

Governance strategies for university-level education amidst Ukraine's postwar reconstruction and growth



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Abstract The restoration and optimisation of higher education institutions have become a priority task for those engaged in the field of academia. The necessity for this research arises from the requirement to safeguard Ukraine's educational system and its intellectual capital, as well as to maintain the country's national identity. Furthermore, the aspiration to integrate into the European educational space serves to intensify this relevance. The objective of this research is to analyse the vectors of state policy in higher education in the context of postwar reconstruction and development in Ukraine. The research objectives were achieved through the application of general scientific methods, including abstraction, comparison, analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. This article examines the potential of public administration tools in the higher education system to facilitate the innovative development of the national educational space. The study identifies four key areas for improvement in the administrative mechanisms in question: target orientation, regulation, information, and economics. The research reveals that the implementation of algorithmic governance mechanisms and long-term international funding can facilitate the optimal development of the higher education system. This can be achieved through the delineation of powers among institutions, the granting of autonomy in the management of the educational process, and the creation of a competitive environment in higher education.

Keywords: public administration, European integration, education reform, state regulation, legal regulation of education, legal support for higher education

1. Introduction

The formulation of a postwar recovery concept is currently under consideration, with a particular emphasis on the sustainable and practical development of the higher education system. To achieve effective state management in this area, it is necessary to implement synergistic interactions among the various links of the sectoral management system in a practical manner. This approach allows for a rapid response to emerging challenges and the implementation of preventative measures to avoid their occurrence.

In the context of postwar recovery, Ukraine must continuously develop its national and cultural identity. It will be instrumental in determining the quality of the country's future legal and sociopolitical unity. It is imperative to establish and implement an effective public management system for higher education, one that is based on transparent and open management mechanisms. Furthermore, the establishment of a system of institutional public accountability is recommended.

In the context of Ukraine's postwar scenario, the conflict has had a significant effect on the education system, particularly at the university and higher education institution levels. It is crucial to emphasise the pivotal function of higher education in social and economic advancement. It is regarded as a crucial instrument for national recuperation in periods of crisis. The challenges currently faced by universities include damage to infrastructure, the migration of students and teaching staff, and the necessity of modernising educational programmes.

This situation calls for a convergence of state governance policies and regional development strategies. In particular, the interaction between different levels of management has the potential to reinforce the position of higher education.

A substantial body of contemporary scholarship has been devoted to investigating efficacious state policy implementation in higher education, with the goal of establishing an innovative strategic management model. Some researchers (Sychenko et al., 2023; Sokolova, 2022) have emphasised that effectiveness is a key determinant of the speed and quality of progress in national societal processes. Tkachenko (2023) posits that effective state policy in higher education is



contingent upon the simplicity of management structures. In turn, Tarasenko and Tarasenko (2022) proposed that the synergistic model of managing educational and scientific potential should focus on the creation of internal conditions conducive to the optimisation of the system in the desired direction.

A number of contemporary scientists have conducted comprehensive research into the general issues of formulating a strategy for state policy and the practical implementation of individual strategic models of the management paradigm in the context of higher education (Popelo & Olyfirenko, 2022). The works of Legotin (2018) and Dooranov et al. (2022) shed light on the particular issues and risks associated with the optimisation process of the higher education system.

The publications and scientific works of several prominent contemporary scholars have reflected the main aspects of reforming higher education in Ukraine in accordance with widely accepted international standards. These issues have become increasingly salient in the wake of the war's deleterious impact on the educational environment. In particular, Batrak and Tarasenko (2023) propose that in selecting effective mechanisms of state governance of higher education, it is prudent to pay attention to the optimal distribution of powers among different levels of management.

This issue has been the focus of scientific research by management theorists and practitioners, including Halkiv et al. (2020), Semigina (2019), and Koval et al. (2020). Conversely, several researchers (Ohneviuk & Luhovyi, 2022; Stawicka, 2021) posit that the optimal social progress of a country is contingent upon the quality of higher education, which serves as an influential social institution.

In scientific publications, the issue of classifying the tools of state public management is investigated from various conceptual and methodological approaches. These include investigations of the issue from the perspective of state administration (Shkilniak et al., 2023), the specifics of applying mechanisms in complex conditions of uncertainty and crisis processes during wartime (Soltanifar et al., 2021), and the absence of effective strategies for innovative development (de Wit & Altbach, 2021).

This work builds on the literature and proposes new approaches for the restoration of the postwar education system. The research project is focused on updating the concept of state policy in the field of education, implementing systemic optimisation changes, introducing algorithm-based mechanisms of state governance, and leveraging the potential of long-term international funding in the postwar period to create potentially effective conditions for the successful development of the education system in Ukraine. The optimal management of the education system should be achieved through differentiation, the delegation of powers among various institutions, the assurance of autonomy in the organisation of the educational process and the creation of a competitive environment in the field of education.

An examination of the factors influencing the optimisation of state policy reveals potential avenues for advancement in higher education in Ukraine. To integrate into the global educational space in the postwar period, Ukraine would be well advised to consider the successful practical experience of foreign countries with respect to state policy in higher education. Some of these experiences can be regarded as exemplars, provided that the national characteristics of the education system and its declared priority are taken into account. The aforementioned potential of international experience in implementing contemporary management systems in academic institutions can facilitate the transition to an appropriate form of state governance of higher education in Ukraine.

Despite the significant contributions of scholars to the field, further research is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the regeneration and transformation of Ukraine's higher education system in the context of its postwar recovery and development.

The objective of this article is to analyse the prospective vectors of optimising the mechanisms of public administration policy in the higher education system, with the goal of identifying potential avenues for the progressive development of Ukrainian society.

2. Methods

The research was conducted in accordance with the principles of comprehensiveness and systematic scientific investigation. This approach permitted the examination of the research object as an integrated system with interconnections and interdependencies. The research objectives were achieved through the utilisation of general scientific research methods, including abstraction, comparison, analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction.

The research employed a combination of analysis and synthesis to identify the primary factors that underpin the essential functionality of state policy in the innovative development of higher education in the postwar period. The inductive method was employed to establish prospective directions for the development of the process under investigation. The deductive method was utilised to ascertain the priority vectors of innovative transformation of the higher education system during Ukraine's postwar recovery. The abstraction method was used to highlight theoretical generalisations, identify principal categories and concepts, and formulate conclusions regarding the priority vectors of innovative development of higher education in the digital national postwar space. A comparative approach was employed to identify the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary innovative paradigm in the higher education system optimisation sector, in contrast with more traditional approaches.

3. Literature Review

The detrimental effects of the institutional and legal constraints imposed by the conflict are mounting and undermining the higher education system. It is therefore evident that an adaptive transformation of management activity, particularly within the context of state policy, is necessary. The postwar recovery period presents a number of significant challenges that require immediate attention. These include the realisation of equal access to education for the population and the restoration and intensive development of the intellectual potential of the scientific-educational environment (Sychenko et al., 2023; Sokolova, 2022).

In light of Ukraine's postwar Eurointegration foreign policy, it is crucial to anticipate potential risks associated with the partial erosion of national self-identity and ensure the quality of higher education. The responsibility of state policy is to mitigate such risks by providing a sustainable and prestigious educational environment. Moreover, the higher education system requires substantial upgrades to its material and technical infrastructure, as well as the integration of contemporary, innovative pedagogical approaches (Shkilniak et al., 2023). This approach will facilitate the alignment of the national higher education environment with the demands of a dynamic, globally competitive industry.

Education performs a particular political function. To implement a strategy for sustainable recovery in the postwar period, it is essential to pay particular attention to the development of a unified state policy for higher education. The priorities for national development programmes include fostering resilient growth, integrating international standards and effectively regulating the higher education environment (Ohneviuk & Luhovyi, 2022; Stawicka, 2021). State policy in higher education essentially has a clear understanding of the target apparatus and the practical tools required for its realisation.

Effective state management of the higher education system can facilitate more efficient utilisation of available resources, integration with Euro-integrated standards, the compelling attraction of international financing opportunities and the expansion of functional boundaries (Koval et al., 2020). The modernisation of existing approaches to state management in higher education necessitates the intensification of national, regional, and institutional interaction, as well as the implementation of common principles of higher education management. The most essential principles, as identified by Shkilniak et al. (2023), are democracy, openness, decentralisation and regionalisation, which must be considered alongside the need to preserve the functionality of the state management link. This approach will facilitate the implementation of vector trends aimed at mastering the innovative potential of competencies in managing the higher education system within the national educational space.

The implementation of state policy within the context of decentralisation necessitates the delegation of multifunctional financial and administrative autonomy to regional management bodies. It constitutes a fundamental instrument for the administration of the public sector, with direct implications for the activities of higher education institutions. Furthermore, the toolkit provides unimpeded access to a range of financial support and investment sources. The expansion of analytical and communication functionality within the accountability system of higher education entities, while simultaneously reducing the administrative and accreditation functions of higher education institutions, will actively contribute to the decentralisation of management in the sector. The implementation of algorithmic management mechanisms and the activation of publicity serve to establish an effective control system for leaders at different levels (Sychenko et al., 2023; Sokolova, 2022). The introduction of long-term preferential international funding during Ukraine's postwar recovery will stimulate infrastructure projects, thereby assisting in the regeneration of the educational environment.

The mechanisms and tools of public management in higher education constitute a nexus of political, economic, motivational, and organisational methods of influence (Ohneviuk & Luhovyi, 2022; Stawicka, 2021). The aforementioned process is implemented by representatives of state authorities and local self-governments. Public management mechanisms must interact directly and effectively with the state management system to establish a vector for internal and international political development strategies (Koval et al., 2020).

It is of the utmost importance during the postwar recovery period to ensure that the development of higher education is closely aligned with economic progress and societal needs. This will facilitate the regeneration of organisational and economic management mechanisms (Shkilniak et al., 2023). The implementation of innovative approaches to the formation of the management paradigm within the concept of state policy will have an impact on the strategic direction of the management of postwar higher education system reform.

It is of the utmost importance to distribute powers optimally among various institutions and organisations within a vertical hierarchical structure to facilitate the activation of state policy and the development of a systemic approach to higher education management. This will facilitate the practical autonomy of those responsible for organising the management of the educational process while also encouraging healthy competition within the educational environment (Koval et al., 2020).

In the context of postwar recovery, the key objectives in optimising the higher education system are the consolidation of institutions and the differentiation of powers between the state and local management sectors. The system should consider the national administrative apparatus as a means of implementing national policies while also considering the specific regional characteristics of each area (Novak et al., 2021).

The economic policy in question is designed to enhance the efficacy of measures taken to counteract the actions of an aggressor, with a particular emphasis on leveraging private initiative, fostering entrepreneurial opportunities, and promoting public–private collaboration. Regulatory innovations are currently being implemented with the objective of facilitating collaboration with higher education institutions in the implementation of innovations and the regeneration of infrastructure.

The array of measures towards economic liberalisation mentioned above indicates that the government acknowledges the correlation between economic freedom and the rate of economic regeneration. Importantly, the adverse consequences of the war period should not only be alleviated but also be utilised as a catalyst for the formulation of efficacious preventative policies. The fundamental principle for enhancing the management mechanisms of the higher education system within the scope of state policy is to provide support and intensively develop processes that reduce the regulatory impact of authoritative bodies and their powers (Legotin, 2018).

It is imperative that the financing and budget provision system be reformed to facilitate the implementation of postwar state policy in higher education. This may be accomplished by reducing budgetary funding for higher education institutions and utilising project financing for research establishments (Soltanifar et al., 2021). Nevertheless, funding for specific disciplines deemed vital for the advancement of the national strategy may be preserved. In the event that a contract is made with a student, it is proposed that an innovation be introduced regarding employment after graduation under state supervision for a minimum of five years. Importantly, any reduction in budgetary funding for higher education institutions should be accompanied by a substantial increase in academic freedom (Kryshtanovych et al., 2022). This entails the transfer of responsibility for the quality of teaching, learning and research from the state management sector to the university level.

It is essential to enhance the financial autonomy of Ukrainian higher education institutions and to grant them complete autonomy and self-governance to optimise the quality of education. This will not only intensify academic freedom but also ensure adequate progress. Shkilniak et al. (2023) posit that this concept represents a pivotal direction for higher education rather than merely a means of optimising budgetary expenditures.

The practical implementation of innovation-oriented development in higher education institutions during the postwar recovery period, supported by corresponding state policies, ensures that students receive adequate preparation for their future roles. This will facilitate greater integration and adaptability of scientific and educational services in response to the evolving demands of the modern labour market. In light of the prevailing socioeconomic circumstances, it is imperative that public management strategies within higher education institutions consider the innovative potential of specific educational institutions (Soltanifar et al., 2021). The significance of these strategic decisions is contingent upon the integration of theoretical and applied tasks in accordance with globalisation trends, the increasing societal demands on the functionality of higher education, and the rapid development of innovative technologies.

The postwar recovery of the higher education system through state management policy will include a function to mitigate obstacles and challenges in achieving the goals of optimising the educational environment in accordance with European and global norms and standards (Soltanifar et al., 2021). To concentrate management efforts, overcoming the contradictions between the mass character of education and its personalised content and guaranteeing workers' competitiveness in the integrated labour market are essential.

The deliberate array of instruments for operationalising state management innovations in the context of postwar Ukraine entails the systematic revitalisation of the higher education sector and the optimisation of its processes. This is accomplished through a phased approach to innovation mastery, the development of adaptive capabilities, and the institutionalisation of innovative decision-making. The implementation of a state policy model based on the paradigm of public administration will primarily entail the selection of prospective development directions according to the individualised conditions and characteristics of the higher education institution. Furthermore, it will entail the practical implementation of innovative potential and the renewal of forms, content, and means of the educational process in higher education (Legotin, 2018; Dooranov et al., 2022).

It is imperative that the higher education system in postwar Ukraine effectively establishes the prerequisites for the development of a national democratic society that is distinguished by a high level of education, equality, dignity, and ethnic identity. These concepts are regarded as the most fundamental values and unchanging factors in society's accelerated development.

In the postwar period, as Ukraine became increasingly integrated into the global educational space, it is essential to consider the successful practical experiences of foreign countries in the formulation of state policies for higher education. Some of these experiences may be considered exemplars, provided that they take into account the distinctive features of the Ukrainian higher education system and its stated priorities. The potential benefits of international experience in implementing modern management systems in higher education institutions could facilitate a transition to a more practical state–public level of interaction. During the postwar regeneration period, the functionality of associations of higher education institutions, innovative formations in higher education, public organisations, and regional self-government bodies intensified. The distinctive features of the strategy for developing a contemporary national higher education system necessitate the establishment of an efficacious interactional framework between higher education institutions and society.

It is imperative that the destructive changes wrought by the war period be neutralised and that an effective preventive policy be formulated as a consequence. The fundamental principle of optimising management mechanisms within the education system in the framework of state policy is to provide support and to intensively develop processes with the objective of minimising the regulatory influence of governmental bodies and their powers. The introduction of long-term concessionary international financing within Ukraine's postwar recovery will serve to actively stimulate a range of infrastructure projects, thereby facilitating the swiftest possible regeneration of the educational environment (Ohneviuk & Luhovyi, 2022; Stawicka, 2021).

The practical implementation of an innovation-oriented development of educational institutions during the postwar recovery period, supported by relevant state policy, will ensure the adequate preparation of learners and facilitate the integration and adaptability of scientific and educational services to the conditions of the modern dynamic labour market. In light of the prevailing socioeconomic circumstances, the strategy of public administration within the framework of state policy implemented by higher education institutions must consider the innovative potential of a given educational institution. The relevance of these strategic decisions is contingent upon the mutual integration of theoretical and applied tasks in accordance with globalisation trends, the ever-increasing demands of society on the functionality of higher education, and the rapid development of innovative technologies (Shkilniak et al., 2023). A specific role for state administration policy in the postwar recovery of the education system will be to establish mechanisms for overcoming obstacles and challenges in achieving the goal of optimising the educational environment in accordance with European and global standards.

The education development system in postwar Ukraine must establish appropriate conditions for the formation of a national democratic society with a high level of education, equality, dignity, and ethnic identity. These concepts are regarded as the most fundamental values, providing a stable foundation for the accelerated advancement of society (Kryshtanovych et al., 2022).

The realisation of the concept of public policy in the field of education, the implementation of systematic optimisation changes, the introduction of algorithmic mechanisms of public administration, and the utilisation of the potential of long-term international financing during the postwar period have the potential to create effective conditions for the successful development of the education system in Ukraine. The optimal functioning of the education system can be achieved through a differentiation of responsibilities between institutions, the autonomy of educational processes, and the fostering of a competitive environment in the field of education (Legotin, 2018). The optimal development of the Ukrainian educational sector is contingent upon digitalisation, the introduction of innovative practices, including immersive technologies, the individualisation of the learning process, and integration into the global educational environment.

To integrate into the global educational space in the postwar period, Ukraine must consider the successful practical experience of foreign countries in terms of state policy in higher education. Some of these cases can be directly considered examples to follow, provided that the specific national features of the education system and its declared priority are taken into account. The aforementioned potential of international experience in implementing modern management systems in educational institutions can facilitate the transition to an optimal state–public level of interaction (Soltanifar et al., 2021). The functionality of associations of educational institutions, innovative formations in the field under study, public organisations, and regional self-government bodies is set to intensify during the postwar period of regeneration. This is contingent upon the specifics of the strategy for forming a modern national education system, which aims to build an effective system of interaction between educational institutions and society.

The traditional management paradigm in higher education in developing countries or those that have experienced crisis phenomena is insufficient for enabling higher education institutions to integrate into the globalised educational environment, as argued by contemporary scholars (Freeman et al., 2021). It is proposed that optimisation transformations have had a negligible impact, with the majority of reforms ultimately deemed ineffective.

As posited by Chankseliani et al. (2021), sociopolitical transformations are precipitating a profound transformation in the relationship format of higher education institutions, specifically with respect to the organisation of the educational process and the establishment of collaborative partnerships with other institutions for the purpose of ensuring the sustainable development of the educational environment.

In the postcrisis period of regeneration, researchers (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021) identify the issues of interrelations and cooperation between educational institutions and the public as priorities for immediate resolution. Although this represents a novel experience for Ukraine, it has already become a widely accepted practice in European countries. Zahavi and Friedman (2020) posit that higher education institutions frequently fail to capitalise on opportunities for interaction and collaboration with the public. They identify a number of factors that contribute to this neglect. The authors state that contemporary higher education institutions should engage in collaborative efforts with the public to address challenges in higher education management in a comprehensive manner. Such collaboration has the potential to be mutually beneficial.

In conclusion, the interactions among higher education institutions, the state, and the public are clearly crucial factors in the dynamic development of the educational environment in the present era. As posited by scholars such as Olssen (2021), Žalėnienė and Pereira (2021), and Zhao et al. (2021), the scope of tasks for this cooperation should include the establishment of a system of structural and logical connections between theoretical knowledge and its practical application, the pursuit of

additional financing and investment sources, and the active implementation of principles of academic adaptability. Moreover, there is a widely held view that the enhancement of management models in higher education institutions and their integration into the global environment to the fullest extent possible is essential.

Researchers Smith (2020) and Gallagher and Savage (2023) posit that collaboration between higher education institutions and the public is a mutually beneficial endeavour that holistically addresses scientific-educational concerns and associated organisational and managerial challenges. The study's findings provide compelling evidence that the trend towards formulating an innovative paradigm of state policy in higher education during the postwar recovery period is a crucial step in the implementation and advancement of sustainable development and digitalisation principles.

4. Conclusion

The analytical techniques employed in this study have enabled the identification of potential avenues for optimising state management mechanisms within the higher education system during Ukraine's postwar recovery period. To preserve and regenerate national identity in education, it is necessary to modernise public management mechanisms within state policy. This enables higher education institutions to engage with governmental and nongovernmental institutions, thereby contributing to harmonious and continuous sustainable development. It is imperative to ensure that postwar development in higher education institutions is innovative, particularly given the international encouragement for adequate recovery. This will facilitate the intensification of the quality level of student training, growth in the influence of integrated educational services, and adaptation to the conditions of the modern labour market.

The realisation of the publicity concept of state policy in the field of higher education, the implementation of systemic optimisation changes, the introduction of algorithmic mechanisms of public administration and the utilisation of the potential of long-term international funding in the postwar period create the potential for adequate conditions for the successful development of the higher education system in Ukraine. It is therefore crucial to ensure effective management of the higher education system within the framework of state policy. This entails differentiating powers between institutions, establishing autonomy in managing the educational process and fostering a competitive environment in the higher education sector.

5. Prospects

Prospective directions for developing a higher education system in Ukraine should be based on the importance of resilience and innovation in the postwar context, as these are key factors in the country's future development.

The implementation of innovative educational solutions in the context of digitalising education and pedagogical technologies is a key priority. This includes elements of machine learning, virtual environments, immersive technologies, and artificial intelligence.

Integration with international, European and global standards is also crucial. This should promote the harmonisation of educational programmes and international partnerships.

The realisation of public–private partnerships, particularly in the context of cooperation between the government, the private sector and universities, will be pivotal for the funding of research and innovation, as well as for the promotion of economic and technological reconstruction.

The intensification of higher education institutions' financial and administrative independence will foster innovation in educational programmes and academic freedom.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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