

OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY REGION: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Uzbekistan operate under different ownership forms public, private, and foreign-affiliated reflecting the institutional diversity of the national higher education system and shaping regional education markets. This paper aims to describe the regional ownership structure of HEIs by calculating and comparing ownership shares across administrative units. The analysis uses an original dataset covering 14 regions and three ownership categories, comprising a total of 207 HEIs.

Keywords: higher education, higher education institutions (HEIs), ownership structure, public HEIs, private HEIs, foreign-affiliated HEIs, regional distribution, descriptive analysis

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Uzbekistan operate under three main ownership forms public, private, and foreign-affiliated each reflecting a distinct role in the system's structure and diversity. However, the distribution of these ownership types across regions is not necessarily uniform, and some regions may have limited representation of private or foreign-affiliated HEIs. This study therefore aims to provide a descriptive regional overview by calculating ownership shares within each region and each region's contribution to national totals, complemented by simple rankings and a stacked bar chart.

Literature Review

Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley conceptualize the contemporary “academic revolution” in global higher education as being driven by massification, diversification of institutional types, and intensified pressures on governance and financing, arguing that structural change in higher education systems is best understood through system-level composition rather than single-institution narratives. [1]

Levy emphasizes that private higher education has expanded worldwide and often “fits” salient system tendencies by operating with distinct organizational and financial characteristics most notably strong tuition dependence, comparatively lean structures, and different governance patterns making ownership a practical analytical lens for describing how national systems evolve and segment over time. [2]

Wilkins and Huisman frame international branch campuses (and, more broadly, foreign-affiliated provision) as a transnational strategy shaped by institutional motives and





constraints, highlighting that foreign-affiliated HEIs reflect not only internationalization goals but also strategic calculations related to legitimacy, risk, and host-country conditions factors that can produce concentrated, uneven geographic patterns. [3]

Arbo and Benneworth stress the inherently spatial dimension of higher education, noting that HEIs increasingly contribute to regional development through education, research, and broader engagement (“third mission”), and that regional ecosystems and place-based dynamics influence how institutions are distributed and how their roles are realized across territories supporting the value of region-by-region descriptive profiling. [4]

Data and Methodology

This study relies on a cross-sectional dataset that records the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) by ownership type across Uzbekistan’s 14 administrative units. The dataset distinguishes three ownership categories: public (state-owned), private (non-state), and foreign-affiliated HEIs. In total, the database includes 207 HEIs nationwide. The unit of analysis is the region, and the key variables are simple counts of institutions by ownership type.

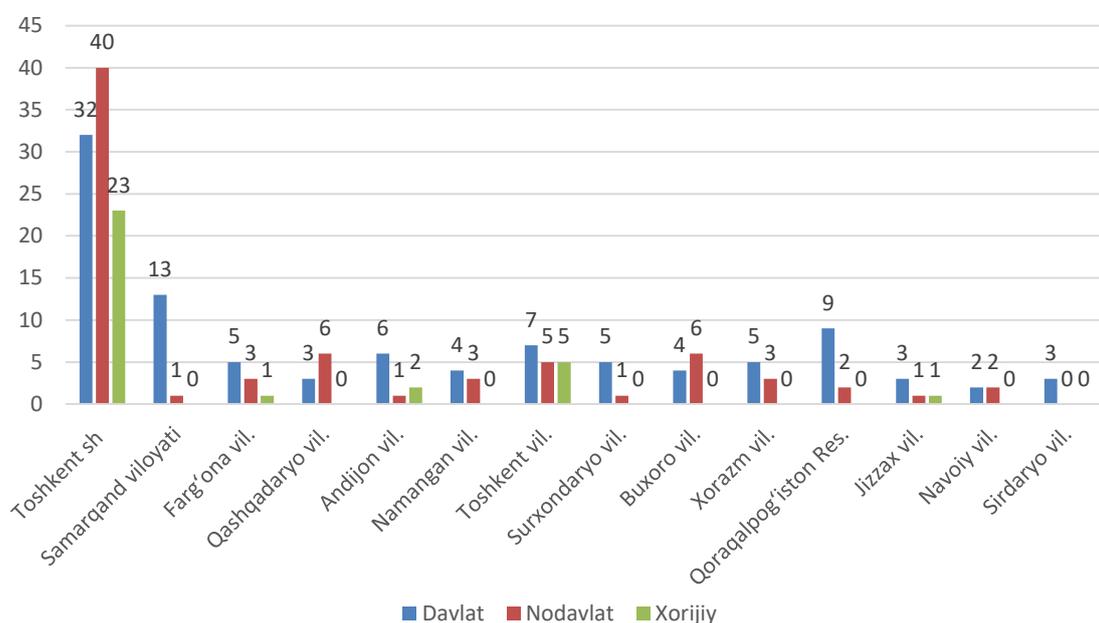
The analysis applies descriptive, share-based measures to characterize ownership composition at two levels. First, for each region, the within-region ownership structure is calculated as the share of each ownership type in the region’s total number of HEIs. Second, the study computes each region’s contribution to national totals for each ownership category, showing how public, private, and foreign-affiliated HEIs are distributed geographically at the national level. In addition, regions are compared using simple rankings based on totals and ownership shares.

Results

Figure 1 presents the number of HEIs by ownership type across regions using a clustered column chart. The figure shows clear differences between regions where all three ownership categories are present and those where foreign-affiliated HEIs are absent. Tashkent City and Tashkent region display the largest and most diverse profiles in absolute counts, whereas many regions have no foreign-affiliated institutions. Public HEIs dominate in Syrdarya and Samarkand in terms of counts, while private HEIs are relatively more prominent in Kashkadarya and Bukhara. Overall, the figure provides a concise comparison of ownership categories across regions in absolute terms.

Figure 1. Ownership structure of HEIs by region





Source: Author's calculations based on official statistical data

Table 1 summarizes the ownership composition of higher education institutions (HEIs) nationwide. Out of 207 HEIs, public (state-owned) institutions account for 101 (48.8%), private (non-state) institutions for 74 (35.7%), and foreign-affiliated institutions for 32 (15.5%). Overall, the national structure indicates that the public sector remains the largest segment, while private provision represents more than one-third of the system and foreign-affiliated HEIs form a smaller, but visible, component.

Table 1. National ownership structure of HEIs (Uzbekistan)

Ownership type	Number	Share (%)
Public (state-owned)	101	48.8
Private (non-state)	74	35.7
Foreign-affiliated	32	15.5
Total	207	100.0

Source: Author's calculations based on official statistical data

Table 2 reports, for each region, the total number of HEIs (T_i) and the within-region ownership shares (P_{iD} , P_{iN} , P_{iX}). The results show substantial variation across regions in both the scale of HEI presence and the composition by ownership type.

First, the distribution of HEIs is highly uneven in terms of totals: Tashkent City hosts 95 HEIs, which corresponds to 45.9% of all HEIs nationwide. The next largest concentration is Tashkent region (17 HEIs, 8.2%), while several regions have relatively small totals, such as Navoi (4, 1.9%) and Syrdarya (3, 1.4%). Second, foreign-affiliated HEIs



are present only in 5 out of 14 regions and are absent (zero) in the remaining 9 regions, indicating limited geographic coverage of the foreign segment. Third, private HEIs are present in 13 regions, with Syrdarya being the only region with no private and no foreign-affiliated HEIs (fully public). Finally, the highest private shares are observed in Kashkadarya (66.7%) and Bukhara (60.0%), whereas the highest foreign shares occur in Tashkent region (29.4%), Tashkent City (24.2%), and Andijan (22.2%).

Table 2. HEIs by region: totals and within-region ownership structure

Region	Public	Private	Foreign	Total	Public share (%)	Private share (%)	Foreign share (%)	Region share of national total (%)
Tashkent City	32	40	23	95	33.7	42.1	24.2	45.9
Samarkand region	13	1	0	14	92.9	7.1	0.0	6.8
Fergana region	5	3	1	9	55.6	33.3	11.1	4.3
Kashkadarya region	3	6	0	9	33.3	66.7	0.0	4.3
Andijan region	6	1	2	9	66.7	11.1	22.2	4.3
Namangan region	4	3	0	7	57.1	42.9	0.0	3.4
Tashkent region	7	5	5	17	41.2	29.4	29.4	8.2
Surkhandarya region	5	1	0	6	83.3	16.7	0.0	2.9
Bukhara region	4	6	0	10	40.0	60.0	0.0	4.8
Khorezm region	5	3	0	8	62.5	37.5	0.0	3.9
Republic of Karakalpakstan	9	2	0	11	81.8	18.2	0.0	5.3
Jizzakh region	3	1	1	5	60.0	20.0	20.0	2.4
Navoi region	2	2	0	4	50.0	50.0	0.0	1.9
Syrdarya region	3	0	0	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	1.4

Source: Author's calculations based on official statistical data

The results indicate that HEI ownership composition varies substantially across regions despite a diversified national profile. Tashkent City concentrates nearly half of all HEIs and dominates the foreign-affiliated segment, while foreign-affiliated institutions are absent in most regions and private provision is unevenly distributed. Overall, the evidence points to pronounced territorial differences in ownership structure, underscoring the need to interpret national aggregates alongside region-level composition.

From a practical perspective, simple share-based indicators can be used to monitor regional balance and identify territories with low ownership diversity. In particular, regions with no foreign-affiliated presence could be prioritised for partnership-based international





programmes, while regions with very limited private provision may be considered for measures that encourage alternative supply under existing quality assurance standards.

The study is limited by its reliance on institution counts only, it does not capture enrolment size, programme portfolios, quality, capacity, or trends over time, nor does it incorporate regional socioeconomic factors that could explain the observed differences. Overall, the article concludes that ownership diversity exists at the national level, but its regional distribution remains highly differentiated, highlighting the value of continued monitoring and deeper explanatory research.

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