



INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

¹Ihua-Jonathan, Nwovuhoma* & ²Okere, Cynthia Obiageli Patricia

¹Institute of Education, Rivers State University.

²Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University

*nwovuhoma.ihua-jonathan@ust.edu.ng;

07034057985, 08037096217

Abstracts

The study explored institutional leadership for effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria. Three research questions and corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a targeted population of 3000 which comprised of Vice Chancellors, Deans and Heads of Departments of universities in south-south Nigeria. The sample for this study was made up of respondents 450 which represents 15% of the entire population. The instrument for the study was a 20-item structured questionnaire titled institutional leadership for effective administration of tertiary institution questionnaire (ILEATIQ) and was patterned on a 4-point likert scale of strongly agree (4), agreed (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagreed (1). The Cronbach's Alpha statistic was used, which indicated a reliability index of 0.87, showing that the questionnaire items were consistent and reliable for the study. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions, while t-test inferential statistics were used to test the formulated null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Statistical analysis was done using the statistical package for social science, SPSS version 23. The result of the study identified skills needed by institutional leaders to be effective in the system, the respondents agreed that those skills identified had positive impact in effective administration of public universities. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that the challenges for effective institutional leadership include; lack of funds, insufficient school plant, increase in students' population, examination malpractice etc. The study however concludes that for efficiency and effectiveness in the university system, leaders should possess essential institutional leadership skills. The study recommended amongst others that leaders of universities should have periodic training and retraining on institutional leadership skills and that the identified issues that hinder the effective management of schools should be handled appropriately.

Keywords: Administration, Institutional Leadership, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

It is interesting to state that no organization whether private or public can effectively do well without good leadership. Institutional leadership plays a very important role in shaping every university system. Universities are those institutions of learning that lead to the attainment of undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees after being found worthy in both character and in learning. University education can also be seen as an advanced level of studying that uses organized, systematic and rigorous programs of activities such as lectures, seminars, industrial training, project works etc that enables students become specialists in their area of interest or field of study. From the above assertion, one can vividly put it that the main purpose of universities is to ensure that students are prepared for their chosen careers. No wonder Okah and Worlu (2013) assert that tertiary

education is an institution of higher learning that is characterized with many-sided tasks in the system that equips scholars in terms of progress in the parts that they find themselves. In essence, one can vividly put it that tertiary education which is the highest form of education equips its graduates for the world of work.

It is important to state that the success of every institution in terms of goal actualization and effectiveness is strongly dependent on whether the school system has a visionary leader who has the system at heart. From a look of things, most public institutions in Nigeria are scudded with so many challenges that range from deployable structures to lack of funds, inadequate school plant, shortage of school personnel, over-crowded classroom, etc. These challenges in the system actually require a comprehensive leadership approach that will not only address immediate issues in the system but will also

adopt novelty, alliance as well as long term sustainability in the system; such achievements can only be noticed if the system or institution has an Institutional leader. Notably, one can say that it is only an institutional leader that can effectively navigate any complex landscape of issues like cultural differences, social/economic differences as well as political diversity to ensure that adequate teaching and learning processes which is one of the aims of establishing universities in our society takes place.

In the university system, institutional leadership encompasses top and middle managers in the school system that execute managerial and administrative functions that ensures that the aims and objectives of schools are realistic (Leal et al, 2020). These types of leaders are malleable, flexible, tactical, and efficient in their duties. In a similar vein, institutional leaders inspire their colleagues or subordinate by ensuring that the environment is conducive for individuals to put in their best. No wonder Wahington et al, (2008) posit that institutional leadership is a leadership style that encompasses the establishment and development of an institutions values and character which its direction focuses mainly on personal -maintenance and less on imminent or change alignment of which institutions such as universities are inclusive. These types of leaders endorse roles by aligning and mounting peripheral principles with the identity of the organization, generates descriptions that has the tendencies to connect former, current and imminent as well as eases exploratory ethics treatise procedures. These leaders retort to pressure from exterior for transformation and actively change institutions practices and characteristics by being projective, future oriented agency or habitual, routinized agency. Institutional leadership is very important for enhancing institutions aptitude to acclimatize in an environment that is complex and it is usually built on knowledge rooted on the structure of the organization. In line with this, Syed et al (2017) affirmed that institutional leader has anticipations and visions and have the carriage to balance pragmatism and idealism through optimism and pragmatism. In view of this, Ciulla and Ciulla (2020) opined that these institutional leaders have the responsivities of policy creation as well as procedure that enhances students' achievements, improves resource allocation and managing the relationships of all stakeholders in the educational sector. In essence, institutional leaders are studdled with the task of ensuring that they create an environment that is productive in nature. No wonder Ololube (2018) affirmed that leadership in our institutions of higher learning is a dynamic process that requires a person not to be responsible only to the task of the group but also actively involved in collaboration and commitment of all the group

members in ensuring that the group achieves it goal or task.

Leadership Skills Needed by Institutional Leaders

It is quite unfortunate that most leaders in institutions of higher learning do not have the requisite skills and competencies needed to pilot the affairs of such institutions. These competencies are very important if the school system must move forward. In view of this, Yang (2005) mentioned four leadership competencies that institutional leaders should possess. These according to Yang (2005) include; social responsibility skills, administrative skills, personal knowledge skills, personality and disposition skills. In line with this, Shamandi et al (2011) include leadership skills, professional skills, persuasive skills and skills in communication. In a study by Mohamed et al (2020), five skills were mentioned and evaluated as skills institutional leaders should have. These skills include; cognition skills, leading skills, impact skills and influence, personal effectiveness skills and achievement and actions.

Challenges faced by Institutional Leaders

Managing and administration of institutions like higher institutions comes with innumerable challenges for institutional leaders especially in our Nigerian context. These numerous challenges have the tendency of creating adverse influence on leadership effectiveness as well as on the bearings on the quality of education that is provided in higher institutions of learning. Some of these challenges include; lack of fund, Infrastructural shortages, shortage of qualified teachers, challenges of insecurity, diversity and Inclusion, corruption and examination malpractice, parents and community engagements, technology integration and policy implementation. It is on this note that Ogunode et al (2022) aver that so many problems face academic leaders in Nigeria. These researchers mentioned the following as issues that confront most institutional leaders; derisory fund, dearth of academic staff, insufficient school plant and machineries, insecurity, brain-drain, strike actions and so on. For Garwe (nd) the challenges faced by institutional leaders in managing include; maintaining the quality of an institution, employing and retaining of knowledgeable workers, obeying the rules and regulations on quality assurance, getting funds for the institutions daily business and its operations, dearth of plant and machineries needed for running the school, Provision of adequate leadership etc.

Addressing these matters will need leadership panache that is strategic in nature. Institutional leaders who are proactive in order to overcome these issues and create an enabling environment that fosters quality teaching delivery



Statement of the Problem

Students' poor academic performance in our tertiary institutions has become a serious concern to stakeholders of higher institutions. Most individual lay the blame on the lecturers, some on the government on the type of leaders that are hand-picked as institutional leaders by the government in power knowing fully well the complexity of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, the case may be, having an institutional leader who has the institution at heart will go a long way irrespective of the challenges of such institution. Having an institutional leader who can combine their premeditated and decision-making skills with complete humanoid morals will endorse the well-being of undergraduates, staff, school community and the nation at large. These and other factors motivated the researcher to investigate institutional leadership a path way for effective administration of public tertiary institutions in south-south Nigeria

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate institutional leadership a path way for effective administration of public tertiary institutions in south-south Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

- 1) Types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public tertiary institutions in south-south Nigeria
- 2) The impact of institutional leadership skills in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria
- 3) Challenges faced by institutional leaders in administration of public tertiary institutions in south-south Nigeria

Research Questions

- 1) What are the various types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public Universities in south- South Nigeria?
- 2) What impacts does institutional leadership skills have in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria?

- 3) What are the challenges faced by institutional leaders in administration of public universities in south- south Nigeria?

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female respondents on the various types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south- South Nigeria
- 2) There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the impact of institutional leadership skills in the administration of universities in south-south Nigeria
- 3) There is no significant difference on the mean rating of male and female respondents on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in administration of public universities in south- south Nigeria?

Methodology

The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design and the population of the study comprised of 3000 heads of institutions, Directors, Deans and Heads of departments in public universities in south-south Nigeria. The sample consists of 450 respondents (heads of institutions, directors, deans, and heads of departments) of public universities in south-south Nigeria representing 15% of the entire population. A self - structured questionnaire titled —institutional leadership for effective administration of universities in South- South Nigeria —(ILPEAUQ) with 20 items was used for data collection. The questionnaire adopted a 4- point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA-4 points), Agreed (A-3 points), Disagreed (D -2 points) and Strongly Disagreed (SD-1). The instrument was duly validated by two experts from measurement and evaluation and a reliability index of 0.84 was established using Cronbach alpha. For the purpose of data analysis, a criterion Mean of 2.50 was used as a cut-off mark while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A t- test inferential statistics was used in testing all null hypotheses at 0.05 level significance. Statistical analysis was done using the statistical package for social science, SPSS version 23.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the various types of Skills Needed by Institutional Leaders for effective administration of public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 1: Types of Skills Needed by Institutional Leaders for Effective Administration of Universities in SouthSouth Nigeria.

S/N	Variable	Male n = 200		Female n = 210		X of X ²	Decision
Types of skills needed by the institutional leader		X	SD	X	SD		
1.	Administrative skills	3.10	0.14	2.59	0.23	2.84	Agreed
2.	Social Responsibility skills	3.33	0.33	3.33	0.21	3.33	Agreed
3.	Personal knowledge skills	2.52	0.91	3.00	0.41	2.76	Agreed
4.	Communication skills	2.58	1.23	3.10	0.45	2.84	Agreed
5.	Leadership skills	3.61	0.08	2.96	0.55	3.28	Agreed
6.	Persuasive skills	3.84	0.64	2.88	0.32	3.36	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.15	0.60	2.97	0.36	3.06	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Data in table 1 show the mean rating and standard duration on the various skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria. The table show that both male and female respondent agreed that item 1-6 on the table are types of skills needed by school administrators with a mean of 3.15 and 2.97 for male and female respondents respectively.

Furthermore, the overall grand weighted mean at 3.06 shows that the respondents agreed that the items in 1-6 are skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of universities in south-south Nigeria.

Research question 2: What are the impacts of the various skills needed by institutional leader on the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria?

Table 2: Impact are skills needed by institutional leaders in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria

S/N	Variable	Male n = 200		Female n = 210		X of X ²	Decision
Institutional Leaders Skills helps;		X	SD	X	SD		
7.	Information to be disseminated	3.38	0.10	3.61	0.14	3.49	Agreed
8.	Provision of school plants	3.41	0.23	3.33	0.28	3.37	Agreed
9.	Ensures an orderly and supportive environment	2.10	0.48	2.05	0.44	2.07	Disagreed
10.	Effective resource management	3.96	0.44	2.89	0.43	3.43	Agreed
11.	Improves teaching/learning process.	3.41	0.31	3.41	0.33	3.41	Agreed
12.	Set visions/ direction	3.98	0.02	3.33	0.21	3.65	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.37	0.26	3.10	0.03	3.24	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Data in table 2 show the mean rating and standard duration on the mean rating and standard duration on the impact of proficiency skills on the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria. From the table, both male and female respondents agreed that the items listed in table 2 are the impact of leadership skills



on the administration of public skills with a mean of 3.37 and 3.10 for both male and female respondents respectively.

Furthermore, the overall grand weighted mean of 3.24 shows that the respondent agreed that skills possessed by institutional leaders has impact on effective administration of universities in south-south Nigeria.

Research question 3: What are the challenges faced by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in South –South Nigeria?

Table 3: Challenges faced by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

S/N	Variable	Male n = 200		Female n = 210		X of X ²	Decision
	Challenges faced by institutional leaders;	X	SD	X	SD		
13.	Fund	3.10	0.10	3.24	0.14	3.17	Agreed
14.	Insufficient school plant	3.24	0.33	2.89	0.23	3.06	Agreed
15.	Integration of Technology	3.33	0.34	2.61	0.33	2.97	Agreed
16.	Employing skilled workers	3.41	0.38	2.94	0.10	3.17	Agreed
17.	Retaining experienced workers	3.24	0.10	2.76	0.28	3.00	Agreed
18.	Maintaining quality of this institution	3.33	0.90	3.10	0.14	3.22	Agreed
19.	Political Influence	3.10	0.41	3.35	0.19	3.21	Agreed
20.	Insecurity	3.30	0.39	3.92	0.11	3.61	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.25	0.73	3.10	0.19	3.18	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Data in table 3 show the mean rating and standard duration on the various challenges faced by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in the south-south Nigeria.

The table show that both male and female respondents agreed that items 13-20 above are the challenges faced by institutional leaders with mean scores of 3.25 and 3.10 for male and female administrators respectively.

Furthermore, the overall grand mean of 3.18 shows that the respondents agreed that the items in 13 – 20 are challenges faced by institutional leaders in effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the various skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria **Table**

4: Independent Sample t-test in the mean rating of the respondents on types of skill needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	p-value	Remark
Male	200	3.16	0.48	248	1.394	0.065	Accept
Female	250	2.97					

Alpha level: 0.05

The result of hypothesis testing in table 4 shows the various types of skill needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria, from the table, it was revealed that the independent sample t-test yielded a p-value of 1.393 with a corresponding p-value of 0.065 at 0.05 level of significance. From the reported result, it is seen that the p-value obtained (0.065) was greater than the chosen alpha 0.05, thus the null hypothesis is accepted. The result, therefore reveal that there is on significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration in south-south Nigeria.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the impact of skills needed by institutional leaders in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Table 5: Independent sample t-test on the mean rating of the male and female respondents on the Impact of the skills needed by Institutional leaders in the administration of public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	p-value	Remark
Male	200	3.98	0.11	248	1.288	0.090	Accept
Female	250	3.33					

Alpha level 0.05

The result of hypothesis 2 on the impact of institutional leadership skills in the effective administration of public university in south-south Nigeria. From this table, it was revealed that the independent t-test yielded a t-value of 1.288 with a corresponding p-value of 0.090 at 0.05 level of significant. From this reported result, it is seen that the p-value obtained (0.090) was greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.050, thus the null hypothesis is accepted. The results therefore suggest that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female correspondence on the impact of institutional leadership skills in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

HO3: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female correspondents on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria. **Table 6: Independent t-test in the mean rating of the respondents on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	p-value	Remark
Male	200	3.25		248	1.276	0.092	Accept
Female	250	3.10					

Alpha level 0.05

From the hypothesis testing on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in effective administration of public universities, in south-south Nigeria. From table 6. It was revealed that the independent sample t-test yielded a t-value of 1.276 with a corresponding p-value of 0.092 at 0.05 level of significance. From the reported result, it is seen that p-value obtained (0.092) was greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05 level significant. The result therefore suggests that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of the respondents on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in the administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public Universities in south- South Nigeria.

Findings on types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria revealed that the respondents agreed that the items listed are the various skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria. These skills are needed for efficiency and effectiveness in the school system, with these skills there is the tendencies for such institutions to survive. This finding is in line with the findings of Shamandi et. al., (2011) who opined that institutional leaders need skills such leadership skills, professional skills, persuasive skills and skills in communication to enable them strive as leaders. Hypothesis 1 on table 4 revealed no significant difference in the mean score of male and female respondents on types of skills needed by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria since the p-value obtained (0.065) was greater than the chosen alpha level of 0.05.

Impacts of institutional leadership skills in the effective administration of public universities in south- south Nigeria.

Findings on the impact of institutional leadership skills on the effective administration of public universities in south- south Nigeria revealed that the respondents agreed that the items listed on table 2 are the impact of institutional leadership skills in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria. This finding is in line with the Shahmandi et. al., (2011) who mentioned that higher institution leaders need to improve in their leadership proficiencies to enable them carry out the task ahead of them and be efficient in the system. Hypothesis 2 on table 5 on the impacts of institutional leadership skills in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria showed no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the impact of institutional leadership skills in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria since the p-value obtained (0.090) was greater than the chosen alpha level of 0.05.

Challenges faced by institutional leaders for effective administration of public universities in south- south Nigeria.

Findings on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria showed that the respondents agreed that insufficient funds, inadequate school plants, technology integration, getting skilled workers, retaining professionals, maintaining quality of the institution, political influence and insecurity were the challenges faced by institutional leaders. This finding is in line with the finding of Ogunode et al (2022) who aver that lack of fund, dearth of academic staff, insufficient school plant, insecurity, brain drain, strike etc were some of the challenges faced by institutional leaders in effective administration of public universities in south -south Nigeria. Hypothesis 3 on table 6 on challenges faced by institutional leaders in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria showed no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female respondents on the challenges faced by institutional leaders in the effective administration of public universities in south-south Nigeria since the p-value obtained (0.092) was greater than the chosen alpha level of 0.05.

Conclusion

The study concludes that for efficiency and effectiveness in the system, institutional leaders should be possess the requisite skills.

Recommendations

1. Government and stake-holders of public universities should create room for institutional leaders to be trained and retrained on leadership skill.
2. Institutional leaders should be made to understand the impact leadership skills has in the efficient administration of universities.
3. The challenges identified should be addressed by the government, institutional leaders and stake holders of universities.

References

- Ciulla, J. B., & Ciulla, J. B. (2020). The importance of leadership in shaping business values. *The search for ethics in leadership, business, and beyond*, 153-163.
- Garwe, E.C (ND). The effect of institutional leadership on quality of higher education provision Evelyn *Research in Higher Education Journal* 2-10.

- Mohamed, J. I.R, Yahaya, N., & Ghani, E.K. (2020), Higher education leadership competency framework in Malaysia: A refinement, *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, 8(4), 438-449.
- Ogunode, N.J, Okechukwu, E., & Olugbenga, A.V (2022).Problems faced by academic leaders in public higher institutions in Nigeria. *Spanish Journal of Innovation and Integrity*, 6,(214-224)
- Okah, R. , & Worlu, W.I. (2013). *Deregulation of university education in Nigeria: Assessment of challenges and the way forward*. In E.Kpangban, P.E. Eya & P.C. Igbojinwaekwu (Eds) *Reforms and innovation in Nigerian education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon Publishing.
- Ololube, N. P., Elechi, S. K., & Uriah, O. A. (2018). Educational leadership and management (ELM): Institutional leaders value functions for effective management of universities. *Encyclopedia of institutional leadership, policy and management*, 111-133.
- Shahmandi, E., Silong, A.D., Ismail, I.A., Samah, B.B.A. , & Othman, J. (2011). Competencies, Roles and Effective Academic Leadership in World Class University. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 2 (1).
- Washington, M., Boal, K. B., & Davis, J. N. (2008). *Institutional leadership: Past, present, and future*. In, R. Greenwood, R. Suddaby, C. Oliver, & K. Sahlin (Eds.), *Handbook of organization institutionalism*. Sage Publication.
- Yang, X. (2005). Institutional challenges and leadership competencies in Chinese ministry of education directed universities in implementing the 1999 Chinese action scheme for invigorating education towards the 21st century. *A Doctoral Dissertation Texas A&M University*.