

The Role Of Leadership And Managerial Competencies In Managing Human Capital In Higher Education Institutions

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Received: 27 October 2025; **Accepted:** 17 November 2025; **Published:** 24 December 2025

Abstract: This article analyzes the importance of leadership qualities and managerial competencies in the effective management of human capital in higher education institutions. It highlights how university leaders' strategic thinking, innovative approach, ability to inspire their team, capacity to manage change, and skills in the efficient use of human resources serve as crucial factors in developing human capital. Additionally, the role of communicative, organizational, analytical, motivational, and coordination competencies in improving the educational process is substantiated. The research results demonstrate that developing leadership and managerial competencies is essential for forming a competitive, innovative, and professional team in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Leadership, managerial competencies, human capital, higher education institution, strategic management, innovative approach, human resource management, motivation, team development, education quality, leadership skills, communication competencies, organizational management, professional development.

Introduction: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are key institutions that shape the intellectual potential and human capital of society. Under current conditions of global competition, changing labor market demands and the rapid development of science and technology, the success of HEIs depends not only on their material and technical base but also on human capital — that is, the capacity and competence of their personnel.

Therefore, for HEI leaders, possessing effective management and strong leadership competencies has become a decisive factor in identifying and developing highly qualified and motivated staff. Managerial competencies in higher education institutions enable leaders to achieve specific goals, manage teams, plan and coordinate resources, and optimize pedagogical and educational processes. The efficiency of management in HEIs primarily depends on how well leaders utilize time, financial resources, and available opportunities in a rational and planned manner to achieve established objectives. In this regard, adherence to management principles such as optimality, integrity, scientific validity, coordination, precision, convenience, and efficiency plays a crucial role. This is because the management process encompasses all areas of a leader's activity and ensures

the harmonization and collaboration of participants in the educational process through functions such as planning, organizing, controlling, analyzing, and evaluating.

The activities of HEI leaders, by their nature, are defined by the systematic implementation of management functions aimed at ensuring the effective organization of pedagogical and educational processes. This process includes creating necessary conditions for educational participants, coordinating their activities, establishing monitoring and analysis systems, modernizing the material and technical base, providing educational processes with modern pedagogical and information technologies, and attracting highly qualified specialists. Ensuring the interconnectedness and continuity of the pedagogical process, organizing it on a scientific basis, promoting effective cooperation among participants in training competitive personnel, and monitoring the execution of decisions are important factors in improving the quality and efficiency of management.

Leadership is an essential component of managerial functions, involving the ability to inspire teams, motivate them, manage change, and guide them toward strategic goals. In HEIs, effective leaders help

raise team morale and unlock the full potential of teachers and staff. For example, studies show that leaders with well-developed leadership competencies have a positive impact on HEI performance. Leadership and managerial competencies serve as a foundation for organizing these processes strategically and systematically.

In the context of Uzbekistan, challenges and opportunities for managing human capital in HEIs have also been analyzed. For instance, the importance of teacher and academic staff qualifications, the use of innovative pedagogical and information-communication technologies, and the modernization of management systems are highlighted. Additionally, it is emphasized that managerial staff should be assessed and strengthened through training and educational programs based on principles of continuous self-development.

According to S. Turg'unov, one of the most important conditions for improving the activities of pedagogical staff and developing the educational process in higher education institutions is the organization of managerial activities of leaders on a scientific basis. The scientific approach to management involves searching for, studying, and relying on innovations and scientifically grounded information; mastering the pedagogical and psychological foundations of management; and introducing innovative technological approaches into management processes.

Research shows that in organizing and managing the activities of a higher education institution, leaders are required to perform the following essential tasks:

- setting tasks to achieve established goals, planning activities in advance in line with these tasks, choosing methods of implementation, and making decisions;
- selecting specialists based on the nature and essence of tasks and distributing responsibilities accordingly;
- organizing the educational process on a scientific basis within the higher education institution, improving the qualifications and retraining of pedagogical staff;
- ensuring the provision of modern material-technical resources and scientific-methodological equipment;
- maintaining continuous interaction between the higher education institution and social institutions;
- ensuring the use of advanced pedagogical practices and modern information technologies;
- implementing State Educational Standards in practice and organizing their monitoring;

- collecting and analyzing information through surveys and interviews with teachers and students in order to identify trends and dynamics in the development of the institution;

- reviewing and updating tasks related to the development and improvement of the institution, selecting and appointing personnel based on state requirements for positions;

- Organizing innovative activities by forming interest among faculty members in the results of innovative work and providing incentives; monitoring the implementation of adopted decisions and orders, and more.

Research also indicates that the effectiveness of managerial activities in organizing and improving the work of a higher education institution largely depends on the level of conceptual understanding, knowledge, skills, and competencies of leaders in the field of management, as well as their personal characteristics and professionally important qualities. Based on this view, literature identifies several requirements related to a leader's personality, personal qualities, and professionally significant attributes.

Unless conscientious, honest, knowledgeable, and experienced leaders are placed in all management structures, and unless they work with dedication and responsibility for the benefit and reputation of our independent country, it is unlikely that desired outcomes will be achieved. A leader in a higher education institution must be able to maintain composure in any situation, demonstrate initiative, guide the team through challenges, keep pace with progress, work in harmony and creativity, possess professional and methodological mastery, align words with actions, set clear goals and ensure their implementation, be patient, tolerant, creative, resourceful, value time, and interact politely.

These statements reflect natural and essential requirements regarding a leader's knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities, and personal qualities. Job requirements emphasize that managerial staff must have a thorough understanding of state policies, regulatory documents related to the field of education, and the principles of organizing the educational process on a scientific basis, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in practice. Moreover, leaders must understand the specific characteristics of the education system and its main development directions; the legal foundations of organizing tasks scientifically; the management of faculty and students' activities; the specifics and principles of management; and must possess a wide range of related conceptual knowledge.

In the process of interaction between managerial staff

and employees, communication-oriented approaches and the highly delicate aspect of leadership—namely, relations with professors, teachers, and students—play a crucial role. If a leader fails to establish such relationships properly, it becomes extremely difficult to succeed in work, avoid conflicts, and prevent psychological strain.

According to U.Inoyatov, in assessing the level of knowledge, skills, and competencies of higher education institution leaders, particular attention is paid to the following criteria:

- **Qualification** – This refers to the leader’s knowledge in the field of higher education, their understanding of how to organize the teaching and learning process, the pedagogical and psychological characteristics of participants and staff, their knowledge of their profession and the social norms and requirements related to it, as well as their understanding of the qualifications expected of future specialists and the theoretical foundations of higher education management.
- **Professional mastery** – This reflects the ability to study the capabilities of professors, teachers, and students based on unified managerial and pedagogical requirements, and—considering these capabilities—to form a university community, coordinate its activities, and identify ways to solve existing problems and issues in fulfilling institutional tasks. It also includes the ability to establish public organizations and involve them in school (institutional) governance.
- **Coordination of interpersonal relations** – This involves organizing the collaborative activities of teaching staff and learners, coordinating behaviors with regard to the necessity of criticism and self-criticism, maintaining discipline and organizational order, determining the goals and tasks of managerial activity, and developing criteria for evaluating the work of the institution and its faculty. These all constitute important socio-psychological skills and competencies.
- **Productivity** – This refers to learners’ performance indicators based on State Educational Standards.

Based on the above information, it can be concluded that leaders of higher education institutions must rely on innovative approaches in management, possess professionally significant personal qualities, demonstrate self-control in all situations, take into account the educational relationships within the institution, and base their decisions on existing legal and regulatory criteria when addressing various issues and challenges. These qualities reflect a leader’s competence in management.

Managerial competence describes a university leader’s

spiritual worldview, psychological-pedagogical and organizational-technological potential, that is, their overall professional capability. This potential can be determined by examining the nature and effectiveness of their managerial practices while considering the unique characteristics of managing a higher education institution.

According to V.Toporovskiy, managerial competence is defined by the leader’s level of conceptual understanding in the field of management, their individual abilities and skills, their inclination toward self-development and continuous independent learning, as well as their ability to manage an educational institution in accordance with modern requirements.

The uniqueness of higher education management lies in adapting institutional governance to internal and external changes, using leadership styles effectively, mastering and applying management principles, and directing management towards improving and developing institutional performance. This distinctiveness is most evident in the execution of key managerial functions such as information analysis, foresight and planning, organizational implementation, monitoring, and regulation—all of which are vital for achieving institutional goals and organizing the educational process on a scientific basis. These functions also aim to ensure the effectiveness of the educational process and enhance the performance of the institution.~

In carrying out these functions, leaders must rely on democratic principles and involve all professors, teachers, and students in the management process, which contributes significantly to achieving higher effectiveness. Thus, management activity in a higher education institution can be described as a system composed of interrelated and complementary components that reflect the meaning and essence of decisions made during the management process and ensures the achievement of desired outcomes. This system ultimately aims to enhance the efficiency and quality indicators of the educational process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis indicates that limited institutional autonomy significantly constrains universities’ ability to respond effectively to market demands and societal needs. Empirical observations show that excessive governmental control over budgeting, curriculum design, staffing, and research priorities reduces operational efficiency and innovation capacity. In contrast, universities with higher levels of autonomy demonstrate greater flexibility in reallocating resources, forming industry partnerships, and

introducing market-relevant academic programs.

The findings further reveal that in a market economy, resource allocation driven by market signals—such as labor market demand, student preferences, and research commercialization potential—leads to more efficient utilization of financial and human capital. Governmental planning mechanisms, while important for ensuring equity and public accountability, often fail to adapt quickly to changing economic conditions. As a result, rigid planning frameworks can lead to misallocation of resources, outdated academic offerings, and reduced graduate employability.

Discussion of the results suggests that increasing university autonomy does not imply the complete withdrawal of the state but rather a redefinition of its role—from direct control to strategic regulation and quality assurance. A balanced governance model, where the government sets broad policy objectives while universities make independent operational decisions, appears most effective. Such a model encourages competition, enhances academic quality, and strengthens universities' contribution to economic development. Therefore, expanding institutional autonomy is a critical prerequisite for improving higher education performance in a market-oriented economy.

CONCLUSION

The role of leadership and managerial competencies in managing human resources potential in higher education institutions (HEIs) is invaluable, as it serves not only as a key factor in ensuring the effectiveness of the educational process but also as a determinant of the institution's overall strategic development. The findings of the research show that leaders' scientific approach to management, their possession of communicative, organizational, analytical, and motivational competencies, as well as their adaptability to change, create opportunities for fully unlocking human resource potential.

Leadership qualities enable university leaders to unite the team, reveal the creative capabilities of faculty and staff, introduce new approaches to the educational process, and significantly contribute to the training of competitive specialists. Additionally, a system based on managerial competencies — including resource allocation, modernization of the teaching and learning process, implementation of modern information technologies, monitoring, and evaluation — helps elevate the performance of HEIs to a higher level.

The reviewed sources and analyses confirm that professional mastery, personal qualities, the conscious application of management principles, and the ability of leaders to organize the educational process based on democratic governance approaches are key to the

success of any higher education institution. A leader's communicative culture, ability to establish effective interaction with the team, and skill in constructively managing conflicts play a crucial role in creating a healthy institutional environment.

Thus, it is essential to emphasize that developing human resource potential in HEIs requires continuous improvement of leaders' managerial competencies, mastery of modern leadership approaches, effective use of innovative management technologies, and readiness for self-development. These processes contribute to achieving the strategic goals of educational institutions, improving the quality and efficiency of education, and, most importantly, preparing competitive specialists.

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