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MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVING STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS UNDER DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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Founder of the “Followers of the Timurids” Schools.

Abstract . This thesis examines mechanisms for enhancing strategic planning and management efficiency in higher education institutions amid digital transformation. Drawing on strategic management literature and international policy reports, it develops an integrated framework linking institutional digital maturity, data-informed decision-making, governance, staff capabilities, cybersecurity, and performance monitoring. The analysis identifies implementation stages, institutional responsibilities, and measurable indicators. The proposed approach emphasizes that digital transformation is an organizational change process rather than the mere deployment of information technologies.

Keywords: higher education; digital transformation; strategic planning; university governance; management efficiency; performance indicators; data analytics.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur tezis oliy ta’lim muassasalarida raqamli transformatsiya sharoitida strategik rejalashtirish va boshqaruv samaradorligini oshirish mexanizmlarini tahlil qiladi. Strategik menejmentga oid adabiyotlar va xalqaro hisobotlar asosida raqamli yetuklik, ma’lumotlarga asoslangan qarorlar, institutsional boshqaruv, xodimlar kompetensiyasi, kiberxavfsizlik hamda natijadorlik monitoringini birlashtirgan yondashuv taklif etiladi. Raqamli transformatsiya faqat texnologiyalarni joriy etish emas, balki tashkiliy o‘zgarishlar jarayoni sifatida talqin qilinadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: oliy ta’lim; raqamli transformatsiya; strategik rejalashtirish; universitet boshqaruvi; boshqaruv samaradorligi; samaradorlik ko‘rsatkichlari.

Аннотация. В тезисе рассматриваются механизмы повышения эффективности стратегического планирования и управления в высших учебных заведениях в условиях цифровой трансформации. На основе литературы по стратегическому менеджменту и международных докладов предложена интегрированная модель, объединяющая цифровую зрелость, принятие решений на основе данных, институциональное управление, компетенции персонала, кибербезопасность и мониторинг результатов. Цифровая трансформация рассматривается как организационное изменение, а не только внедрение технологий.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование; цифровая трансформация; стратегическое планирование; управление университетом; эффективность управления; показатели результативности.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is reshaping how universities design educational services, manage research, allocate resources, and respond to stakeholders. Yet the adoption of learning management systems, enterprise platforms, and artificial intelligence does not automatically produce institutional effectiveness. OECD (2023) stresses the importance of coherent digital ecosystems, while UNESCO (2023) warns that technology must be assessed for educational value, equity, and sustainability. Accordingly, strategic planning should connect technology investments with the university's academic mission, financial capacity, and measurable results.

The aim of this thesis is to systematize practical mechanisms that improve strategic planning and administrative performance in higher education institutions. The study employs a conceptual literature review, comparative policy analysis, and synthesis of managerial instruments. It does not report primary survey data or causal estimates; instead, it develops a framework that institutions can adapt and subsequently test empirically.

MAIN PART

1. Strategic alignment and institutional digital maturity

Strategic planning begins with an institutional diagnosis: assessment of infrastructure, interoperable databases, staff digital skills, cybersecurity practices, governance processes, and student access. The results should inform a small set of priorities rather than a collection of disconnected IT projects. Digital transformation has organizational and strategic implications beyond technological adoption (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). University leadership should therefore translate a multi-year institutional strategy into a digital roadmap with accountable owners, funding sources, milestones, and risk registers.

A practical governance structure includes a steering committee chaired by senior management, a cross-functional digital transformation unit, and designated data owners in academic and administrative divisions. Such arrangements help harmonize student records, learning platforms, research information, procurement, and financial reporting while protecting academic autonomy. The European Commission (2020) similarly frames digital education in terms of both ecosystem capacity and digital skills.

2. Data-driven management and implementation mechanisms

A unified management dashboard can combine educational, financial, research, and operational data. However, data quality rules, access permissions, and consistent indicator definitions must precede automation. Universities can use a balanced scorecard logic to connect strategic goals to leading and lagging indicators (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Each metric should have a baseline, target, review frequency, and named owner. Institutional leaders should triangulate dashboard trends with student and staff feedback rather than relying on a single numerical score.

Effective change management also requires a compelling institutional rationale, credible leadership coalitions, staff participation, and staged implementation. Kotter (1995) highlights the importance of structured organizational change, while Bryson (2018) emphasizes strategy formulation suited to mission-driven institutions. Pilot programs can be evaluated against predefined criteria before institution-wide scaling.

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Table 1. Proposed mechanisms for digital strategic management in higher education

Mechanism	Management action	Illustrative KPI
Digital maturity assessment	Audit systems, skills, processes and inclusion	Share of priority processes mapped and assessed
Integrated planning	Link digital projects to strategic goals and budgets	Projects with approved owners, milestones and budgets (%)
Data governance	Establish data standards, quality checks and access roles	Completeness of core administrative datasets (%)
Performance dashboard	Review teaching, research, finance and service metrics	On-time quarterly KPI reviews (%)
Staff development	Provide role-specific training and change support	Staff completing competency-based training (%)
Risk and cybersecurity	Conduct security reviews and continuity exercises	Critical findings remediated within deadline (%)

3. Efficiency evaluation and phased implementation

The mechanisms in Table 1 are proposed management instruments, not empirical findings. Their effectiveness should be evaluated with a baseline and follow-up data, considering institutional size, resources, and student composition. A multidimensional evaluation could track administrative turnaround times, error rates, student satisfaction, budget variance, platform accessibility, and learning-related outcomes. Shorter processing time is beneficial only if service quality and fairness are maintained.

Implementation can follow three phases. During months 1–3, institutions perform a maturity assessment, identify process bottlenecks, and agree on baseline indicators. During months 4–9, teams pilot interoperable workflows and dashboards in selected departments while training personnel. During months 10–18, leaders review evidence, revise governance rules, and scale proven practices. A cycle of planning, execution, measurement, and corrective action supports organizational learning (Hanelt et al., 2021).

Risks include fragmented procurement, vendor lock-in, weak cybersecurity, low staff engagement, unequal digital access, and overreliance on automated decision-making. To mitigate these, universities should implement privacy-by-design rules, accessible service alternatives, independent security assessments, and human oversight of high-stakes decisions. Selwyn (2016) argues that digital education must

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be examined in its social and institutional context, reinforcing the need to assess outcomes rather than equate digitalization with improvement.

CONCLUSION

Improving management efficiency under digital transformation requires alignment between institutional strategy, organizational governance, reliable data, human capacity, and continuous performance evaluation. The proposed integrated mechanism combines maturity diagnostics, prioritized investment, accountable data stewardship, balanced performance measurement, staff development, and risk management. Its practical contribution lies in converting broad digital ambitions into responsibilities and verifiable indicators. Future research should test the framework through longitudinal comparisons across universities and examine how implementation conditions affect educational quality, administrative efficiency, equity, and financial sustainability.

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