

INNOVATIVE ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF RIVERS STATE OWNED UNIVERSITIES.



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Abstract

The study investigated innovative ethical decision-making for effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities. Three research objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population and sample size of the study was 179 management staff comprising of 10 Principal Officers, 23 Dean of Faculties and 146 Head of Departments from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The census sampling technique was used. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Innovative Ethical Decision-Making for Effective Administration Questionnaire” developed on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Department of Educational Management in Rivers State University and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded reliability indexes of 0.84, 0.80 and 0.82. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while one-way ANOVA analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The study found that innovative ethical decision-making such as technology integration, stakeholders’ inclusiveness and leadership to a high extent enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that university management should adopt a proactive approach to integrating technology-driven administration by leveraging digital tools for academic planning, administrative communication, financial management and student services.

Keywords: Innovative Ethical Decision-Making, Effective Administration.

Introduction

The dynamic landscape of higher education demands continuous reform through innovative policies that enhance institutional efficiency, academic excellence and ethical governance. Universities serve as centers for knowledge creation, skill development and national development, requiring robust administrative structures that align with global best practices. According to Osuji, Wey-Amaewhule and Epelle (2023), university education is an instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills which provide them access to productive employment. In Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, the effectiveness of university administration is largely influenced by the extent to which educational policies incorporate innovation and ethical decision-making principles. Adebayo (2021), stated that the demand for quality education, coupled with emerging challenges such as technological advancement, globalization and financial constraints, underscores the need for higher education institutions to adopt strategic decision-making that foster administrative effectiveness.

The intersection of innovative ethical decision-making is critical for achieving effective administration in universities. While educational policies provide structural changes necessary for institutional development, their success is contingent on ethical leadership and sound decision-making.

In cases where ethical considerations are ignored, even well-designed policies may fail due to resistance, corruption or poor implementation strategies (Chukwu & Adebisi, 2022). For example, policies promoting digital transformation in university administration may face setbacks if decision-makers prioritize personal interests over institutional objectives. This highlights the need for a balanced approach that integrates policy innovation with strong ethical decision-making framework. A study by Nwachukwu and Amadi (2023), found that universities with well-structured policies supported by ethical decision-making recorded higher levels of administrative efficiency, better staff motivation and improved student satisfaction. This suggests that ethical decision-making acts as a catalyst for the successful implementation of educational policies, ensuring that reforms translate into meaningful educational improvements leading to administrative effectiveness.

Effective administration is the capacity of an organization or institution to achieve its goals through efficient management of resources, clear decision-making processes and consistent delivery of quality services. It encompasses a range of competencies, including organizational planning, leadership, communication and stakeholder engagement. According to Akpan and Etim (2020), effective administration in educational institutions is characterized by the ability to align administrative operations with institutional goals and adapt to dynamic challenges in the educational landscape. Effective administration is not just about enforcing rules or managing resources but also about fostering innovation, collaboration and a shared vision within an organization. Uka and Chukwu (2023), asserted that Effective administration in universities is measured through parameters such as policy implementation, timely decision-making, stakeholder engagement and adherence to global educational standards.

Ethical decision-making plays a crucial role in ensuring that educational policies achieve their intended objectives. According to Nwachukwu and Amadi (2023), innovative ethical decision-making refers to the features, behaviours or factors that characterize an approach where ethical choices are made creatively and proactively. Similarly, Abubakar (2021), defines innovative ethical decision-making as the application of ethical principles such as honesty, justice and respect for human dignity to decision-making processes in professional and organizational settings. In the context of university administration, innovative ethical decision-making plays a crucial role in promoting justice, preventing corruption and ensuring that policies are implemented equitably and in the best interest of all stakeholders (Obi & Eke, 2020). Effective ethical decision-making entails the adoption of transparency, accountability and integrity in decision-making processes, ensuring that university policies are implemented fairly and equitably. Ethical decision-making, characterized by adherence to moral principles, ensures that administrative decisions align with the core values of higher education, thereby fostering trust among students, staff and external stakeholders (Abubakar, 2021). Okeke and John (2020), noted that the failure to adhere to ethical decision-making principles can lead to a decline in institutional credibility, reduced stakeholder trust and legal consequences for those involved in unethical conduct. Ethical decision-making thus serves as a safeguard against corruption and administrative inefficiencies, ensuring that policies and actions align with moral and legal standards.

Integration of technology in university administration is a critical component of innovative ethical decision-making that has significantly transformed the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional management in many parts of the world, including Nigeria. In Rivers State universities, technology adoption has influenced various aspects of administration, ranging from student enrollment and records management to staff coordination, financial transactions and communication systems. The use of digital platforms, automated processes and artificial intelligence-driven tools enhance administrative decision-making, improve workflow and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks (Eze & Uzochukwu, 2021). Traditionally, university administration in Nigeria was characterized by manual record-keeping systems, which were prone to errors, inefficiencies and delays. With the advent of digital record management systems, universities in Rivers State can improve their ability to store, retrieve and analyze student and staff data more efficiently. Technology integration also improve communication and collaboration within universities. The use of email systems, intranet platforms and virtual meeting tools enhance coordination among faculty members, administrative staff and students

(Abubakar, 2021). Furthermore, technology influence administrative effectiveness in human resource management by streamlining processes such as staff recruitment, performance evaluation and payroll management through digital human resource management systems. By automating these functions, universities are able to reduce inefficiencies, improve staff productivity and ensure compliance with employment regulations. Eze and Uzochukwu (2021), noted that institutions that leverage HR technology experience fewer cases of payroll errors, delayed promotions and administrative bottlenecks in staff management. However, the effectiveness of these systems depends on the willingness of university administrators to embrace digital transformation and invest in continuous staff training to improve digital literacy.

Stakeholders' inclusiveness plays a critical role in shaping the administrative effectiveness of universities. In higher education institutions, stakeholders include students, members of teaching and non-teaching staff, university management, government agencies, industry partners and the wider community. The extent to which these stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making processes significantly impacts governance, institutional development and overall efficiency in administrative operations. Obi and Eke (2020), asserted that effective stakeholder inclusiveness fosters inclusivity, transparency and accountability, leading to better policy implementation, reduced conflicts and improved institutional performance. While limited stakeholder participation, often undermine the benefits of inclusive decision-making, leading to administrative inefficiencies. In the same vein, Nwachukwu and Amadi (2023), argued that participatory decision-making enhances trust and cooperation among university staff and students, reducing resistance to policies and improving compliance with administrative directives. When university administrators involve staff, students and other relevant stakeholders in key decisions regarding policies, academic programmes and institutional reforms, there is a greater sense of ownership and collective responsibility. In contrast, stakeholders may feel excluded from decision-making processes, leading to policy failures, resistance to change, industrial actions and declining institutional morale. According to Okeke and John (2020), universities that regularly consult stakeholders through forums, advisory committees and joint decision-making platforms experience fewer cases of administrative misconduct and financial irregularities. When stakeholders, including faculty and students, have access to information about institutional policies, budgets and strategic plans, they can hold university management accountable, thereby strengthening administrative effectiveness. Udoh and Ibekwe (2023), highlights that many universities in Rivers State have experienced prolonged strikes, student protests and faculty grievances due to a lack of inclusive decision-making processes. When administrators make unilateral decisions without consulting lecturers or student unions, tensions often arise, leading to disruptions in academic activities thereby affecting effective administration. Fostering a culture of collaboration and respect among stakeholders can mitigate resistance and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of university administration.

Leadership is a crucial determinant of administrative effectiveness in universities, as it fosters trust and accountability. Leadership influences how policies are implemented, resources are managed and relationships between administrators and stakeholders of the university community are maintained. Transparent leadership practices reduce the likelihood of corruption, favoritism and financial mismanagement, which are common issues in some Nigerian universities (Obi & Eke, 2020). Adebayo (2021), emphasizes that in universities where leaders act with integrity, members of the university community demonstrate higher levels of job commitment, which positively impacts teaching, research and student outcomes. Conversely, when leaders engage in dishonest practices such as nepotism, bribery, or the manipulation of academic and employment processes, they erode stakeholder confidence, leading to dissatisfaction and administrative inefficiencies. Trustworthy leadership reduces resistance to change and increases compliance with administrative directives, leading to a more harmonious and productive university environment. Nwachukwu and Amadi (2023) note that universities with ethical leadership structures experience fewer cases of industrial disputes, as faculty and staff trust the fairness of institutional decisions. When ethical principles are disregarded, universities face increased cases of favoritism, discrimination, and policy inconsistencies, which weaken administrative effectiveness and create an atmosphere of distrust. In addition to ethical

decision-making, integrity in leadership strengthens institutional stability and conflict resolution mechanisms. According to Udoh and Ibekwe (2023), university administrators who demonstrate integrity in conflict management are more effective in maintaining institutional stability, as they avoid manipulative tactics and prioritize dialogue and consensus-building. When university leaders uphold integrity, they create a governance framework that fosters excellence, stakeholder confidence and sustainable institutional development which enhance effective administration.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of university administration in Rivers State has been a subject of growing concern due to persistent challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, unethical leadership practices and ineffective policy implementation. While ethical decision-making is crucial in ensuring that university administrators make choices that align with moral principles, accountability and fairness, the rapid transformation of global higher education necessitates continuous policy innovation to enhance administrative effectiveness.

Despite numerous educational reforms aimed at improving the performance of universities, administrative ineffectiveness continues to hinder institutional growth and academic excellence (Okeke & John, 2020). It has been observed that universities in Rivers State struggle with ethical dilemmas in areas such as student admissions, staff recruitment, financial management and policy implementation. Corruption, nepotism and political interference have often been reported as major obstacles to effective university governance. Furthermore, universities often face resistance to change, limited technological infrastructure and inadequate training for administrators on policy implementation. These raises concerns about the sustainability and impact of existing policies, as well as the extent to which ethical governance is integrated into decision-making processes. The failure of administrators to uphold ethical standards compromises the credibility of institutional policies, leading to inefficiencies, stakeholder dissatisfaction and a decline in educational quality. Without a strong ethical framework, even well-designed educational policies may fail to achieve their intended objectives due to poor implementation and lack of institutional commitment. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate innovative ethical decision-making for effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate innovative ethical decision-making for effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. ascertain the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.
2. determine the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.
3. ascertain the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities?
2. To what extent does stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities?
3. To what extent does leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Methods

The adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 179 management staff comprising of 6 Principal Officers, 16 Dean of Faculties and 104 Head of Departments of Rivers State University and 4 Principal Officers, 7 Dean of Faculties and 42 Head of Departments of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The population was considerable enough so the researchers used the entirety as census. The instrument for the study was a 15 item self-structured questionnaire titled "Innovative Ethical Decision-Making for Effective Administration Questionnaire (IEDMEAQ)" which was face and content validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Department of Educational Management from Rivers State University. The response scale was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with values 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded reliability indexes of 0.84, 0.80 and 0.82. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation with a criterion mean of 2.50; while the null hypotheses were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 significance level with an F-critical value of 3.04. The decision rule was that if the F calculated is greater than the critical value from the F distribution table, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative upheld and conclude that there is a significant difference between the group means. But if the calculated F is less than the F-critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted, and concluded that there is not enough evidence to suggest a significant difference between the group means.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Technology Integration Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Items	Principal Officers (n = 10)			Dean of Faculties (n = 23)			Head of Departments (n = 146)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
1	Adoption of e-learning platforms enhances the efficiency of teaching and learning administration	3.21	1.05	H E	3.18	0.99	H E	3.33	1.02	H E
2	Digital record-keeping systems improve the accuracy and retrieval speed of academic and administrative data	2.88	0.99	H E	2.81	0.95	H E	2.72	0.91	H E

3	Automated financial management systems enhance accountability in university finances	2.93	1.11	H E	2.83	1.02	H E	2.87	1.03	H E
4	Integration of technology reduces bureaucratic delays in university governance	2.74	0.97	H E	3.15	0.96	H E	3.18	1.04	H E
5	Online admission reduce delays which improve students' enrollment processes	2.87	0.99	H E	2.84	1.02	H E	2.78	0.87	H E
Mean($\bar{X}$) for Different Institutions		2.93	1.02		2.96	0.99		2.96	0.97	
Grand Mean		2.95								

Results in Table 1 shows that the mean values of 2.93 for Principal Officers, 2.96 for Dean of Faculties and 2.96 for Head of Departmentson the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities are higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. With the grand mean value of 2.95 which was higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, this infers that technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers Stateowned Universities?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Stakeholders' Engagement in Decision Making Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Items	Principal Officers(n =10)			Dean of Faculties (n = 23)			Head of Departments (n = 146)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD		$\bar{X}$	SD		$\bar{X}$	SD	
		Rmks			Rmks			Rmks		
6	Stakeholders participation in policy formulation improves the relevance and effectiveness of academic policies	2.82	0.98	H E	2.91	0.96	H E	2.86	0.92	H E
7	Stakeholder feedback is effectively incorporated into policy modifications, enhancing decision-making quality	2.88	0.96	H E	2.83	1.02	H E	2.73	1.06	H E
8	Effective communication channels between stakeholders and administrators improve decision-making efficiency	2.88	0.95	H E	2.72	0.97	H E	2.71	1.04	H E
9	Active stakeholder engagement enhances transparency in university governance	2.90	0.96	H E	2.82	0.90	H E	2.74	0.90	H E
10	Regular stakeholder meetings contribute to timely and well-informed administrative decisions	2.64	0.98	H E	2.61	1.16	H E	2.64	1.01	H E
Mean($\bar{X}$) for Different Institutions		2.82	0.97		2.78	1.00		2.74	0.99	
Grand Mean		2.78								

Results in Table 2 shows that the mean values of 2.82 for Principal Officers, 2.78 for Dean of Faculties and 2.74 for Head of Departmentson the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness making enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities are higher than the criterion mean of 2.50.

With the grand mean value of 2.78 which was higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, this infers that stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities?

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Leadership Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

S/N	Items	Principal Officers (n = 10)			Dean of Faculties (n = 23)			Head of Departments (n = 146)		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
11	Leaders who demonstrate fairness improve decision-making quality	2.95	1.09	H E	2.82	0.96	H E	2.85	1.01	H E
12	Ethical leadership ensures transparency in institutional accountability	2.76	0.97	H E	2.67	0.94	H E	2.78	0.90	H E
13	Ethical leadership contributes to a positive institutional culture, leading to better academic and administrative outcomes	2.86	0.90	H E	2.70	0.99	H E	2.72	1.01	H E
14	Leadership integrity fosters a culture of trust among staff and students	2.88	0.98	H E	2.95	0.96	H E	2.71	1.04	H E
15	Merit-based staff recruitment enhance staff morale and productivity	2.86	1.01	H E	2.81	0.98	H E	2.67	0.95	H E
Mean ($\bar{X}$) for Different Institutions		2.86	0.99		2.79	0.97		2.75	0.98	
Grand Mean		2.80								

Results in Table 3 shows that the mean values of 2.86 for Principal Officers, 2.79 for Dean of Faculties and 2.75 for Head of Departments on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities are higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. With the grand mean value of 2.80 which was higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, this infers that leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 4: Summary of F-Ratio Showing the One-Way Analysis of Variance of Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Technology Integration Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean	F-cal.	F-crit.		Decision
Between Groups	2.045	2	1.02	6.98	0.05	3.04	Sig.

Within Groups	28.637	177	0.146
Total	30.682	179	

Results in Table 4 shows that at 0.05 significance level and degrees of freedom (Df) = (177), F-ratio = 6.98 and F-crit = 3.04. Since the F-ratio (6.98) is greater than the critical value (3.04), the calculated value is statistically significant at 0.05 significance level (F-cal = 6.98). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities was rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities and both groups view that technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 5: Summary of F-Ratio Showing the One-Way Analysis of Variance of Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Stakeholders' Inclusiveness Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

Source	Sum of	DF	Mean	F-cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Squares	Square					
Between Groups	2.652	2	1.362	9.14	0.05	3.04
Within Groups	28.615	177	0.145			
Total	31.267	179				

Results in Table 5 shows that at 0.05 significance level and degrees of freedom (Df) = (177), F-ratio = 9.14 and F-crit = 3.04. Since the F-ratio (9.14) is greater than the critical value (3.04), the calculated value is statistically significant at 0.05 significance level (F-cal = 9.14). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities was rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities and both groups view that stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Heads of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which integrity in leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 6: Summary of F-Ratio Showing the One-Way Analysis of Variance of Mean Ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the Extent to which Leadership Enhance Effective Administration of Rivers State Owned Universities.

Source	Sum of	DF	Mean	F-cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Squares	Square					
Between Groups	2.904	2	1.452	7.68	0.05	3.04

Within Groups	37.055	177	0.189
Total	39.959	179	

Results in Table 6 shows that at 0.05 significance level and degrees of freedom (Df) = (177), F-ratio = 7.68 and F-crit = 3.04. Since the F-ratio (7.68) is greater than the critical value (3.04), the calculated value is statistically significant at 0.05 significance level (F-cal = 7.68). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities was rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities and both groups view that leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings for Research Questions 1 on Table 1 showed that technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with a grand mean score of 2.95 for Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities. Hypothesis 1 on Table 4 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which technology integration enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities with F-cal (6.98) which was greater than the critical value (3.04). This finding is in line with Eze and Uzochukwu (2021), who asserted that the use of digital platforms, automated processes and artificial intelligence-driven solutions enhance administrative decision-making, improve workflow and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks. This finding also corroborated with Udoh and Ibekwe (2023), who found that Universities that adopted digital accounting systems experience greater transparency in financial transactions, ensuring that allocated funds are utilized efficiently for institutional development.

The findings for Research Questions 2 on Table 2 showed that stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with a grand mean score of 2.78 for Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities. Hypothesis 2 on Table 5 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which stakeholders' inclusiveness enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities with F-cal (9.14) which was greater than the critical value (3.04). This finding is in line with Obi and Eke (2020), who asserted that effective stakeholder engagement fosters inclusivity, transparency and accountability, leading to better policy implementation, reduced conflicts and improved institutional performance. In support, Nwachukwu and Amadi (2023), argued that participatory decision-making enhances trust and cooperation among university staff and students, reducing resistance to policies and improving compliance with administrative directives. When university administrators involve faculty, students and other relevant stakeholders in key decisions regarding policies, academic programmes and institutional reforms, there is a greater sense of ownership and collective responsibility.

The findings for Research Questions 3 on Table 3 showed that leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities to a high extent with a grand mean score of 2.80 for Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities. Hypothesis 3 on Table 6 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of Principal Officers, Dean of Faculties and Head of Departments of Rivers State Universities on the extent to which leadership enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities with F-ratio (7.68) which was greater than the critical value (3.04). This finding is in tandem with Adebayo

(2021), who emphasizes that in universities where leaders act with integrity, members of the university community demonstrate higher levels of job commitment, which positively impacts teaching, research and student outcomes. This finding aligns with Udoh and Ibekwe (2023), who opined that university administrators who demonstrate integrity in conflict management are more effective in maintaining institutional stability, as they avoid manipulative tactics and prioritize dialogue and consensus-building.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that innovative ethical decision-making such as technology integration, stakeholders' inclusiveness and leadership to a high extent enhance effective administration of Rivers State owned Universities. Universities in Rivers State must embrace a holistic approach that integrates policy innovation with ethical governance to foster sustainable institutional development and effective administration.

Recommendations

1. University management should adopt a proactive approach to integrating technology-driven administration by leveraging digital tools for academic planning, administrative communication, financial management and student services.
2. Stakeholders' engagement should be strengthened through structured participatory platforms that involve students, faculty, alumni and external partners in key decision-making processes. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership, reduces conflict, and increases trust between university management and stakeholders.
3. Transparent appointment processes, regular performance evaluations and mechanisms for public accountability should be implemented to ensure that university leaders uphold the values of honesty, fairness and equity.

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