

Transforming Leadership and Planning in Nigerian Public Universities: The Role of Institutional Resilience, Courage, Fairness, and Compassion

Stella Cheta-Maclean ; and Nwachukwu Prince Ololube 

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: stella.cheta@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/qjhcer.2025.018.010724>

Abstract

The fast-changing global landscape marked by economic fluctuations, political unrest, social inequality, environmental challenges, and technological advancements has placed increasing pressure on these institutions to evolve. As such, this study examined the transformation of public university planning and leadership using resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion as benchmarks. Four objectives, four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted a mixed-methods approach. The target population includes faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students, in public universities in Rivers State. The sample consisted of 600 respondents—faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students respectively. A self-structured 22 items questionnaire tagged the “Transformation of Public University Planning and Leadership” was developed to assess stakeholders’ perceptions. The internal consistency was verified using Cronbach’s alpha and reliability indices of $\alpha = .888$ and $.867$ was obtained respectively. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 to perform the descriptive statistics that answered the research questions, while Kendall’s Tau-b was employed and tested at .05 level of significance. The study found that institutional resilience ensures that universities can withstand and learn from disruptions, allowing them to continue fulfilling their educational missions in times of crisis. Institutional courage empowers leaders to break from traditional norms, pursue innovative solutions, and foster environments where bold ideas can thrive. Institutional fairness guarantees that universities remain equitable, providing all students, staff, and faculty with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds. And institutional compassion fosters university culture that prioritizes the well-being of its community members, and ensures that students and staff alike are supported in their personal and professional growth. Recommendations were proffered.

Keywords: Transforming, Public University, Planning, Leadership, Resilience, Courage, Fairness, Compassion, Higher Education Leadership.

Introduction

Public universities in Nigeria are supposed to play a central role in shaping the future of society through the provision of accessible education, fostering research, and driving innovation (Olayiwola et al., 2023). However, the rapidly changing global landscape marked by economic fluctuations, political unrest, social inequality, environmental challenges, and

technological advancements has placed increasing pressure on these institutions to evolve. As they confront these complex and often unpredictable challenges, public universities must undergo a transformative shift in leadership and planning strategies. The transformation must focus not only on achieving academic and operational excellence but also on integrating key values that reflect the evolving needs of diverse communities like resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion.

The traditional models of leadership and planning in public universities, often characterized by hierarchical structures and rigid policies, may no longer be sufficient to address the multifaceted challenges of the modern world (Omaplex, 2024). Universities must stand-in environments that prioritize flexibility, adaptability, and inclusivity while maintaining the integrity of academic rigor and institutional stability. To achieve this, leaders must exhibit resilience in the face of adversity, courage to pursue innovative solutions, fairness in decision-making processes, and compassion toward students, faculty, and the communities they serve.

Institutional resilience is the cornerstone of any institution's ability to weather challenges and thrive in times of crisis. Public universities are supposed to develop strategies that enable them to adapt to external shocks, whether it is economic downturns, natural disasters, or the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to fulfill their mission of educating future generations (Afolabi et al., 2022). According to Ololube (2024), resilience, however, is not merely about survival; it is about learning from adversity and using those lessons to foster a stronger, more sustainable institution. Leaders who exemplify resilience are not only able to navigate immediate challenges but also envision long-term solutions that help the university grow and evolve in response to changing circumstances.

Institutional courage is equally vital in this transformative process. In a time when higher education is often scrutinized and challenged by political, economic, and social pressures, university leaders must possess the courage to make bold decisions that may be unpopular or difficult to implement (Omaplex, 2024). Courageous leadership involves standing firm in the face of criticism, embracing change, and challenging traditional norms. This may include rethinking the structure of academic programs, exploring new models of student engagement, or advocating for policies that promote equity and inclusion.

Institutional fairness is the foundation of trust and transparency in university governance. Public universities are tasked with serving diverse populations, including students from different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences (Ahiazu & Ololube, 2016). It is essential that university leaders ensure fair and equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support systems. This requires creating policies that address disparities and promote inclusivity, ensuring that all members of the university community are treated with respect and dignity. Fairness in decision-making processes, whether related to admissions, faculty hiring, or funding allocation, fosters an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute to the university's success (Ogunyomi & Ojelabi, 2020).

Institutional compassion plays an essential role in creating a university environment that truly serves its community. Compassionate leadership goes beyond operational management and academic administration; it involves understanding the personal challenges and needs of students, faculty, and staff. This is particularly important in a world where mental health issues, financial insecurity, and social isolation are increasingly prevalent. Studies have shown significant levels of depression and psychological distress among Nigerian university students, underscoring the need for institutions to respond with empathy and supportive infrastructure (Oluwole et al., 2023). Compassionate leaders emphasize the well-being of their community members and develop systems of support that help individuals navigate personal struggles while maintaining their academic and professional aspirations. To Ololube (2024), compassionate leaders plan towards creating campus culture that promotes kindness, empathy, and mutual support among all members of the university community.

The integration of resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion into public university planning and leadership is not simply an idealistic vision; it is a pragmatic necessity for institutions that seek to thrive in the 21st century. Universities can cultivate an environment that nurtures the intellectual, emotional, and social development of their students and staff, ensuring that they are well-equipped to address the complex challenges of the future when they promote these values. As such, transforming public university planning and leadership is an important step toward creating institutions that are not only academically successful but also socially responsible and ethically grounded. Through transformation, public universities emerge through strong leaders when they promote a more just, compassionate, and resilient society.

Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Nigeria are facing unprecedented challenges in an increasingly complex global environment. These challenges ranging from economic constraints, political pressures, and technological disruptions to issues of social inequality, environmental sustainability, and mental health have exposed the limitations of traditional models of higher education leadership and planning. The conventional top-down, bureaucratic structures in many universities are often ill-equipped to address the diverse and dynamic needs of students, faculty, and the broader community. As a result, universities struggle to remain adaptable and responsive in an era where rapid change is the norm.

Observations still holds that significant gap exists in the integration of key values such as resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion within university leadership and planning frameworks. But the fact still remains that institutional resilience is necessary to navigate crises and ensure long-term sustainability, yet many universities lack strategies that cultivate adaptive and proactive responses. While institutional courage is required to embrace innovation and challenge outdated norms, but fear of failure or resistance to change often stifles progress. Institutional fairness is essential to promote equity and

inclusion, yet universities continue to grapple with issues of access and disparities in opportunity. Institutional compassion is critical for supporting the well-being of students and staff, but often takes a backseat to academic and administrative priorities. This lack of a holistic, values-driven approach to leadership and planning undermines universities' ability to effectively serve their communities. To thrive in the 21st century, public universities must undergo a transformation that integrates these core values, by making sure that resilient, courageous, fair, and compassionate are employed as strategies in decision-making processes.

Aim and Objectives of the study

Drawing from the problems stated above, this study is aimed to examine the transformation of public university planning and leadership using resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion as benchmarks. Specifically, this study’s objectives are to:

- Examine the role of institutional resilience in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Assess the role of institutional courage in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Determine the role of institutional fairness in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Evaluate the role of institutional compassion in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

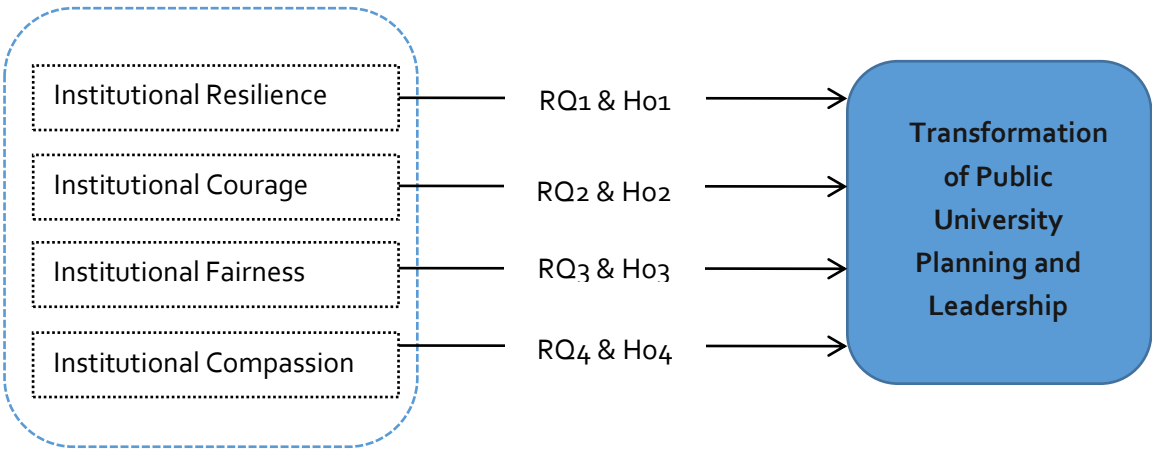


Figure 1: Conceptualization of the study’s aim and objectives

Research Questions

Four research questions directed this study:

- How does institutional resilience improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

- How does institutional courage improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?
- How does institutional fairness improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?
- How does institutional compassion improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses further guided this study:

- Institutional resilience does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional courage does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional fairness does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional compassion does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Institutional Resilience and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

According to Bartusevičienė et al. (2021), rapid change and uncertainty have marked the era of digital technology in universities and institutional resilience has become a vital characteristic for universities to be able to confront these changes and uncertainties. Institutional resilience is the capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from challenges while maintaining core missions (Nyakoty & Goronga, 2024). Effective planning and leadership play significant roles in cultivating institutional resilience in university to enable them to navigate financial pressures and technological disruptions to meet societal needs. Public universities often face budgetary constraints due to fluctuating funding and rising operational costs. To guarantee institutional resilience, universities must adopt strategic planning frameworks that focus on flexibility and adaptability. Universities leaders must also engage in comprehensive needs assessments, which involve collecting data on student demographics, community needs, and emerging trends in education (Dohaney et al., 2020). According to Ololube (2024), collaborative leadership is essential in fostering institutional resilience. Effective leaders recognize that resilience is not solely a top-down initiative; it requires input and engagement from various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders. Therefore, to institutional resilience must establish advisory committees and forums for open dialogue that can empower the groups to voice their concerns and contribute to the planning process. To the UNESCO (2017), establishing these inclusive approaches will not only enhance the quality of decision-making but will also promote a shared sense of ownership and commitment to the university's goals.

In addition to financial and operational challenges, public universities must also navigate technological advancements, because the rise in online learning have necessitated that universities rethink their educational models (Mhlongo et al., 2023). Furthermore, to be able to navigate and resist the changes of this era, institutional leaders must invest in the professional development of their faculty so that they can to effectively integrate technology into their teaching methods (Johnson et al., 2016). Fernández et al. (2023) explained that university leaders have to explore partnerships with tech companies and other educational institutions to enhance their digital infrastructure in line with the global demand. In the same disposition, Mugimu (2022) and Kruger and Steyn (2024) emphasized that universities that nurture culture of innovation are guaranteed to remain competitive and relevant in the increasingly digital educational landscape.

Another critical aspect of institutional resilience is the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (UNESCO, 2017). Consequently, it behooves on university leaders to prioritize DEI initiatives to create an inclusive environment that supports everyone in the system. This does not only enhance the university's reputation but also prepares graduates to thrive in a diverse workforce (Kruger & Steyn, 2024). Through the integration of the DEI principles into strategic planning, universities will be able to improve a more resilient environment that is better equipped to address societal challenges. Ultimately, institutional resilience enhances the ability of public universities to fulfill their mission of education, research, and community services for long-term sustainability and success.

Institutional Courage and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Institutional courage is increasingly recognized as a fundamental trait necessary for public universities to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing educational landscape (APPA, 2014). Ololube (2024) defined institutional courage as the willingness of universities to take bold and decisive actions in the face of the challenges confronting them, and empowers universities to confront pressing issues such as financial instability, social justice, and evolving educational needs. Effective planning and leadership are essential in promoting the needed courage that enables universities to adapt and innovate while remaining true to their core missions (Alharbi, 2021).

Public universities often operate under significant constraints like inadequate funding and increasing demand for services (Lucky, 2024). Institutional courage makes university leaders to prioritize long-term goals over short-term comfort, and when universities are faced with budget cuts, courageous leaders may choose to reallocate resources toward high-impact programs or initiatives that enhance faculty, staff and student success rather than simply trimming costs across the board (Miller, 2023). This strategic approach requires a clear vision and commitment to transparency and making stakeholders to understand the rationale behind the difficult decisions on budget cuts.

According to Lara (2020), courageous leaders essentially address issues of equity and inclusion within the educational setting. They are willing to confront systemic inequities that affect faculty, staff, and student access, retention, and success through the

implementation of policies that promote diversity in hiring practices or developing programs that support underrepresented students. To champion these initiatives, Brigue and Orlu (2023) noted that university leaders must demonstrate commitment to social responsibility and moral integrity to inspire a culture of courage throughout the university. It is important to note that institutional courage does not only embrace innovative teaching and research methods but also dismantle outdated practices that hinder progress (Mhlongo et al., 2023). To Laufer et al. (2024), university leaders must in fact encourage experimentation and risk-taking among faculty and staff, and foster environment where new ideas that can flourish through investment in professional development and creating spaces for collaboration and interdisciplinary projects that push the boundaries of traditional university education. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic forced Nigerian universities to rethink their operational models overnight, whereby institutional leaders demonstrated courage in swiftly transitioning to remote learning, while also prioritizing student mental health and well-being (Bartusevičienė et al., 2021).

Institutional Fairness and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Institutional fairness in public universities is essential and has been proven to foster equitable and inclusive educational environment. Fairness comprises principles of justice, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes that are associated with planning and leadership (Ololube, 2024). Universities are public institutions obliged with the sole responsibility to serve the societies in order to address the disparities in terms of access, resources, and opportunities to faculty, staff and students.

Effective planning and leadership are critical in promoting institutional fairness, which requires a strong commitment to inclusive practices that engage all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. Collaborative decision-making do not only enhance transparency, however, it also ensures that varied perspectives from stakeholders are considered, which may lead to a more comprehensive and equitable outcomes (Bensimon, 2005). For instance, involving marginalized groups in planning processes can help identify unique barriers they face and facilitate the development of targeted interventions.

Data is important in institutional fairness and data-driven approaches can significantly enhance institutional fairness. In situations where data are collected and analyzed on employment and enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, universities can use such data bank to identify gaps in equity and implement strategies to address circumstances when they arise (Perkins, 2018). Data-driven efforts do not only promote fairness in universities, but it also strengthens their overall educational goal.

As such, university leaders should be able to direct equity in their vision and mission, and demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion. The aforementioned can be achieved through setting clear goals on equity, allocating resources to support marginalized groups, and holding them accountable for progress. Therefore, institutional leaders should be

competent enough to also serve as role models, promote institutional culture that values fairness and encourage open dialogue about equity issues (Morris, 2020).

The question remains that can institutional leaders be able to advance institutional fairness through policies and practices that support equitable access to resources like financial aid, academic support, and career services? According to Ololube (2024), institutional leaders must be proactive in ensuring that all stakeholders have the necessary tools to succeed, in order to mitigate disparities and create a more level playing field.

Institutional Compassion and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Institutional compassion in public universities creates supportive educational environments that highlight the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Compassion in universities contexts involves recognizing and responding to the emotional and psychological needs of faculty, staff and students, which gives them a sense of belonging, and promotes their mental health. Therefore, as public entities, universities must embrace compassion as a core value in their planning and leadership practices to effectively address the diverse challenges faced by their communities (Ololube, 2019, 2024).

Effective planning and leadership are essential towards entrenching compassion into the institutional framework. This can be done when university leaders who model compassionate behavior and prioritize the well-being of their faculty, staff and students. Also, when university leaders demonstrate empathy and understanding, they create organizational culture where employees and student feel valued and supported (Simmons, 2019). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, universities that prioritized the mental health resources of their institutions, as well as communicate openly with their stakeholders, helps mitigate feelings of isolation and anxiety among them (Wolf, 2021).

The strategic planning involves recognizing the unique challenges faced by various groups within the university, and actively engaging faculty, staff and students to gather input on their needs and experiences can develop targeted initiatives that will infuse compassionate environment. Universities that implement programs that provide mental health support, flexible learning options, and peer mentoring has the significant potential to enhance the overall well-being to enhance campus life (Farrugia, 2020). Also, universities that discover high incidence of anxiety among staff and students and respond by enhancing orientation programs to include mental health awareness and support services has a high chance of gaining success (Lazarus, 2018).

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive and correlational design to investigate the transformation of public university planning and leadership using resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion as benchmarks in Nigeria. The research combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

The population comprised faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students, in public universities in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different demographics and disciplines.

A self-structured 22 items questionnaire tagged the "Transformation of Public University Planning and Leadership" was developed to assess stakeholders' perceptions. The questionnaire included a six-point (Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1; Disagree (D) = 2; Slightly Disagree (SLD) = 3; Slightly Agree (SLA) = 4; Agree (A) = 5; Strongly Agree (SA) = 6) Likert-scale items focusing on dimensions such as institutional resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion. The Likert scale offered a unique section for respondents to express their perceptions or experiences that are related to the statements concerning the transformation of public university planning and leadership using resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion as benchmarks. The questionnaire also gathered demographic information to facilitate the analysis. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity and reliability, and necessary adjustments were made based on feedback. The internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's Alpha and reliability indices of $\alpha = .888$ and $.867$ was obtained respectively.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 to perform the mean and standard deviation analysis to answer the answers to the research questions while Kendall's Tau-b was employed and tested at .05 level of significance. Kendall's Tau-b was chosen over other correlation measures due to its appropriateness for the nature of the data and the research objectives. Unlike Pearson's correlation, which assumes normally distributed, continuous variables and a linear relationship, Kendall's Tau-b is a non-parametric measure that does not require these assumptions.

Results

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Information

Categories	Gender	Age	Institution	Academic Position
Male	325(54.2%)			
Female	275(45.8%)			
20-29 years		115(19.2%)		
30-39 Years		219(36.5%)		
40-49 years		142(23.7%)		
50-59 years		90(15%)		
60-69 years		34(5.7%)		
IAUE			227(37.8%)	
RSU			211(35.2%)	
UNIPORT			162(27%)	
Senior Lecturer				123(20.5%)
Reader				100(16.7%)
Professor				94(15.7%)
Non-Academic Staff				140(23.3%)
Doctoral Student				143(23.8%)

Table 1 provides a detailed analysis of the respondents' demographic information across various categories. In terms of gender distribution, male respondents formed the majority, accounting for 325 individuals (54.2%), while female respondents comprised 275 individuals (45.8%). This near balance in gender representation suggests a relatively equitable participation, with a slightly higher proportion of males.

The age distribution of respondents reveals a diverse range of participants. Younger individuals aged 20–29 years accounted for 115 respondents (19.2%), they are likely at the early stages of their careers or studies. The largest age group was those aged 30–39 years, they comprise 219 respondents (36.5%), representing mid-career professionals or advanced students. Participants aged 40–49 years totaled 142 individuals (23.7%), which indicate a strong presence of experienced professionals. Meanwhile, 90 respondents (15%) were aged 50–59 years; they reflect seasoned professionals likely at the peak of their careers. The smallest age group, those aged 60–69 years, included 34 individuals (5.7%), representing a smaller proportion of highly experienced professionals. Overall, the majority of respondents fell within the active professional age range of 30–49 years.

Data for institutional affiliation shows that respondents were drawn from three institutions. IAUE (Ignatius Ajuru University of Education) had the highest representation with 227 respondents (37.8%). This was followed by RSU (Rivers State University), which accounted for 211 respondents (35.2%). UNIPORT (University of Port Harcourt) had the smallest representation, with 162 respondents (27%).

Regarding academic positions, the largest group was Doctoral Students, with 143 respondents (23.8%), reflecting a focus on higher education and research. Non-Academic Staff made up 140 respondents (23.3%), highlighting contributions from administrative and support roles. Senior Lecturers accounted for 123 respondents (20.5%), representing mid-level academic leadership. Readers, comprising 100 respondents (16.7%), signified a significant group of advanced academics nearing professorship. Professors formed the smallest academic group, with 94 respondents (15.7%), which represent top-level academics.

Research Question 1: How does institutional resilience improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of institutional resilience improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Resilience and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
1.	Rapid change and uncertainty have marked the era of digital technology in universities and institutional resilience has become a vital characteristic for universities to be able to confront these changes and uncertainties.	4.3750	1.74244	Agree
2.	Resilience is the capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from challenges while maintaining core missions.	4.3767	1.78328	Agree
3.	Effective planning and leadership play significant roles in cultivating resilience in university to enable them to navigate financial pressures and technological disruptions to meet societal needs.	3.9700	1.78262	Agree
4.	To guarantee institutional resilience, universities must adopt strategic planning frameworks that focus on flexibility and adaptability.	3.8567	1.77239	Agree
5.	Institutional resilience must establish advisory committees and forums for open dialogue that can empower the groups to voice their concerns and contribute to the planning process.	3.6717	2.04552	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.0500	1.82525	Agree

Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional resilience in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The data revealed that respondents agreed on the importance of institutional resilience in confronting changes and uncertainties brought about by digital technology, with a mean score of 4.3750 (SD = 1.74244). Additionally, respondents recognized resilience as the ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from challenges while maintaining core missions, as reflected by a mean of 4.3767 (SD = 1.78328). The role of effective planning and leadership in cultivating resilience, allowing universities to navigate financial pressures and

technological disruptions, was rated with a mean of 3.9700 (SD = 1.78262). Respondents also agreed that for universities to guarantee resilience, strategic planning frameworks focusing on flexibility and adaptability are necessary, with a mean score of 3.8567 (SD = 1.77239). Furthermore, the need to establish advisory committees and forums for open dialogue to empower groups in contributing to the planning process was highlighted with a mean of 3.6717 (SD = 2.04552). With a grand mean of 4.0500 and a standard deviation of 1.82525, the data confirm that respondents agree on the significant role of institutional resilience in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 2: How does institutional courage improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of institutional courage improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Courage and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
6.	Institutional courage is increasingly recognized as a fundamental trait necessary for public universities to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing educational landscape.	3.7917	2.10927	Agree
7.	Institutional courage is the willingness of universities to take bold and decisive actions in the face of the challenges confronting them.	3.9150	1.52369	Agree
8.	When universities are faced with budget cuts, courageous leaders may choose to reallocate resources toward high-impact programs or initiatives that enhance success rather than simply trimming costs across the board.	4.2583	1.64908	Agree
9.	Institutional courage does not only embrace innovative teaching and research methods but also dismantle outdated practices that hinder progress.	4.1517	1.55758	Agree
10.	Institutional leaders must in fact encourage experimentation and risk-taking among faculty and staff.	4.2783	1.54429	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.0790	1.67678	Agree

Table 3 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional courage in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The data indicated respondents' agreement that institutional courage is increasingly recognized as essential for public universities to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing educational landscape, with a mean score of 3.7917 (SD = 2.10927). Respondents also acknowledged that institutional courage reflects the willingness of universities to take bold and decisive actions in the face of challenges, as evidenced by a mean of 3.9150 (SD = 1.52369). The importance of courageous leaders reallocating resources toward high-impact programs during budget cuts, rather than simply making across-the-board reductions, received a mean score of 4.2583 (SD = 1.64908). Additionally, the embrace of innovative

teaching and research methods while dismantling outdated practices that hinder progress was rated with a mean of 4.1517 (SD = 1.55758). The encouragement of experimentation and risk-taking among faculty and staff by institutional leaders was highlighted with a mean of 4.2783 (SD = 1.54429). With a grand mean of 4.0790 and a standard deviation of 1.67678, the data confirm that respondents agree on the significant role of institutional courage in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 3: How does institutional fairness improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of institutional fairness improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Fairness and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
11.	Institutional fairness in public universities is essential and has been proven to foster equitable and inclusive educational environment.	4.3167	1.57178	Agree
12.	Fairness comprises principles of justice, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes that are associated with planning and leadership.	4.4350	1.39368	Agree
13.	Effective planning and leadership are critical in promoting institutional fairness, which requires a strong commitment to inclusive practices that engage all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community.	3.8150	1.44022	Agree
14.	Collaborative decision-making do not only enhance transparency, it also ensures that varied perspectives from stakeholders are considered, which may lead to a more comprehensive and equitable outcomes.	3.9467	1.48239	Agree
15.	University leaders should be able to direct equity in their vision and mission, and demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion.	3.9100	1.44755	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.0846	1.46712	Agree

Table 4 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional fairness in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The data reveal respondents' agreement that institutional fairness is essential for fostering an equitable and inclusive educational environment, as indicated by a mean score of 4.3167 (SD = 1.57178). The principles of justice, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes related to planning and leadership received a mean score of 4.4350 (SD = 1.39368), highlighting their importance. Respondents acknowledged that effective planning and leadership play a critical role in promoting institutional fairness, requiring a strong commitment to inclusive practices that engage all stakeholders—

students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community—with a mean score of 3.8150 ($SD = 1.44022$). Furthermore, the collaborative decision-making process, which enhances transparency and incorporates varied perspectives from stakeholders for more equitable outcomes, was rated with a mean of 3.9467 ($SD = 1.48239$). University leaders' ability to direct equity in their vision and mission while demonstrating commitment to diversity and inclusion was rated at 3.9100 ($SD = 1.44755$). With a grand mean of 4.0846 and a standard deviation of 1.46712, the data confirm that respondents agree on the significant role of institutional fairness in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 4: How does institutional compassion improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of institutional compassion improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Compassion and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
16.	Institutional compassion in public universities creates supportive educational environments that highlight the well-being of students, faculty, and staff.	4.1217	1.57512	Agree
17.	Compassion in universities contexts involves recognizing and responding to the emotional and psychological needs of faculty, staff and students.	3.9467	1.49919	Agree
18.	Universities must embrace compassion as a core value in their planning and leadership practices to effectively address the diverse challenges faced by their communities.	3.8283	1.40789	Agree
19.	Effective planning and leadership are essential towards entrenching compassion into the institutional framework.	4.0367	1.44411	Agree
20.	University leaders who model compassionate behavior and prioritize the well-being of their faculty, staff and students are successful.	3.8433	1.76559	Agree
21.	When university leaders demonstrate empathy and understanding, they create organizational culture where employees and student feel valued and supported.	3.8450	1.79435	Agree
22.	Universities that implements programs that provide mental health support, flexible learning options, and peer mentoring have the significant potential to enhance the overall well-being and enhance campus life.	3.8033	1.82945	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	3.9178	1.61652	Agree

Table 5 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' views on the role of institutional compassion in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The findings indicate strong agreement that institutional compassion fosters supportive educational environments focused on the well-being of students, faculty, and staff, with a mean score of 4.1217 (SD = 1.57512). Respondents also highlighted the importance of recognizing and addressing the emotional needs of the university community, reflected in a mean of 3.9467 (SD = 1.49919). They emphasized that universities should embrace compassion as a core value in their leadership practices to effectively address diverse challenges, demonstrated by a mean of 3.8283 (SD = 1.40789). Effective planning and leadership are seen as essential for integrating compassion into the institutional framework, with a mean score of 4.0367 (SD = 1.44411). Additionally, university leaders who model compassionate behavior and prioritize well-being tend to be more successful, as indicated by a mean of 3.8433 (SD = 1.76559). Respondents agreed that empathy and understanding from leaders foster a culture where employees and students feel valued (mean = 3.8450, SD = 1.79435). Finally, the implementation of programs for mental health support and peer mentoring shows significant potential to enhance overall well-being, with a mean of 3.8033 (SD = 1.82945). The grand mean of 3.9178 confirms the critical role of institutional compassion in enhancing planning and leadership in public universities.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Institutional resilience does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

Table 6: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional resilience and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Resilience	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Resilience	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.456**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.456**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis one, which posits that institutional resilience does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .456, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is

statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). These results led to the rejection of the initially proposed null hypothesis. This rejection highlights the significant role of institutional resilience in enhancing the leadership and strategic planning within public universities, contrary to Hypothesis one, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional resilience is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional resilience are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional resilience plays a crucial role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 2: Institutional courage does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

Table 7: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional courage and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Courage	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Courage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.522**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 7 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis two, which posits that institutional courage does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .522, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). These results led to the rejection of the initially proposed null hypothesis. This rejection emphasizes the importance of institutional courage in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities, contrary to Hypothesis two, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional courage is positively correlated to improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional courage are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional courage plays a significant role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 3: Institutional fairness does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

Table 8: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional fairness and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Fairness	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Fairness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.824**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis three, which posits that institutional fairness does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .824, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). These results led to the rejection of the initially proposed null hypothesis. This rejection highlights the significant role of institutional fairness in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities, contrary to Hypothesis three, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional fairness is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional fairness are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional fairness plays a critical role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 4: Institutional compassion does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

Table 9: Kendall’s Tau-b analysis of institutional compassion and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional compassion	Planning and Leadership
Institutional compassion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.360**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Data in Table 9 presents the results from the Kendall’s Tau-b analysis of hypothesis four, which posits that institutional compassion does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .360, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). These results led to the rejection of the initially proposed null hypothesis. This rejection underscores the important role of institutional compassion in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities, contrary to Hypothesis four, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional compassion is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional compassion are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional compassion plays a meaningful role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Discussion

Institutional Resilience and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall’s Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis seven, which posited that institutional resilience does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria, revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .456, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results emphasize the crucial role of Institutional resilience in enhancing leadership and planning within public universities, suggesting that resilient institutions are better equipped to adapt to challenges and pursue strategic goals effectively. According to Nyakotyo et al. (2024), resilience is the capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from challenges while maintaining core missions.

Fernández et al. (2023) emphasized that resilience enables universities to navigate uncertainties and adversities, such as financial crises and regulatory changes. In their study, they argue that resilient leadership is essential for sustaining strategic initiatives and fostering a culture of innovation. This aligns with the findings of the current research, indicating that leaders who embody resilience are more likely to promote effective planning and agile decision-making processes.

According to Ololube (2024), collaborative leadership is essential in fostering institutional resilience. Effective planning and leadership play significant roles in cultivating resilience in university to enable them to navigate financial pressures and technological disruptions to meet societal needs. Universities leaders must also engage in comprehensive needs assessments, which involve collecting data on student demographics, community needs, and emerging trends in education (Dohaney et al., 2020). Therefore, to institutional resilience must establish advisory committees and forums for open dialogue that can empower the groups to voice their concerns and contribute to the planning process.

To the UNESCO (2017), establishing these inclusive approaches will not only enhance the quality of decision-making but will also promote a shared sense of ownership and commitment to the university's goals. Fernández et al. (2023) explained that university leaders have to explore partnerships with tech companies and other educational institutions to enhance their digital infrastructure in line with the global demand. In the same disposition, Mugimu (2022) and Kruger and Steyn (2024) emphasized that universities that nurture culture of innovation are guaranteed to remain competitive and relevant in the increasingly digital educational landscape.

The findings from this study reaffirm the idea that institutional resilience plays a critical role in shaping the planning and leadership landscape of public universities. In sum, the data strongly suggest that institutional resilience significantly influences the leadership and planning outcomes of public universities. Resilient leaders not only enhance the institution's capacity to manage challenges but also foster an environment of collaboration, innovation, and accountability that is crucial for achieving strategic objectives.

Institutional Courage and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis eight, which posited that institutional courage does not significantly enhance the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria, revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .522, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results highlight the important role of institutional courage in improving leadership and planning within public universities, suggesting that courageous institutions are more adept at confronting challenges and implementing innovative strategies.

The result of the analysed data is in line with the assertion of Miller (2023), who opined that institutional courage makes university leaders to prioritize long-term goals over short-term comfort, and when universities are faced with budget cuts, courageous leaders may choose

to reallocate resources toward high-impact programs or initiatives that enhance faculty, staff and student success rather than simply trimming costs across the board. They emphasize that leaders who exhibit courage are more likely to take calculated risks, challenge the status quo, and advocate for transformative changes, which ultimately enhances institutional effectiveness. This aligns with the current study's findings, indicating that courageous leadership fosters a culture of innovation and proactive planning.

To Laufer et al. (2024) university leaders must in fact encourage experimentation and risk-taking among faculty and staff, and foster environment where new ideas that can flourish through investment in professional development and creating spaces for collaboration and interdisciplinary projects that push the boundaries of traditional university education. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic forced universities to rethink their operational models overnight, whereby institutional leaders demonstrated courage in swiftly transitioning to remote learning, while also prioritizing student mental health and well-being (Bartusevičienė et al., 2021).

The findings from this research support the notion that courageous leadership not only enhances institutional planning but also contributes to long-term sustainability and success. The data strongly suggest that institutional courage significantly influences the leadership and planning outcomes of public universities. Leaders who embody courage are more likely to drive positive change, foster an inclusive environment, and enhance the overall effectiveness of their institutions.

Institutional Fairness and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis nine, which posited that institutional fairness does not significantly enhance the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria, revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .824, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The analysis highlighted the essential role institutional fairness plays in enhancing leadership practices and strategic planning in public universities. Perkins (2018) pointed out that in situations where data are collected and analyzed on employment and enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, universities can use such data bank to identify gaps in equity and implement strategies to address circumstances when they arise.

Morris (2020) argued that institutional leaders should be competent enough to also serve as role models, promote institutional culture that values fairness and encourage open dialogue about equity issues. This study's findings corroborate their assertions, suggesting that when university leaders uphold fairness in their policies and practices, it not only enhances planning but also cultivates a more committed and motivated academic community. Fair practices foster trust among stakeholders, leading to higher levels of engagement and collaboration.

Ololube (2024) asserted that equitable leadership practices contribute to a more inclusive institutional culture, which is essential for attracting diverse talent and perspectives.

institutional leaders must be proactive in ensuring that all stakeholders have the necessary tools to succeed, in order to mitigate disparities and create a more level playing field. The findings from this study resonate with their claims, indicating that institutional fairness positively influences planning and leadership by ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

This study's findings reflect this perspective, demonstrating that institutions led by fair leaders are better positioned to implement effective planning strategies that align with the institution's mission and goals. In summary, the data strongly suggest that institutional fairness is a critical factor in shaping the leadership and planning outcomes of public universities. Leaders who prioritize fairness contribute to a transparent, accountable, and ethically sound institutional environment, ultimately leading to more effective governance and strategic success.

Institutional Compassion and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis ten, which posited that institutional compassion does not significantly enhance the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria, revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .360, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This analysis demonstrates the critical role that institutional compassion plays in improving leadership practices and strategic planning in public universities. The findings of the study is in line with the research of Ololube (2019) who pointed out that universities must embrace compassion as a core value in their planning and leadership practices to effectively address the diverse challenges faced by their communities.

Research by Simmons (2019) showed that when university leaders demonstrate empathy and understanding, they create organizational culture where employees and student feel valued and supported. Their findings indicate that compassionate leadership directly correlates with increased job satisfaction and loyalty among university employees. Universities that implements programs that provide mental health support, flexible learning options, and peer mentoring has the significant potential to enhance the overall well-being to enhance campus life (Farrugia, 2020). This study's findings support the idea that compassionate leadership not only improves individual performance but also contributes to the strategic effectiveness of planning processes within institutions.

Furthermore, Mantginte (2024) argued that compassion is essential for ethical decision-making in higher education. His research indicates that leaders who prioritize compassion in their decision-making processes tend to make choices that benefit not only the institution but also its stakeholders. The findings of this study align with this notion, reinforcing the idea that compassionate leadership fosters ethical governance and supports the achievement of long-term strategic goals. In summary, the data strongly suggest that institutional compassion is a critical factor in shaping the leadership and planning outcomes of public universities. Leaders who embody compassion create a supportive and

empathetic environment that enhances engagement, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, ultimately leading to improved institutional effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study succeeded in examining the transformation of public university planning and leadership by integrate resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion as benchmark. It is not merely a theoretical ideal but a critical necessity for the sustainability and relevance of higher education institutions in the modern world. As universities navigate an increasingly complex landscape marked by economic, social, and environmental challenges, the need for a more adaptive, inclusive, and supportive approach to leadership has never been clearer.

Institutional resilience ensures that universities can withstand and learn from disruptions, allowing them to continue fulfilling their educational missions in times of crisis. Institutional courage empowers leaders to break from traditional norms, pursue innovative solutions, and foster environments where bold ideas can thrive. Institutional fairness guarantees that universities remain equitable, providing all students, staff, and faculty with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds. And institutional compassion, meanwhile, fosters a university culture that prioritizes the well-being of its community members, and ensures that students and staff alike are supported in their personal and professional growth.

The integration of these values into university leadership and planning processes creates an ecosystem which does not only involve academic success but also includes where personal and collective thrive occur. As public universities continue to evolve, embracing resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion will be essential in shaping institutions that are not only centers of knowledge but also hubs of social responsibility, innovation, and care. Making resilience, courage, fairness, and compassion central in universities leadership and planning, they can better prepare future generations to address the complexities of the world ahead.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered as a result of the findings from the study:

- Institutional leaders should promote the culture of resilience in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should encourage courage among stakeholders in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should support organizational fairness in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should constantly stimulate compassion among the stakeholders in the planning and leadership of public universities in Nigeria.

References

- Afolabi, M. O., Saka, A. O., & Ige, O. O. (2022). Institutional responses and resilience of Nigerian universities during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 20(1), 45–60.
- Ahiau, L. U., & Ololube, N. P. (2016). The mediating effect of organizational culture, size and structure on the relationship between innovations and resilience in selected Nigerian universities. In N. P. Ololube (Ed.), *Handbook of research on organizational justice and culture in higher education institutions* (pp. 324–364). Information Science Reference. DOI:10.4018/978-1-4666-9850-5.ch013.
- Alharbi, I. (2021) Innovative Leadership: A Literature Review Paper. *Open Journal of Leadership*, 10, 214–229. Doi: [10.4236/ojl.2021.103014](https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2021.103014).
- APPA (2014). *Leveraging facilities for institutional success*. APPA's Center for Facilities Research.
- Bartusevičienė, I., Pazaver, A., & Kitada, M. (2021). Building a resilient university: Ensuring academic continuity—transition from face-to-face to online in the COVID-19 pandemic. *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs*, 20, 151–172. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13437-021-00239-x>.
- Bensimon, E. M. (2005). A Conceptual Framework for Analyzing the Role of Institutional Research in Institutional Change. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2005(127), 35–48.
- Brigue, A. U., & Orlu, V. N. (2023). Ethical considerations of leaders and integrity in public universities. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 5(2), 245–261.
- Dohane, J., de Róiste, M., Salmon, R. A., & Sutherland, K. (2020). Benefits, barriers, and incentives for improved resilience to disruption in university teaching. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 50, 101691. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2020.101691>.
- Farrugia, C. (2020). Compassionate Leadership in Higher Education: A Framework for Action. *Educational Leadership*, 78(1), 34–39.
- Fernández, A., Gómez, B., Binjaku, K. et al. (2023). Digital transformation initiatives in higher education institutions: A multivocal literature review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28, 12351–12382. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11544-0>.
- Johnson, A. M., Jacovina, M. E., Russell, D. E., & Soto, C. M. (2016). Challenges and solutions when using technologies in the classroom. In S. A. Crossley & D. S. McNamara (Eds.), *Adaptive educational technologies for literacy instruction* (pp. 13–29). Taylor & Francis.
- Kruger, S., & Steyn, A. A. (2024). Developing breakthrough innovation capabilities in university ecosystems: A case study from South Africa. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 198, 123002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2023.123002>.
- Lara, G. (2020). An exploration of courageous followership characteristics present in student involvement support staff at select Midwest Community Colleges. Doctoral dissertation Southeastern University.
- Laufer, M., Deacon, B., & Mende, M. A. et al (2024). Leading with Trust: How University Leaders can Foster Innovation with Educational Technology through Organizational Trust. *Innovative Higher Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-024-09733-5>.
- Lazarus, R. (2018). Understanding Student Anxiety: Insights for Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 32(4), 327–342.
- Lucky, U. A. (2024). *Challenges of inadequate funding in the administration of university education in Nigeria*. Kampala International University.
- Mantginte, S. Y. (2024). Fortifying transparency: Enhancing corporate governance through robust internal control mechanisms. *Advances in Management & Financial Reporting Research*, 2(2), 72–84. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60079/amfr.v2i2.173>.
- Mhlongo, S., Mbatha, K., Ramatsetse, B., & Reuben Dlamini, R. (2023). Challenges, opportunities, and prospects of adopting and using smart digital technologies in learning environments: An iterative review. *Heliyon*, 9(6), e16348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16348>.

- Miller, M. (2023) Leadership Preparation and Institutional Priorities: A Global Perspective on Higher Education. *Open Journal of Leadership*, 12, 1-14. Doi: [10.4236/ojl.2023.121001](https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2023.121001).
- Morris, J. E. (2020). The Role of Leadership in Promoting Institutional Equity. *Educational Leadership Review*, 21(1), 15-30.
- Mugimu, C. B. (2022). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Africa Embracing the "New Normal" for Knowledge Production and Innovation: Barriers, Realities, and Possibilities. *Intech Open*. Doi: 10.5772/intechopen.101063.
- Nyakotyo, C., & Goronga, P. (2024). Resilience Strategies for Higher Education Institutions. In M. Kayyali (Ed.), *Rebuilding higher education systems impacted by crises: Navigating Traumatic Events, Disasters, and More* (pp. 1-18). Information Science Reference. DOI: [10.4018/979-8-3693-1926-0.ch001](https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1926-0.ch001).
- Ogunyomi, P. O., & Ojelabi, R. A. (2020). Comparative study of diversity management and employee fairness in the North Central universities of Nigeria. *International Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 9(2), 50–63. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344849176>.
- Olayiwola, K., Adeyemi, B., & Abubakar, M. (2023). Transforming public universities in Nigeria: Leadership, policy, and innovation in a changing world. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning*, 19(2), 75–92.
- Ololube, N. P. (2019). *Practical guide to human resources management and organizational theory*. Pearl Publishers.
- Ololube, N. P. (2024). *Institutional leadership: Laying the foundation for success*. Pearl Publications.
- Oluwole, O. A., Ojo, T. E., & Hassan, T. O. (2023). Mental health status and risk of depression among Nigerian university students: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychology*, 11(1), 58. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10132655>.
- Omaplex Law Firm. (2024). *Opportunities and Challenges of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the Nigerian Educational System*. <https://omaplex.com.ng/opportunities-and-challenges-of-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei-in-the-nigerian-educational-system>.
- Perkins, R. (2018). Data-Driven Equity: How Colleges and Universities Can Improve Student Outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, 47(5), 298-307.
- Simmons, R. (2019). The Role of Empathy in University Leadership. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 34(2), 45-58.
- UNESCO (2017). *Practical strategies to promote social integration*. UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab.
- Wolf, S. (2021). Mental Health in Crisis: Universities' Response to COVID-19. *Journal of American College Health*, 69(1), 1-10.