership"—leadership focused on the educational process [1].

According to TALIS 2024 data, the level of teachers' instructional autonomy and their participation in school-level decision-making in the US are generally close to OECD averages, though they may be higher for some indicators and lower for others [8]. This situation suggests that the US model should be viewed not as a completely decentralized system, but rather as an interconnected governance system involving the state, school district, and school levels. A comparative analysis reveals that innovative school management models in the two countries are evolving within distinct institutional environments. While management reforms in Uzbekistan are implemented via a top-down approach—driven by state policy and regulatory mechanisms—school management in the USA has largely taken shape through the distribution of authority across state, district, and school levels.

In this context, rather than simply replicating the US experience, it is crucial for Uzbekistan to adapt specific management principles to its own national circumstances. Promising areas for development include enhancing the competencies of school principals as professional managers, expanding the decision-making authority of teaching staff, and strengthening data-driven management at the school level.

An integrated model of innovative management. Based on the comparative analysis, the following "4D+KPI" innovative management model is proposed for schools in Uzbekistan:

1D — Decentralization. Gradually expanding the authority of school principals regarding the budget, human resources, the educational process, and aspects of internal development strategy.

2D — Data-driven management. Analyzing student academic performance, attendance, teachers' professional development, parental satisfaction, and other indicators within a unified digital monitoring system.

3D — Distributed leadership. Distributing management responsibilities among the principal, deputy principals, methodological associations, teachers, parents, and students.

4D — Digital management. Utilizing electronic document management, dashboards, AI-based analytical tools, and digital HR mechanisms.

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KPI — Key Performance Indicators. Evaluating the school principal's performance not merely through administrative metrics, but through comprehensive indicators such as educational quality, pedagogical development, student progress, the school environment, and innovative activities.

This model aligns with the principles of school autonomy, professional leadership, and distributed management promoted by the OECD. OECD studies also note that management capabilities are enhanced when autonomy is combined with effective leadership and the distribution of responsibility [1; 9].

Conclusion. A comparative analysis of the education systems of Uzbekistan and the USA reveals that the common goal of innovative mechanisms in school management is to enhance the quality of education, strengthen the school's internal management capacity, and expand the participation of stakeholders in the educational process.

Significant steps are being taken in Uzbekistan to strengthen the status of school principals, provide incentives based on KPIs, improve management efficiency, and introduce HR management and new management models [2–4]. Meanwhile, the US experience demonstrates long-established, advanced forms of mechanisms such as decentralization, local autonomy, school-based management, and distributed leadership [6–8].

Based on the research findings, the following areas are considered crucial for the development of school management in Uzbekistan: (1) developing the professional management competencies of school principals; (2) gradually expanding decision-making authority at the school level; (3) strengthening the genuine participation of educators in management; (4) refining the KPI system based on comprehensive and balanced indicators; (5) developing data-driven and digital management practices; and (6) strengthening institutional mechanisms for cooperation with parents and the community. Thus, the primary goal in studying international experience should not be to directly replicate the US model, but rather to adapt its effective management principles to Uzbekistan's national education policy, organizational structure, and socio-cultural conditions.

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