



American Scholar
Journal of Interdisciplinary
Research and Knowledge

Administration, Governance And Management In Education: A Case Study Of Uzbekistan

Sanjar Kurbanov Saliyevich

Teacher, Department of English Language and Literature,
Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

E-mail: s.kurbanov@buxdpi.uz

Abstract

This article examines the reform of educational administration, governance and management in Uzbekistan between 2017 and 2025. It distinguishes administration as the formal regulatory structure, management as the operational leadership of institutions and governance as the distribution of authority and accountability among stakeholders. The study shows that Uzbekistan has substantially modernised its educational governance architecture through ministerial reorganisation, the Law on Education, higher-education autonomy, quality assurance reforms and digital management systems. However, the article also argues that structural change has moved faster than management culture. The main unfinished tasks are the professional development of school and university leaders, the practical implementation of institutional autonomy, stronger stakeholder participation and the transition from compliance-based control to evidence-informed professional judgment.

Keywords: educational governance, administration, management, Uzbekistan, autonomy, quality assurance, leadership

This work is Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Introduction

Educational governance is not simply a technical arrangement of ministries, rules and reporting forms. It determines who has the authority to define learning priorities, allocate resources, evaluate quality and represent the interests of students, families and society. For transitional states, this issue is especially important because inherited centralised structures often

remain influential even when new policies declare decentralisation and autonomy.

Uzbekistan is a significant case because the reforms launched after 2017 have attempted to rebuild the administrative architecture of education while also improving institutional management. New ministries, revised legislation, strategic programmes, quality assurance mechanisms and digital information systems have changed the formal structure of the sector. These changes have created the preconditions for a more modern system, but they have not automatically produced a new management culture.

This article analyses the reform period through three connected concepts: administration, management and governance. It argues that Uzbekistan's strongest achievements are visible in administrative restructuring and legal modernisation, while the most difficult remaining tasks relate to professional leadership, participatory accountability and the everyday practice of autonomy.

Conceptual Framework

Educational administration refers to the formal structures through which the education system is organised: laws, ministries, inspection agencies, regional departments and institutional regulations. Administration gives the system its legal and procedural skeleton. Without a clear administrative framework, policy cannot be implemented consistently.

Educational management concerns the operational leadership of schools, universities and education departments. It includes planning, staffing, budgeting, curriculum implementation, quality assurance and staff development. In this sense, management is the point where policy becomes institutional practice. A well-written strategy may fail if principals, rectors and middle managers lack the authority or competence to implement it.

Educational governance is broader. It addresses the distribution of voice, power and accountability among government, institutions, teachers, parents, students, employers and civil society. Governance is therefore connected to legitimacy. A system can be administratively efficient but weak in governance if stakeholders have little influence over decisions that affect them.

Table 1. Distinction between administration, management and governance

Concept	Main question	Relevance for Uzbekistan
---------	---------------	--------------------------

Administration	Who has formal authority and how is it organised?	Modernising ministries, laws and regulatory channels
Management	How are institutions led and operated?	Developing principals, rectors and data-based planning
Governance	Who has voice and how is accountability ensured?	Strengthening participation of students, parents, employers and civil society

3. Administrative Restructuring and Legal Reform

One of the most visible reforms has been the differentiation of ministerial responsibilities. The former structure, which separated public education from higher and secondary specialised education, has been reorganised into more specialised bodies. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation reflects the attempt to connect universities with research, innovation and economic development. The separate ministry responsible for preschool and school education reflects the priority given to early childhood and general schooling.

This restructuring has practical meaning. Different levels of education require different governance instruments. Preschool expansion, school curriculum reform and higher education autonomy cannot be managed through exactly the same administrative logic. Differentiated ministries can improve focus, but they also require strong coordination so that transitions between education levels remain coherent.

The Law on Education adopted in 2020 renewed the legal foundation of the sector. It confirmed the principles of continuous education, forms of learning and institutional responsibilities. For higher education, the recognition of academic freedom, research activity and institutional self-governance is especially important. Legally, this moves universities away from a purely command-administrative model and towards a system in which institutional responsibility is expected.

Strategic programmes have added further layers to the architecture: the Concept for the Development of Higher Education until 2030, the National Programme for School Education 2022-2026 and international partnership frameworks. Together, these documents demonstrate that reform is not limited to isolated decrees but is organised as a multi-level agenda with targets and monitoring mechanisms.

Table 2. Major reform instruments and governance effects

Instrument	Year	Governance effect
Law on Education, LRU-637	2020	Updated legal framework for education and institutional responsibilities
Concept for Higher Education Development until 2030	2019	Strategic direction for higher education expansion, quality and autonomy
National Programme for School Education 2022-2026	2022	Outcome-oriented school development priorities
HEMIS	2020 onwards	Digital management of higher education processes and data
International accreditation initiatives	2020s	External benchmarking of programme quality

4. Institutional Autonomy and Management Capacity

The autonomy agenda is one of the most important reforms in higher education. Universities have received greater responsibility for academic planning, curriculum development, finance and international cooperation. The introduction of the credit-modular system has also expanded the possibility of flexible learning trajectories and student choice. These reforms are consistent with international approaches that link quality improvement to institutional responsibility.

However, autonomy is not only a legal status. It is a management capacity. A university can be formally autonomous but still behave as if every significant decision requires informal approval from above. This is common in systems where compliance has long been the dominant administrative habit. For autonomy to function, rectors, deans, academic councils and quality assurance units must be prepared to make evidence-based decisions and take responsibility for their consequences.

School management faces a similar issue. Principals are expected to implement reform, improve school quality and respond to community needs, but their authority remains shaped by central curricula, regional reporting structures and limited professional training. International research on school leadership shows that principals need preparation in instructional leadership,

staff development, data use, community partnership and ethical management. In Uzbekistan, a systematic national school leadership development programme would be a strategic investment rather than an optional addition.

Digital management systems also affect leadership. HEMIS and related platforms make it possible to collect more accurate information about students, staff and institutional processes. Yet data have value only when managers know how to interpret them. The transition from reporting data to using data for improvement is one of the key cultural shifts required in the next stage of reform.

5. Governance, Accountability and Stakeholder Participation

The weakest area remains participatory governance. Uzbekistan has made progress in formal administration and institutional management, but the mechanisms through which parents, students, employers and civil society influence decisions are still limited. In many institutions, accountability continues to move mainly upward: from school to district, from university to ministry, from manager to supervising authority. Democratic governance requires accountability that also moves outward and downward to learners and communities.

Parent councils, boards and public discussion mechanisms exist, but their influence is often consultative rather than decisive. In higher education, student participation in quality assurance and curriculum evaluation is still developing. Employers are increasingly involved in discussions about graduate competencies, especially in vocational and higher education, but this involvement must be institutionalised to affect programme design consistently.

Quality assurance is another key governance instrument. The creation of inspection and accreditation mechanisms has helped separate evaluation from direct ministerial management. International accreditation of selected programmes is a positive step because it exposes institutions to external standards. At the same time, inspection culture should gradually move from punitive control to developmental support. Quality assurance is most effective when it helps institutions improve, not when it merely identifies formal non-compliance.

Table 3. Reform achievements and remaining gaps

Dimension	Achievement	Remaining gap
-----------	-------------	---------------

Administration	Differentiated ministries and updated legislation	Need for better inter-ministerial coordination
Higher education management	Formal autonomy and credit-modular system	Autonomy culture and leadership capacity still developing
School management	School improvement agenda introduced	Systematic principal preparation remains limited
Data governance	HEMIS and digital reporting expanded	Data use for improvement remains uneven
Participatory governance	Formal councils and transparency commitments exist	Real stakeholder influence remains weak

6. Discussion: From Structural Reform to Management Culture

Uzbekistan's experience demonstrates the difference between changing structures and changing behaviour. New ministries, laws and digital systems can be created relatively quickly. Professional habits develop more slowly. A principal who has been trained to wait for instructions does not become an autonomous instructional leader simply because a new policy says that local initiative is encouraged. A university does not become self-governing simply because legal autonomy is granted.

The main theoretical lesson is that decentralisation must be accompanied by capacity. Strong central frameworks are still necessary in a geographically diverse education system. They protect standards and equity. But if all meaningful decisions remain centralised, institutional responsibility cannot mature. The desirable balance is a coherent national framework combined with professional autonomy at institutional level.

Leadership development is therefore the central missing link. Uzbekistan needs programmes that prepare rectors, deans, principals and regional education administrators for evidence-informed planning, transparent finance, staff motivation, inclusive governance and community accountability. Such programmes should include mentoring, case analysis, practical projects and evaluation based on real improvement, not only attendance in seminars.

A second priority is the strengthening of stakeholder voice. Student surveys, parent participation and employer feedback should not be treated

as formal procedures. They should become part of decision-making cycles. This would improve legitimacy and help education institutions respond to social and labour-market needs more accurately.

7. Conclusion

Uzbekistan's education system has undergone substantial governance reform since 2017. The administrative structure has become more differentiated, the legal foundation has been renewed, higher education autonomy has expanded, data systems have been introduced and quality assurance has become more visible. These are major achievements and provide a serious basis for further development.

The next stage should concentrate on the less visible but more decisive dimension of reform: management culture. This includes professional leadership development, practical autonomy, data-informed decision-making, participatory accountability and a shift from compliance to professional judgment. If these priorities are addressed, the reforms can move from institutional scaffolding to substantive educational improvement. If they are not addressed, the system may remain modern in structure but traditional in practice.

References

1. Bush, T. (2011). *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
2. Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. M. (1992). *Leading the Self-Managing School*. Falmer Press.
3. Global Partnership for Education. (2019). *Education Sector Plan of Uzbekistan 2019-2023*.
4. Global Partnership for Education. (2023). *Uzbekistan: Partnership Compact for Education Reform 2023-2026*.
5. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Education, LRU-637. (2020).
6. Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Uzbekistan. (2024). *Higher Education Development Report*.
7. OECD. (2016). *Education in Uzbekistan: Analytical Overview*. OECD Publishing.
8. Pont, B., Nusche, D., & Moorman, H. (2008). *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*. OECD Publishing.
9. Ramazonovna, S. M., & Bakhor, K. (2025). *Creating pre-, while, and post-reading activities to enhance reading comprehension*. In *interdisciplinary innovation and scientific research conference* (Vol. 3, No. 27, pp. 104-106).

1. 10. Ramazonovna, S. M. (2023). THE ROLE OF AN ENGLISH TEACHER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE THINKING AND CREATIVE ABILITIES OF STUDENTS. *Innovative Technologica: Methodical Research Journal*, 4(04), 66-73.
10. Ramazonovna, S. M., & Marjona, R. (2023). The Role of Music in Teaching Foreign Languages. In *Conference on Applied and Practical Sciences* (pp. 10-12).
11. Saliyevich, S. K. (2023). The influence of L1 (German) in learning English language. *Finland International Scientific Journal of Education, Social Science and Humanities*, 11(3), 220-225.
12. Saliyevich, S. K. (2023). The influence of L1 (German) in learning English language. *Finland International Scientific Journal of Education, Social Science and Humanities*, 11(3), 220-225.
13. Saparova, M. R., & Kurbanov, S. S. (2019). *The main peculiarities of word stress in the English language*. In *Роль науки в формировании современной виртуальной реальности* (pp. 39–41).
14. Tojiboev, R. S. (2025). Education Statistics in Uzbekistan: Current State and Reform Directions. *Bulletin of the Technical Committee on Learning Technology*, 25(1), 26-34.
15. UNICEF Uzbekistan. (2022). *Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis 2021*.
16. World Bank. (2023). *Uzbekistan: Quality Enhancement and Higher Education Accountability*.