

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE MANAGEMENT OF INNOVATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study investigated institutional leadership and the management of innovation in the 21st century university education in Kano State. Three research questions guided the study. Correlational survey research design was employed for this study. Data were collected from three public universities in Kano State, Nigeria. The population comprised all academic staff from the three universities, management staff inclusive. Simple and proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 1,470 respondents. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled Institutional Leadership and Management of Innovation Questionnaire (ILMIQ) addressing the three research questions. The instrument underwent face and content validity by experts in measurement and evaluation and educational administration and planning from Bayero University, Kano. The instrument validity and reliability were determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The finding emphasizes the significance of adequate planning, decision making, and innovativeness in navigating the complexities of university education landscape. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that university leaders should integrate comprehensive planning, foster balanced leadership styles, and garner innovativeness in the institutions. These recommendations offer guidance for institutions seeking to thrive in the dynamic and evolving innovative world of university education in the 21st century.

Keywords: Institutional leadership, management innovation, educational innovation

Introduction

The 21st century has undoubtedly marked a pivotal juncture in the history of higher education. As universities worldwide grapple with a rapidly evolving educational landscape, the significance of institutional leadership in steering these institutions toward success and relevance cannot be overstated. This study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the profound influence wielded by institutional leadership in the context of 21st-century university education, focusing on three elemental facets of leadership, adequate planning, decision making, and innovativeness.

Adequate planning, one of the fundamental pillars of institutional leadership, emerges as a linchpin in effectively managing innovation within the dynamic field of higher education. The importance of strategic planning transcends mere administrative protocols; it extends to shaping the very core of universities. It directly influences not only the financial sustainability of institutions but also their adaptability and responsiveness to the ceaseless emergence of new demands and opportunities in the education sector (Smith, 2019; Johnson, 2019).

Decision-making is the heart of management in any institution. Organizations or institutions are confronted with challenges that result to the leaders attempting to seek solutions to the problems that befall them in order to proffer positive changes, and the management has to embark on serious steps and take decisions that will avert the collapse of the institution. Such decisions made should be able to produce positive changes where the already laid down policies are no longer yielding fruits in the management of the institutions, without good policies laid down for a better change, the management will be heading to doom. The kind of decision made by the management, will determine the kind of innovation that will confront the institution. The quality of decision made by the management goes a long way to affect the institution, positively or negatively. This study delves deep into the qualities and attributes that underpin decision making, exploring its role in galvanizing faculty, staff, and students as they grapple with the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving educational landscape (Clark & Lewis, 2018).

Innovativeness, standing as a distinguishing hallmark of institutional leadership, emerges as the key to not merely surviving but flourishing in the 21st century. Visionary leaders envision and execute novel approaches, embrace emerging technologies, and re-imagine teaching methodologies that have the potential to revolutionize higher education. The ability to foster innovation within the institution represents a critical facet of leadership in the modern university, and it directly correlates with the institution's ability to remain competitive and relevant in a dynamic global academic landscape (Balogun, 2018). This research undertakes a thorough exploration of how innovative leaders drive change and cultivate a culture of creativity within their institutions, thereby ensuring their continuous evolution in line with contemporary educational demands (Okafor, 2017).

In our pursuit of a holistic understanding of these three vital elements of institutional leadership, the research turns to the extensive body of work contributed by Nigerian scholars. By examining the insights and wisdom offered by these scholars, the research aims to gain a nuanced perspective on institutional leadership and management of innovation within the unique context of Nigerian higher education (Adeleke, 2017). Strategic planning in the 21st century is marked by an array of challenges and opportunities. Nigerian universities, in particular, grapple with issues of inadequate funding, rising student expectations, and the need to stay abreast of rapidly evolving pedagogical practices. Adequate planning within this context necessitates a deep understanding of the financial intricacies, the establishment of collaborative partnerships, and a meticulous review of curricular structures (Adeleke, 2017). These processes not only drive the universities towards financial sustainability but also allow them to maintain their relevance in a competitive global educational landscape. Furthermore, within the Nigerian higher education sphere, strategic planning is deeply tied to the unique social and economic conditions of the country. Factors such as government policies, demographic shifts, and the evolving job market play a substantial role in shaping the planning strategies employed by universities (Balogun, 2018). Therefore, this research will undertake a meticulous examination of how institutional leaders in Nigeria navigate these contextual challenges, providing critical insights into how adequate planning functions as a key driver in the management of innovation in the 21st century Nigerian university education system.

Decision-making can be seen as the act of making up one's mind. It is the process of coming at a course of action involving minimum and maximum cost. It is the actual selection among several alternatives in taking a course of action (Ogunseju, 2014). Decision-making is the process of deliberating, calculating or reflecting over an issue either consciously or unconsciously and thereby leading to a particular action. It involves making rational choices and evaluating risks. It is the core of management output. In the context of Nigerian universities, where resources are often scarce and bureaucratic obstacles are common, decision making can be the catalyst that propels institutions to new heights of excellence and adaptability. Leaders who manifest this attribute inspire innovation and creativity within their teams, paving the way for the implementation of novel strategies to enhance the quality of education and the overall student experience (Clark & Lewis, 2018).

The importance of innovativeness is particularly relevant in the Nigerian higher education context due to the dynamic nature of the country's socio-economic and educational landscape (Okafor, 2017). Nigerian universities must not only adapt to global advancements in education but also respond to the unique needs of a diverse student population and labor market. The ability of leaders to promote innovation in curricular design, delivery methods, and research initiatives is fundamental in equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge required to excel in a rapidly changing world (Balogun, 2018). Within this complex context, Nigerian universities are experiencing a shift toward the adoption of e-learning platforms, the integration of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning, and a focus on research that addresses local challenges while aligning with global trends (Adeleke, 2017).

Innovativeness within leadership is instrumental in steering these transformations and ensuring that Nigerian universities maintain a competitive edge in the global higher education arena. Thus, through a rigorous examination of innovative leadership practices in Nigerian universities, this study seeks to unveil the ways in which leaders drive change and stimulate creativity, thereby steering the institutions toward a dynamic, progressive, and sustainable future. Nigerian scholars have also been at the forefront of advocating for innovativeness in higher education leadership. They have extensively studied the role of innovation in curricular design, faculty development, and research (Clark & Lewis, 2018). Their research provides a wealth of knowledge about the dynamic approaches that Nigerian universities can adopt to embrace innovation and remain competitive in a rapidly changing world (Ogona and Ololube, 2022).

This research endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of the profound influence of institutional leadership on the management of innovation in the 21st century university education landscape. Adequate planning, decision making, and innovativeness are not isolated elements but interconnected dimensions that together form the basis for effective leadership in higher education. In the Nigerian context, where universities face unique challenges and opportunities, the role of leadership becomes even more critical. By examining the insights and wisdom offered by these scholars, the research aims to gain a nuanced perspective on institutional leadership and change management within the unique context of Nigerian higher

education (Balogun, 2019). The research will uncover the intricate relationship between leadership and innovation in the 21st century university education landscape in Nigeria and shed light on the strategies and approaches that are most relevant and effective in this specific context. This journey of exploration and analysis seeks to inform and inspire institutional leaders, policymakers, and academics alike, as they navigate the dynamic and ever-evolving terrain of university education in the 21st century Nigerian context.

Statement of the Problem

In the 21st century, universities worldwide are facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the field of higher education. This transformation is driven by technological advancements, changing student demographics, and evolving pedagogical practices. The pivotal role of institutional leadership in guiding these changes cannot be overstated. Effective management of innovation within university settings is not only a strategic necessity but also a fundamental determinant of an institution's ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected world. However, despite the acknowledged importance of leadership in universities and the recognized need for adept management of innovation, a significant gap exists, and this gap revolves around the systematic examination of the relationship between institutional leadership and management of innovation strategies, particularly within the unique context of 21st century university education in Kano state. This research endeavors to bridge the existing gaps in the field of university leadership and management of innovation in the institutions. With this in mind, the study aspires to comprehensively examine the significant relationship between Institutional Leadership and the Management of Innovation in 21st Century University Education in Kano State. By so doing, this work aims to shed new light on their critical intersection, contributing valuable insights to address the pressing challenges and opportunities faced by universities in the 21st century.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. Determine how adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education.
2. Ascertain how decision making as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education.
3. Determine how innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of change in the 21st century university education.

Research Questions

1. How does adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education?
2. How does decision making as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education?

3. In what ways does innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 4,692 academic staff in the three public universities in Kano State, Nigeria. Simple and proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 1,470 respondents (management staff inclusive) from the three public universities in Kano State, (Bayero University, Kano, Kano State University of Science and Technology, Wudil and Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano). A self-structured questionnaire titled “Institutional Leadership and Management of Innovation Questionnaire (ILMIQ)” was used in the study. The instrument consisted of 15 items based on the variables of the study patterned on the modified Likert type rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (DA); with scoring as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was properly validated and its reliability which stood at 0.84 was determined through test re-test method and calculated with Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Data obtained were properly analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question One: How does adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses on how adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education:

S/N	Statement	X	STD	Decision
1.	Adequate planning, when integrated into institutional leadership, results in more efficient resource allocation and financial sustainability in universities.	2.51	1.06	Agreed
2.	Adequate planning helps universities proactively address challenges arising from shifts in student demographics and external factors.	2.61	1.11	Agreed
3.	Adequate planning ensures that university policies and strategies remain aligned with the institution's mission and vision.	2.52	1.17	Agreed
4.	Adequate planning enhances the adaptability of universities to changing educational landscapes and emerging opportunities.	2.45	0.95	Disagreed

5.	Adequate planning supports the development of long-term academic programs that meet the evolving needs of students.	2.54	1.10	Agreed
	Cumulative Mean	2.54	1.10	Agreed

Data on Table 1 showed the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on how adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education. The respondents agreed on items 1, 2, 3 and 5 with mean scores far above the mean criterion of 2.50, and disagreed on item 4 with mean of 2.45, which is below the mean criterion. From the analysis, it was discovered that the higher the mean scores, the lower the standard deviation; the lower the mean score, higher the standard deviation. The aggregate grand mean of 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.10 indicated a strong consensus among respondents that adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education.

Research Question Two: How does decision making as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses on how decision-making as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education:

S/N	Statement	X	STD	Decision
6.	Decision-making in institutional leadership inspires and motivates faculty staff to embrace innovative changes.	2.64	1.12	Agreed
7.	Decision-making empowers leaders to take calculated risks when implementing transformative initiatives	2.73	1.11	Agreed
8.	Decision-making leads to a shared sense of purpose within the university community, fostering a collaborative spirit.	2.55	1.06	Agreed
9.	Decision-making enhances a leader's ability to navigate obstacles and setbacks during change management.	2.55	1.10	Agreed
10.	Decision-making is crucial for guiding the institution towards bold decisions in response to emerging challenges.	2.63	1.06	Agreed
	Cumulative Mean	2.62	1.10	Agreed

Data presented in Table 2 explored the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on how decision-making as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education. The respondents agreed on all the items with high mean scores above the mean criterion of 2.50. Based on the analysis, it can be seen that the higher the mean score, the lower the standard deviation and vice-versa. The aggregate grand mean score of 2.62 indicated that the items in the table are agreed upon. Therefore, there is a strong consensus among respondents that decision making as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education.

Research Question Three: In what ways does innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of innovation in the 21st century university education?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation responses on ways innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education.

S/N	Statement	X	STD	Decision
11.	Innovativeness within institutional leadership leads to the adoption of novel teaching methodologies and technology integration	2.55	1.10	Agreed
12.	Innovativeness fosters a culture of experimentation, encouraging faculty and staff to explore new ideas.	2.73	1.13	Agreed
13.	Innovativeness in leadership is vital for addressing the challenges posed by rapidly evolving technological landscapes.	2.63	1.04	Agreed
14.	Innovativeness drives universities to become leaders in their field, adapting to changing student demographics and emerging trends.	2.93	1.11	Agreed
15.	Innovative leaders effectively communicate the value of change, addressing concerns and skepticism among stakeholders.	2.84	1.15	Agreed
Cumulative Mean		2.75	1.10	Agreed

Result in Table 3 showed the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on ways innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of change in the 21st century university education. The respondents agreed on all the items with high mean scores above the mean criterion of 2.50. Based on the analysis, it can be seen that the higher the mean score, the lower the standard deviation and vice-versa. The aggregate grand mean score of 2.73 is an indication that the items in the table are agreed upon satisfactorily. From the data therefore, it is very clear and understanding that innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership, enhances the management of change in the 21st century university education in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated institutional leadership and the management of innovation in the 21st century university education in Kano state, Nigeria. The findings of the study were as follows. The first finding revealed a strong agreement among respondents that adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education with a grand mean of (2.51). The finding is in line with the works of prominent scholars in the field, including John P. Kotter (2019), whose seminal works like "Leading Change" stressed the importance of meticulous planning in the context of change

initiatives. He argued that a well-structured plan provides a roadmap for change, enhancing its chances of success.

Universities that proactively plan for change can allocate resources more efficiently, enabling them to maintain financial sustainability in the face of limited budgets and uncertain funding sources. Further supporting this finding, Ololube (2021) emphasized the significance of strategic planning in organizational adaptability. His research underscores how strategic planning, when integrated into institutional leadership, fosters the ability to respond to changing educational environments, shifts in the student population, and external influences. This alignment with Ololube's perspective reinforces the notion that adequate planning is essential for universities to effectively address the challenges posed by the rapidly evolving 21st-century educational landscape. The second finding revealed that decision making as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education with a grand mean of (2.62).

This aligns with a 2018 study by Ololube which understood decision-making as a set of activities involved in diagnosing the problem and developing alternatives and choosing one of a set of alternatives to enhance the management of innovation. It must be an emphasis that all decision-making relates to the future and that a decision is a choice between alternatives in pursuit of objectives.

Where no alternatives exist no decision can be made and nothing can be done now that will alter the past. Therefore, decision-making is concerned with the future and involves the act of selecting one course of action from various courses of action especially as it concerns the management of innovation in the 21st century university education. Similarly, Jomah (2017) reported that managerial leadership and decision-making skills steer institutions towards achieving corporate objectives. Decision-making is important to the management of innovations in institutions; it is a consensus among personnel and management practitioners.

The third finding revealed that innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhances the management of innovation in the 21st century university education. This finding buttressed the importance of innovativeness within institutional leadership which leads to the adoption of novel teaching methodologies and technology integration, fosters a culture of experimentation, encouraging faculty and staff to explore new ideas, vital for addressing the challenges posed by rapidly evolving technological landscapes, drives universities to become leaders in their field, adapting to changing student demographics and emerging trends. Also, innovative leaders effectively communicate the value of change, addressing concerns and skepticism among stakeholders.

This finding concurred with the findings of Christensen and Eyring, (2011) that innovativeness, as a distinguishing element of institutional leadership, is indispensable for universities aiming not only to survive but thrive in the 21st century. The ability to envision new approaches, technologies, and teaching methodologies that can revolutionize higher education is crucial. The finding further agrees with the study conducted by Birnbaum, (2018) who found out that

innovativeness extends beyond technological solutions to novel approaches in research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community engagement. Universities must adapt their strategies to foster a culture of creativity and experimentation. Innovative leaders create an environment where faculty and staff are encouraged to explore new ideas and take calculated risks. Change management in the 21st century is inherently linked to the ability to foster innovation. Universities that fail to embrace innovation risk becoming obsolete in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. Innovative leaders serve as catalysts for change, guiding the institution toward new horizons and uncharted territories. In fact, innovative leaders possess the skills to communicate the value of change, address concerns, and facilitate the adoption of new practices.

Conclusion

This study has provided a profound understanding of the positive relationship between leadership qualities and management of innovation within the dynamic landscape of 21st-century university education. The key revelation of this research is the central role played by adequate planning, decision-making and innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership. Contrary to initial belief, it is clear that decision-making, when judiciously balanced with strategic planning and innovativeness, emerges as a cornerstone for effective management of innovation in modern universities. This challenges the traditional belief that unwavering decisions may hinder adaptability and underscores the need for leaders to maintain a sense of purpose while fostering adaptability and open-mindedness. In essence, the study sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of leadership and management of innovation in the 21st-century university education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University institutional leaders should integrate comprehensive planning as an integral part of leadership practices, allowing universities to proactively address challenges and adapt to changing educational landscapes.
2. University leaders should foster balanced leadership styles and invest in leadership development programs that do not only nurture decision-making but also emphasize strategic planning adaptability, and innovation.
3. University leaders should ensure active and inclusive stakeholder engagement in the management of innovation through open communication and collaboration which are essential for garnering innovativeness.

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