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Issues of Introducing Innovative Management Approaches in Managing Academic Activities in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: This article analyzes the issues of introducing innovative management approaches to the management of academic activities in higher education institutions. The study examines the content of innovative methods such as results-oriented management, project management, quality management standards, academic analytics, scenario planning and knowledge management, as well as the level of readiness of organizations to implement them. The main obstacles to the introduction of innovative approaches are identified, and the roadmap for their phased implementation and expected results are scientifically documented.

Keywords: Innovation Management, Project Management, Quality Management, Academic Analytics, Scenario Planning, Knowledge Management, Change Management, Institutional Inertia

1. Introduction

The increasingly complex operating conditions of higher education institutions demonstrate the inadequacy of traditional management methods. Increasing institutional differentiation, resource constraints, digital transformation, and increased international competition require a restructuring of academic management based on modern, flexible, and innovative approaches.

In modern management science, a number of innovative management methods have been developed, which have proven themselves well in various fields, including commercial organizations. However, their application in the field of higher education has its own characteristics: it is necessary to take into account such values as academic freedom, collegiality and scientific autonomy. Therefore, it is important not to mechanically copy innovative methods, but to introduce them in an adapted way to the academic environment.

The success of implementing innovative management methods depends on two main factors. The first is the extent to which the method itself is suitable for the specifics of the higher education sector. The second is the readiness of the organization to adopt and effectively apply this method, including the level of personnel competence, financial resources and institutional flexibility. Often, the failure of innovative projects is associated with insufficient consideration of the second factor.

This article is aimed at analyzing the issues of introducing innovative management approaches to academic management in higher education institutions. The study comprehensively studies the content of the main innovative methods, the level of readiness for their introduction, obstacles to their introduction, and the step-by-step path of implementation.

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Analysis of literature on the topic

The issues of introducing innovative approaches in higher education management have been studied from various aspects by foreign, CIS, and Uzbek scholars.

American scholar Burton R. Clark studied the role of innovative management methods in university development within the framework of the concept of "entrepreneurial university". The author substantiates the elements of a centralized strategic core and a strengthened periphery of innovative management. However, the mechanisms for managing institutional barriers to the introduction of innovative methods have not been thoroughly developed [1].

British researcher Michael Shattock, having studied the methodology of strategic management and change management in university administration, substantiated the success factors of innovation management. The author shows that consistent support from management is a decisive factor in the success of innovative changes. However, the methodology for implementing each innovation method separately has not been developed in detail [2].

American scientist John P. Kotter developed an eight-step model of organizational change management and based on mechanisms for overcoming resistance to change. The author's model is widely used in various fields, including educational organizations. However, the specifics of the academic environment (collegiality, academic freedom) are not specifically adapted to the model [3].

Russian scientist GB Kleiner studied the institutional conditions for the implementation of organizational innovations from the perspective of institutional economics. The author argues that institutional inertia hinders the implementation of innovations. However, innovative methods specific to the field of higher education have not been studied in depth [4].

Russian researcher NV Novikov, having studied the development trends of innovative approaches in the management of educational systems, substantiated the gradual nature of their introduction. The author indicates the need to test innovative management through pilot projects. However, a methodology for assessing readiness for the introduction of innovative methods has not been developed [5].

Professor RX Aylimov studied the application of modern management methods in the national higher education system within the framework of educational management and substantiated the directions for adapting innovative approaches. The author's scientific results contributed to the development of national educational management. At the same time, a quantitative assessment of the obstacles to the introduction of innovative methods was not carried out [6].

Professor Sh.K. Shodmonov, within the framework of economic theory, studied the impact of institutional innovations on economic development and substantiated the general laws of introducing innovative changes. The author shows that institutional changes should be gradual and systematic. However, innovative methods specific to higher education management have not been studied separately [7].

Professor UV Gafurov analyzed the directions of modernization of higher education management within the framework of educational economics and substantiated the prospects for the introduction of innovative management methods. His work made a significant contribution to the development of national educational management. However, a quantitative assessment of the level of readiness for the introduction of innovative methods has not been developed [8].

Literature analysis shows that foreign scientists have extensively studied innovative management methods and change management methodologies. Scientists from the CIS countries have studied institutional inertia and the conditions for the introduction of innovations. Uzbek scientists have analyzed the directions of modernization of the national education system. However, the adaptation of innovative management methods to the sphere of higher education, quantitative assessment of the readiness of organizations to implement them, and systematic analysis of obstacles to their implementation have not been sufficiently carried out. It is this direction that determines the scientific novelty of this study.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study is the theory of innovative management, the concept of change management (Kotter model), project management methodology, and institutional economics [3], [4], [9]. The methods of systematic analysis, comparative analysis, expert assessment, and logical generalization were used during the study.

To assess the readiness of organizations to implement innovative methods, an expert survey methodology was used, in which senior staff and specialists of higher education institutions participated. To identify barriers to implementation, an expert assessment method was also used, and the severity of each barrier was assessed on a scale of 0–100 points. To assess the expected effect of the implementation of innovative methods, the current state and the expected result were compared.

3. Results

Innovative management methods that can be applied in the management of academic activities are grouped into six main areas (Figure 1).

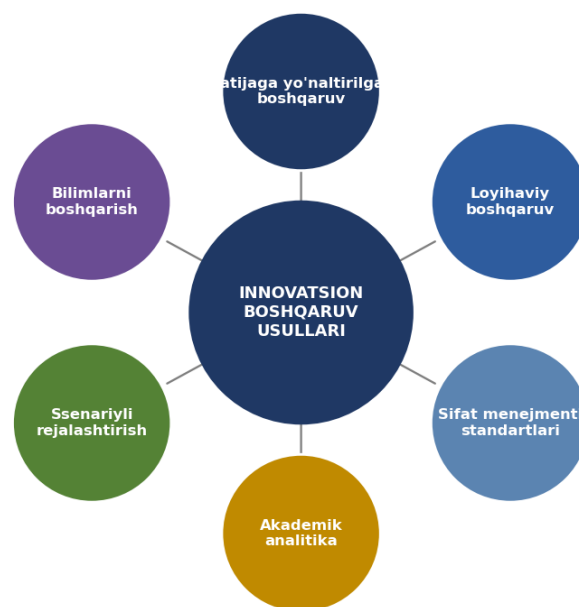


Figure 1. System of innovative methods used in the management of academic activities

Results-oriented management involves evaluating the management process by the results achieved, not the resources spent [10]. Project management organizes part of the organization's activities in the form of projects with specific goals and deadlines [9]. International quality management standards provide a methodology for systematizing management processes [11]. Academic analytics analyzes data collected during the educational process and increases the effectiveness of teaching [12], [13]. Scenario planning is a method of making strategic decisions in conditions of uncertainty [14]. Knowledge management is aimed at systematizing, storing and distributing knowledge and experience accumulated in the organization [15], [16].

Level of readiness to introduce innovative methods.

The level of readiness for the implementation of each innovative method in higher education institutions varies. An expert survey was conducted to assess this readiness (Figure 2).

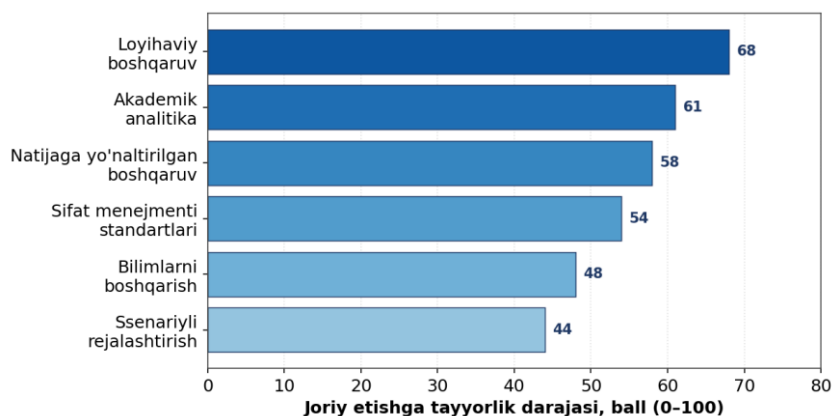


Figure 2. Level of readiness to introduce innovative methods

Expert assessments showed that project management (68 points) and academic analytics (61 points) have the highest readiness level – this is explained by the fact that they can be implemented in a relatively short time and at low cost. Results-oriented management (58 points) and quality management standards (54 points) have an average readiness level. Knowledge management (48 points) and scenario planning (44 points) have the lowest readiness level, as they require long-term institutional changes. Barriers to implementing innovation management.

The main obstacles encountered in the implementation of innovative methods were identified (Figure 3).

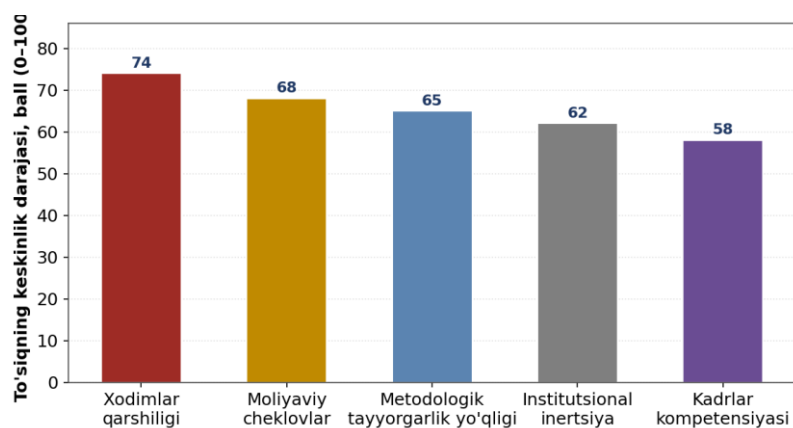


Figure 3. Main obstacles to implementing innovation management

Staff resistance was rated as the most serious obstacle (74 points). This resistance is explained by the additional burden associated with mastering new methods, a lack of clarity about the purpose of the change, or a reluctance to abandon existing practices [17], [18]. Financial constraints (68 points) and lack of methodological preparation (65 points) are also significant obstacles. Institutional inertia (62 points) – the organization's low propensity to deviate from established procedures – and a lack of staff competence (58 points) were also noted as significant obstacles.

Applying project management to academic activities.

Among the innovative methods, the project approach is worth considering in more detail, since it has the highest readiness for implementation. Its essence is to carry out part of the organization's activities through temporary project teams, rather than permanent functional units.

The main areas where project management is used in a higher education organization are: implementation of research projects, development and accreditation of new educational programs, implementation of international cooperation initiatives, modernization of infrastructure and introduction of digital systems. The main difference of the project approach is that the project has a clear goal, deadline, budget and

responsible leader, which allows for rapid mobilization of resources and clear assignment of responsibility for the result.

To implement project management, an appropriate infrastructure must be created in the organization: a project management methodology, a project office or coordinating unit, a system for training project managers, and a project portfolio management mechanism. The main difficulty is the conflict between the traditional hierarchical structure and the matrix project structure, to resolve which it is necessary to clearly define the responsibilities and formally record the employee's employment in the project [9].

Implementation of quality management standards.

International quality management standards are designed specifically for educational organizations and provide a methodology for systematizing management processes and continuously improving them. The main principles of this system are: stakeholder orientation, management leadership, employee involvement, a process approach, continuous improvement, and evidence-based decision-making [11].

An important caveat is necessary when introducing standards: in practice, standards often remain at the level of formal documentation and do not affect real management. In this case, the system only creates an additional bureaucratic burden. The true value of standards is manifested only when they become part of the culture of the organization, therefore, when introducing them, special attention should be paid to the transition from form to content [11].

The content of innovative methods and the level of readiness to implement them are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Application of innovative management methods to higher education

Method	Application form	Level of readiness
Results-oriented management	Integral indices, target indicators	Average (58 points)
Project management	Scientific and development projects	High (68 points)
Quality management standards	Internal quality assurance system	Average (54 points)
Academic analytics	Information and analytical platform	High (61 points)
Scenario planning	Strategic development scenarios	Low (44 points)
Knowledge management	Scientific schools, mentoring	Low (48 points)

Formation of a knowledge management system.

The main resource of a higher education organization is knowledge. Therefore, the method of knowledge management, although it has the lowest level of readiness, is of particular importance in the long term. Its essence is to identify, systematize, store and disseminate the knowledge and experience accumulated in the organization.

It is customary to divide knowledge in an organization into two types: formalized knowledge (documents, methodological manuals) and tacit knowledge (personal experience of employees, professional intuition) [15], [16]. The issue of preserving tacit knowledge is especially relevant for a higher education organization, since when an experienced professor leaves the organization, his knowledge is often lost. Practical mechanisms of the knowledge management system include mentoring programs, support for scientific schools, open classes, and the creation of a database of best practices.

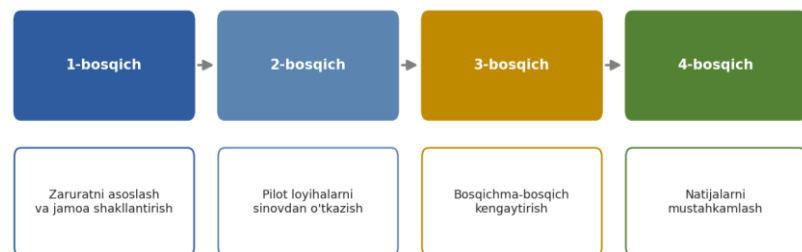
The organizational conditions for the implementation of innovative methods are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Organizational conditions for the implementation of innovative management methods

Condition	Content	Importance
Leadership support	Consistent and personal example	Builds employee trust
Pilot test	Initial inspection within a limited scope	Reduces risks
Personnel training	Training in innovation management	Fills the competency gap
Transparent communication	Transparency of goals and results	Reduces resistance

A step-by-step model of innovative change management.

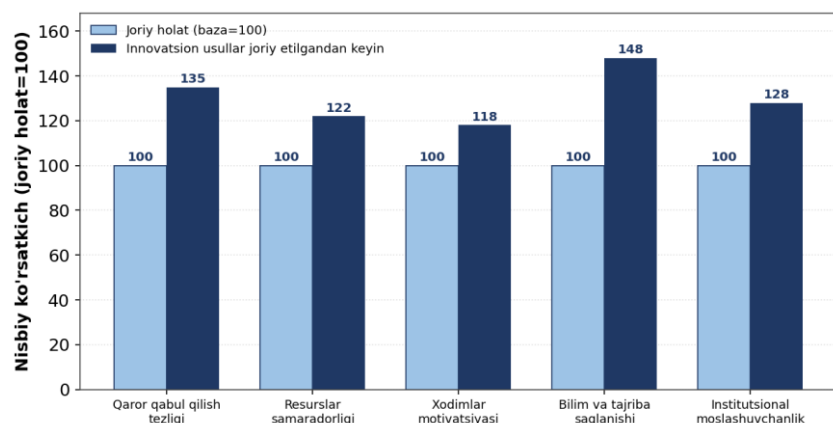
A step-by-step change management model was developed to overcome the identified barriers and successfully implement innovative methods (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Step-by-step model for implementing innovative management methods

In the first stage, the need for change is justified and a team supporting it is formed. In the second stage, the selected innovative method is tested in a limited scope, as a pilot project. In the third stage, the method is gradually expanded based on successful results. In the fourth stage, the achieved results are consolidated and the method is made part of the organizational culture. This consistency is an effective way to overcome institutional inertia and employee resistance [3], [18], [19].

The expected effect of introducing innovative methods.

An expert survey was conducted to assess the expected impact of the integrated implementation of innovative management methods (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Expected results of implementing innovative methods

Expert assessments showed a 35 percent increase in decision-making speed, 22 percent in resource efficiency, and 18 percent in employee motivation. The highest increase was in the knowledge and experience retention index, which increased by 48 percent, demonstrating the long-term institutional value of the knowledge management

approach. Institutional flexibility increased by 28 percent, strengthening the organization's readiness for future changes.

Psychological foundations of employee resistance and its overcoming.

Since employee resistance has been identified as the most serious obstacle, it is important to understand its psychological causes in more depth. There are several types of resistance: resistance arising from ignorance (the employee does not understand the essence of the new method), fear of uncertainty (the employee perceives it as a threat to his position or status), fatigue from additional workload (the new system takes time and effort to master), and previous experience of unsuccessful changes (the employee remembers that previous reforms did not work) [17], [18].

Each type of resistance requires a specific approach. For resistance arising from ignorance, it is effective to provide clear and understandable information, to give illustrative examples. For fear of uncertainty, it is necessary to clearly describe the employee's future role and actively involve him in the process. To reduce fatigue, the change should be implemented gradually, with sufficient time. For previous unsuccessful experiences, it is important to clearly show how the new approach differs from previous ones and quickly demonstrate initial small successes [18].

It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to completely eliminate employee resistance – a certain level of critical thinking helps to carefully consider changes. The key is to manage resistance through constructive dialogue and not let it turn into covert sabotage [17].

International experience of innovation management.

Successful experience in implementing innovative management methods has been accumulated in advanced foreign universities. Project management and academic analytics are widely used in Anglo-Saxon universities, as these organizations have relatively high autonomy and flexible management structures [9], [12], [13], [19]. In continental European universities, quality management standards and results-oriented management are a priority, which is associated with accountability requirements imposed by the state [10], [11].

Strategic planning and scenario-based approaches are widely used in East Asian universities, especially in developing long-term development plans to achieve international rankings [14]. Summarizing these experiences, a strategy is considered appropriate, starting with the methods that have the highest readiness for national conditions (project management, academic analytics) and then moving to more complex methods.

4. Discussion

It is necessary to acknowledge a number of limitations of this study. The assessment of the level of readiness and barriers to the implementation of innovative methods is based on an expert survey, which introduces a certain degree of subjectivity. In order to realistically implement each innovative method and measure its specific effectiveness, pilot projects should be implemented and their results monitored.

Also, the success of implementing innovative methods largely depends on the specific institutional conditions of each organization, and general recommendations need to be adapted to each specific situation. As promising areas of future research, an in-depth analysis of the results of the pilot project of each innovative method, a comparison of the experience of different organizations, and a detailed development of mechanisms for forming an innovative management culture can be indicated.

The analysis shows that the introduction of innovative management methods is an important tool for improving the effectiveness of academic management, but this process faces serious obstacles, such as staff resistance, institutional inertia, and lack of methodological preparation. To overcome these obstacles, a phased approach, starting with pilot projects and consistently supported, is needed.

5. Conclusion

This article systematically studies the issues of introducing innovative management approaches to the management of academic activities in higher education institutions. The results of the study allowed us to formulate the following conclusions.

First, six innovative methods that can be applied in academic management – results-oriented management, project management, quality management standards, academic analytics, scenario planning, and knowledge management – were identified and described.

Second, the expert assessment found that project management (68 points) and academic analytics (61 points) had the highest implementation readiness, while scenario planning and knowledge management had the lowest readiness.

Third, employee resistance (74 points) was identified as the most serious obstacle to implementing innovative management, followed by financial constraints (68 points) and lack of methodological preparation (65 points).

Fourth, a four-stage change management model (need justification, pilot testing, expansion, consolidation) was developed, and its expected high effectiveness (knowledge retention increased by 48 percent and decision-making speed increased by 35 percent) was determined.

Based on the results of the research, the following scientific and practical proposals were developed:

It is advisable to start implementing innovative methods with those with the highest readiness (project management, academic analytics), and then move on to more complex methods (scenario planning, knowledge management);

To overcome employee resistance, it is recommended to clearly explain the purpose of the change, involve employees in the process, and openly demonstrate initial successes;

Before implementing each innovative method, it is necessary to test it as a pilot project and make adjustments based on the results;

It is necessary to organize special training programs to improve the competencies of management personnel in the field of innovative management;

It is recommended to support innovative changes through a consistent and personal example from management, making them part of the organizational culture.

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