COMPLICATED MODE OF MANAGEMENT

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Abstract. *Organizations increasingly operate in environments marked by technological change, uncertainty, regulation, and interconnected stakeholders. In such settings, the complicated mode of management addresses systems with multiple interacting components requiring coordination, planning, and expert judgment. This paper presents an IMRAD-based analysis outlining key characteristics, diagnostic principles, and implementation mechanisms. Findings show that governance improves coordination, reduces decision delays, and enhances predictability.*

Keywords: *complicated management, organizational complexity, governance, decision-making, coordination, systems thinking, process management, program management, performance measurement*

INTRODUCTION

Modern organizations rarely function as isolated units. They are embedded in networks of suppliers, customers, regulators, technologies, and social expectations. As organizations grow, their internal structure becomes more complex: multiple departments, specialized roles, layered hierarchies, and diverse information systems must work together to deliver consistent outcomes. In such settings, management is no longer merely about direct supervision or basic planning. Instead, managers must handle complicated systems where outcomes depend on interactions among many components.

In management theory, it is helpful to differentiate between simple, complicated, and complex situations. A simple situation is predictable: a clear rule or best practice produces a stable outcome. A complicated situation is also largely knowable and manageable, but it requires expert analysis, careful planning, and coordination because there are many parts and dependencies. A complex situation (in contrast) is more uncertain and emergent: cause–effect relationships are not fully predictable, and adaptation is central.

This paper focuses on the complicated mode of management, which is suitable when:

- the system has many interacting components (teams, processes, technologies);

- work is interdependent and sequential (one task depends on completion of another);
- decisions require technical expertise and structured analysis;
- outcomes are measurable and can be planned, monitored, and optimized with sufficient information.

Examples include large infrastructure projects, multi-campus universities, nationwide logistics systems, healthcare networks, large-scale IT platforms, and multi-stakeholder public programs. In such organizations, failures often arise not from lack of effort, but from coordination breakdowns, unclear decision rights, weak process governance, and inconsistent performance measurement.

Research Problem

Many organizations attempt to manage complicated systems using either overly simple approaches (leading to chaos and rework) or overly rigid bureaucratic approaches (leading to slow execution). There is a need for a balanced management mode that is structured, analytical, and coordinated—yet still practical and understandable for implementation.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. define the complicated mode of management and its distinguishing characteristics;
2. propose an IMRAD-based methodological framework for diagnosing organizational “complicatedness”;
3. identify managerial mechanisms and governance practices that improve performance in complicated environments;
4. provide actionable indicators and implementation steps for organizations.

Research Questions

- Which organizational conditions indicate the need for a complicated management mode?
- What governance and process mechanisms are most effective for managing complicated systems?
- What measurable outcomes can be expected from implementing complicated management mode?

Methodology

This study uses a conceptual–analytical research design with a structured framework that translates management theory into actionable organizational practice. The methodology integrates systems thinking, organizational design, and process management into an operational model.

Conceptual Model of Complicated Management Mode. The proposed model conceptualizes complicated management mode as an integrated combination of structural clarity, process architecture, decision-rights design, data-driven

monitoring, and coordination mechanisms. Structural clarity ensures that roles and responsibilities are explicitly defined (e.g., through a RACI matrix or equivalent responsibility mapping), reporting lines are transparent, escalation paths are standardized, and interfaces between organizational units are clearly specified to avoid duplication and gaps in ownership. Process architecture establishes consistent execution by mapping end-to-end processes from inputs to outputs, formalizing repeatable activities via standard operating procedures (SOPs), and embedding quality-control checkpoints at critical stages to prevent error propagation and rework. Decision-rights design determines who makes which decisions, at what organizational level, and based on what evidence, while separating strategic, tactical, and operational decisions to reduce confusion and accelerate resolution; cross-functional decisions are managed through governance bodies such as committees or boards to ensure alignment and accountability. Data-driven monitoring provides continuous visibility through objective-aligned KPI systems, dashboards, and periodic performance reviews, complemented by risk registers and issue-tracking systems that detect deviations early and support corrective action. Finally, coordination mechanisms—such as program/project management offices (PMO) where appropriate, structured interdepartmental planning cycles, and resource allocation and capacity management routines—enable synchronized execution across interdependent teams, ensuring that complex workstreams remain coherent, predictable, and controllable.

Diagnosis of “Complicatedness”

To determine whether a complicated mode of management is appropriate, an organization can be systematically assessed across six key diagnostic dimensions that reflect the nature and intensity of managerial complexity. Interdependence refers to the degree of dependency among organizational units and processes, where high inter-unit coordination and sequential task reliance indicate a stronger need for structured management. Specialization captures the extent to which activities require expert knowledge, technical skills, or professional judgment, increasing reliance on formal coordination and decision rules. Variety reflects the number and diversity of products, services, or process configurations, with higher variety demanding standardized processes and control mechanisms. Scale considers the overall size of operations, including geographic dispersion and the number of stakeholders involved, which amplifies coordination and communication challenges. Regulation and compliance measure the frequency, complexity, and strictness of external regulatory requirements that necessitate formal controls, documentation, and auditability. Finally, information latency evaluates delays, fragmentation, or inconsistencies in data availability, where higher latency increases uncertainty and reinforces the need for data-driven monitoring and structured decision-making.

A higher score on these dimensions indicates a stronger need for complicated management mode.

Implementation Procedure

The implementation procedure proposed in this study follows five phases:

1. Mapping: identify key processes, stakeholders, and dependencies
2. Design: define governance, decision rights, and process standards
3. Instrumentation: create KPIs, dashboards, and risk controls
4. Execution: pilot in one unit, then scale gradually
5. Continuous improvement: periodic review and process refinement

Evaluation Indicators

The success of complicated management mode is evaluated using measurable indicators:

- reduction in rework and process errors
- decrease in decision cycle time (from request to decision)
- improvement in on-time delivery of outputs
- reduced operational risk incidents
- improved stakeholder satisfaction (internal/external)
- stronger budget and resource predictability

Results

Applying the above framework leads to several consistent outcomes expected in organizations that implement complicated management mode correctly.

Increased Operational Predictability

When processes are mapped and standardized, variability decreases. Teams know what inputs they need, what outputs they produce, and what quality standards apply. This reduces unexpected interruptions and increases schedule reliability.

Improved Coordination Across Departments

Clear decision rights and governance mechanisms reduce “ownership confusion.” Cross-functional problems (e.g., IT–finance–operations conflicts) can be resolved systematically through agreed escalation paths and decision bodies.

Reduction of Decision Bottlenecks

A common problem in complicated organizations is that too many decisions are pushed upward to top management. By distributing decision authority appropriately—while maintaining transparency through reporting—decision cycle time decreases and managers focus on strategic priorities.

Better Risk Control and Compliance

Complicated mode encourages risk registers, compliance checklists, and monitoring routines. This improves audit readiness and reduces costly incidents (late reporting, contractual penalties, safety issues).

Improved Resource Allocation

Through planning cycles and capacity management, organizations can balance workloads, reduce idle time in some units, and reduce overload in others. This enhances efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Discussion

The findings suggest that complicated management mode is beneficial when the organizational environment is largely predictable but operationally demanding due to interdependencies and specialization. In such contexts, the main performance problem is not ambiguity, but coordination.

However, complicated mode has limitations. If implemented without discipline, it can create bureaucracy: too many meetings, excessive documentation, and slow approval chains. Therefore, the management challenge is to introduce structure without destroying speed.

Complicated vs Complex: Choosing the Right Mode

Complicated systems are analyzable; expert knowledge can produce good solutions. Complex systems are adaptive and uncertain; experimentation is required. Many organizations treat complex problems as complicated, over-planning and under-learning. A practical strategy is hybrid management:

- use complicated mode for stable, repeatable processes (finance reporting, procurement, standardized services);
- use adaptive/learning mode for uncertain innovation (new products, AI deployment, crisis response).

Governance Design: The “Minimum Effective Bureaucracy” Principle

Governance should be designed to be as light as possible while still effective:

- define only the critical decision forums;
- set strict meeting agendas and decision deadlines;
- document decisions in short, standardized formats;
- automate reporting through dashboards rather than manual reports.

Digital Tools as Enablers

Digital platforms—ERP, BPM systems, project management tools, and BI dashboards—are essential for complicated mode because complexity is often “information complexity.” Without real-time data and integrated systems, management becomes blind, and coordination costs rise.

Human Factors and Capability Development

Complicated management mode requires management competence:

- process literacy (ability to map and improve processes);
- data literacy (understanding KPIs and analytics);
- cross-functional communication skills;
- disciplined execution culture.

Training and change management are therefore critical to success.

Conclusion

This study presented a structured IMRAD-based exploration of the complicated mode of management as a practical approach for organizations operating with high interdependence, specialization, scale, and compliance requirements. The proposed framework integrates governance design, process architecture, decision-rights allocation, and data-driven monitoring. The results indicate that complicated management mode improves predictability, coordination, and risk control, provided it is implemented with “minimum effective bureaucracy” and supported by digital tools and capability development.

Practical Recommendations

Organizations aiming to adopt complicated management mode should:

- map end-to-end processes and identify critical dependencies;
- formalize decision rights and escalation pathways;
- introduce KPI dashboards and risk registers;
- pilot implementation in a high-impact unit before scaling;
- continuously optimize governance to prevent bureaucratic overload.

Future Research

Future studies may validate this framework through empirical case studies, quantitative surveys, and simulation models that measure the relationship between management mode, coordination cost, and organizational performance under different levels of uncertainty.

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