

What Role Does the Strength of Character of Institutions Play in the Planning and Leadership of Public Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Stella Cheta-Maclean ¹; and Nwachukwu Prince Ololube ²

¹Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria. ²Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: stella.cheta@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/qjmr.2024.017.010573>

Abstract

This study examined the role of strength of character of institutions in shaping the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Institutional character strength, defined by core ethical values and principles, significantly influences decision-making processes, governance, and stakeholder engagement within universities. This research highlighted how strength of character facilitates effective planning and leadership, enabling university leaders to navigate challenges such as funding constraints and political pressures. Furthermore, it emphasized the importance of character in promoting academic integrity and community engagement, which ultimately contributes to the long-term sustainability and reputation of public universities. Through qualitative review and quantitative analysis, a self-structured questionnaire tagged the "Strength of Character of Institutions" was developed to assess stakeholders' perceptions of the strength of character of institutions. The study's sample size of 600 was determined using Cochran's formula, the respondents include faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students respectively. The internal consistency questionnaire was verified using Cronbach's alpha and reliability indices of $\alpha = .916$ and $.887$ was obtained respectively. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Kendall's Tau-b was employed test the hypotheses at .05 level of significant level. This study found that institutions with robust character do not only enhance their operational effectiveness but also prepare faculty members, administrative staff and students to become ethical leaders. The findings emphasized the necessity of integrating character education into university curricula and leadership training programs, which will position strength of character as a foundational element for successful planning and governance in public universities. This study contributed to the broader discourse on higher education management and the ethical responsibilities of academic institutions.

Keywords: Role, Strength of Character, Institutions, Planning, Leadership, Public Universities, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Introduction

The strength of character of institutions is essential for their ability to function effectively and contribute positively to the universities (Scott, 2008). Character in the context of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria refers to the moral and ethical qualities that underpin the behaviors, decisions, thoughts, words, and actions of institutions vis-à-vis integrity, honesty, authenticity, responsibility, empathy, self-discipline, resilience, courage, fairness, compassion, humility, perseverance, self-awareness, adaptability, and moral principle.

Institutional character strength can be understood as the embodiment of core values, ethics, and principles that guide an institution's operations and culture. It reflects the integrity, accountability, transparency, and commitment to the social responsibility that universities in Nigeria uphold (Daniel-Ozah, 2024). Therefore, strength is essential not only to foster trust among stakeholders but also for navigating challenges and ensuring sustainable institutional growth (Abo-Khalil, 2024; Chanda & Lufeyo, 2024).

Universities with strong character build trust and credibility among their stakeholders—students, staff, the community, and policymakers. This trust is foundational for collaboration and engagement, which are essential for institutional success (Ololube, 2024). Character strength informs decision-making processes within the universities and institutional leaders who emphasize ethical considerations are more likely to make decisions that reflect the institution's values and serve their greater good (Nguyen & Crossan, 2022). In addition, Crossan et al. (2013) noted that institutions with a strong character are better equipped to resolve crises and challenges, and their commitment to ethical principles and accountability fosters an institutional culture of resilience that enables them to adapt and recover from short, medium and long-term setbacks. Institutional character promotes focus on long-term goals and sustainability rather than immediate gains, which may be crucial in creating lasting impacts.

In the context of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, the strength of character is particularly significant due to the unique challenges faced in the region. The challenges range from leadership and governance, academic integrity, community engagement and student development. According to Brigue and Orlu (2023), effective leadership and governance are critical in instilling a culture of character within public universities and it is evidence that institutional leaders who demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior set the tone for the entire institution. Leaders have the capacity to serve as role models for faculty and students, which will at the long run, foster an environment where ethical considerations are paramount (Amanchukwu et al., 2015).

Çelik and Razi (2023) observed that a robust character within the university community promotes academic integrity, which is essential for maintaining high educational standards. Therefore, institutions that emphasize ethical behavior in research, teaching, and administration encourage trust and respect. This is especially important in a region where corruption and malpractice undermine the credibility of academic success. Public universities are responsible to serve their communities, and those with strong character are more likely to engage meaningfully with their stakeholders. Good institutional character

enhances the university's reputation and also enriches the educational experiences of their faculty and students. Universities that accentuate character strength in their curricula and extracurricular activities help their students develop fantastic ethical frameworks (Ololube, 2024).

In many cases, political interferences and influences compromise the independence and integrity of public universities in Nigeria. Many decisions taken in most public universities in Nigeria are driven by political agendas rather than ethical considerations thereby weakening the character and institutional culture (Adeniyi, 2022; Bamiro, 2024). Also, limited funding and resources made available to public universities in Nigeria does not promote efficiency and effectiveness, and in most cases, they lead unethical concerns (Ololube, 2019). Adeniyi (2022) highlighted that corruption within the system has resulted to shifts that have eroded trust and integrity, which has ultimately harmed most universities reputation. In some circumstances, societal norms and values has impacted the principles of institutional character, because when a nation tolerates corruption, it will be challenging for universities to uphold ethical standards (Çelik & Razi, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, face numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, political interference, and fluctuating student enrollment. These challenges are compounded by a lack of effective planning and leadership, which can often be traced back to the strength of character exhibited by institutional leaders. The role of strength of character of institutions has profound implications for the management and strategic direction of public universities.

Current literature on higher education management highlights the significance of leadership traits, yet there are limited empirical researches that focused specifically on the interplay between strength of character of institutions and university planning and leadership in the unique socio-political context of Rivers State. As universities strive to fulfill their educational mandates, the strength of character among institutional leaders is central in navigating the complexities of funding shortages, infrastructural decay, and fluctuating government policies.

Conversely, weak character in university communities can lead to ineffective governance, poor decision-making, and a culture of corruption, which ultimately undermines institutional credibility and educational quality. This dichotomy raises critical questions: How does the character of institutional leaders influence strategic planning in public universities? What specific traits contribute to effective planning, leadership, and governance and enhanced educational outcomes? Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing strategies that not only improve institutional performance but also restore public trust in university education.

Thus, the need for a comprehensive investigation into the role of character strength in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State becomes evident. Such research could inform policy recommendations aimed at strengthening institutional

leadership, promoting ethical governance, and ultimately enhancing the educational landscape in the region. This study aims to fill this gap, providing valuable insights into how character can shape the future of public universities amidst the challenges they face.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine what role the strength of character of institution plays in the planning and leadership in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria? To achieve this aim, six specific objectives were put forward to:

- Determine the role of institutional integrity in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Examine the role of institutional honesty in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Survey the role of institutional authenticity in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Scrutinize the role of institutional responsibility in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Explore the role of institutional empathy in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Evaluate the role of institutional self-discipline in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

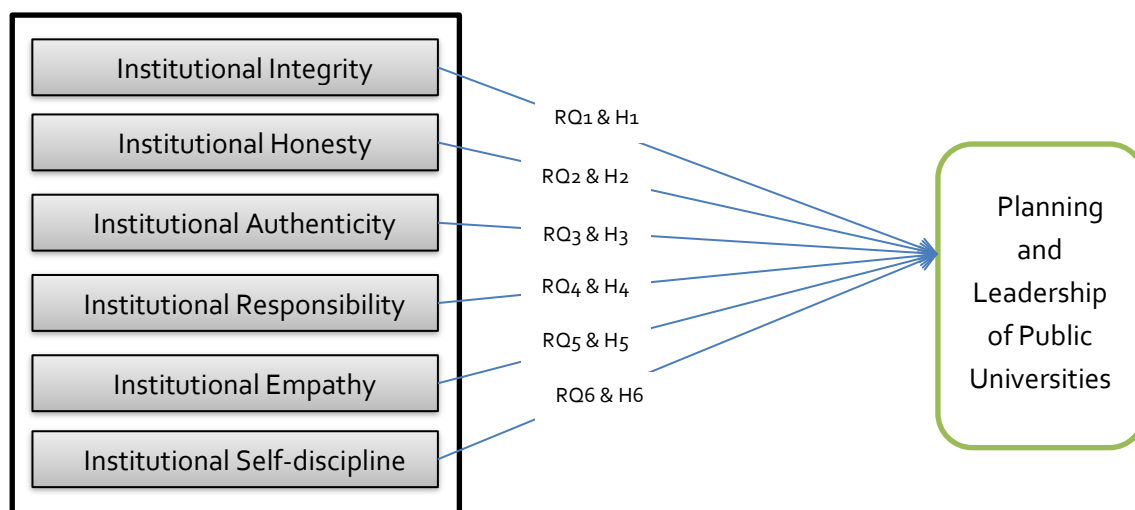


Figure 1: Aim and Objectives / Conceptual Model

Research Questions

In order to guide this study, six research questions was used:

- How does the role of institutional integrity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

- How does the role of institutional honesty improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does the role of institutional authenticity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does the role of institutional responsibility improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does the role of institutional empathy improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- How does the role of institutional self-discipline improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

To further guide this study, six hypotheses were developed:

- Institutional integrity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional honesty does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional authenticity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional responsibility does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional empathy does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional self-discipline does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Institutional Integrity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Institutional integrity is the cornerstone of effective governance in public universities, influencing not only their operational success but also their reputations and relationships with stakeholders (Nafi & Kamaluddin, 2019). Institutional integrity involves adhering to ethical standards, which promotes transparency, and ensures accountability in all aspects of university life. Intrinsically, university integrity is vital to foster trust within the academic community and beyond, ultimately impacting the quality of education and research.

Planning and leadership in public universities is guided by a commitment to principles and a clear and compelling mission statement serves as the foundation for decision-making processes, ensuring that all actions align with the institution's core values (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Dei, 2024). Values such as inclusivity, diversity, and respect create a supportive environment for students and faculty to enhance the university's overall culture (Eden et al., 2024).

Permitting Mukoro and Ojeje (2024) idea, transparent governance structures are essential for institutional integrity and effective leaders engage various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and community members, in planning processes. This collaborative approach raises a sense of ownership and accountability, encouraging a culture where diverse perspectives are valued. Moreover, establishing clear decision-making processes enhances trust and promotes a shared commitment to the universities mission.

Accountability further strengthens institutional integrity and performance (Nwafor & Ololube, 2024). Universities that conduct regular audits evaluate their success and identify areas for improvement. These practices promote transparency and demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement. They ensure that the institution develops to response to the emerging challenges and opportunities.

Ethical leadership is another crucial aspect that fosters institutional integrity, and leaders who model ethical behavior and decision-making, serves as role models for faculty, staff, and students (Ololube, 2024). Continuous training and development programs on ethics and compliance are able to promote culture of integrity, and equipping all members of the university with the knowledge and tools to navigate ethical dilemmas to nurture institutional integrity (Brigue & Orlu, 2023).

Furthermore, safeguarding academic freedom is paramount for maintaining the integrity of public universities, which is done by protecting faculty and students' rights to explore diverse ideas and conduct research without undue influence (Euben, 2022). To this end, universities should be able to uphold the principles of inquiry and innovation that are essential to lay the foundation for success.

Institutional Honesty and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

According to Ololube et al. (2018), institutional honesty is used to determine the effective planning and leadership of public universities. It encompasses transparency, ethical behavior, and a commitment to truthfulness in all institutional dealings (Brigue & Orlu, 2023; Miller, 2023; Cox et al. 2024). Kapur (2024) stated that when universities embrace honesty, they foster an environment of trust, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Effective planning in public universities begins with clear communication of the institution's mission and values (Cortés et al., 2022; Okeleke & Agwoje, 2023). Therefore, university leaders must ensure that these guiding principles are not only articulated but also actively reflected in decision-making processes (Agwoje & Okeleke, 2023). This alignment helps in the building of credibility and encourages buy-in from the university community, promoting a culture where everyone feels valued and heard (Ololube, 2019).

Transparency is a cornerstone of institutional honesty, as such; university leaders must be open about their decision-making processes and the criteria used for resource allocation, policy changes, and strategic initiatives (Manginte, 2024; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014). According to Ololube (2024), engaging honestly with stakeholders in meaningful discussions and inviting feedbacks from them makes universities promote a sense of

ownership and shared responsibility. This collaborative approach not only enhances trust but also leads to better-informed decisions that consider diverse perspectives.

Similarly, Brigue and Orlu (2023) saw that ethical leadership plays a critical role in promoting institutional honesty. Therefore, university leaders must model integrity, demonstrating commitment to ethical practices in both their actions and communication to advance success. Therefore, it will be safe to state that the foundation of honesty does not only enhance the university's reputation but also contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the institution in an increasingly complex educational landscape (Adree, 2023).

Institutional Authenticity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

In an era where higher education faces increasing scrutiny regarding its relevance and value, the concept of institutional authenticity has emerged as a critical consideration for public universities (Olorube, 2024). Institutional authenticity in the context of this work refers to the genuine alignment of a university's mission, values, and practices directed at the needs of its stakeholder—students, faculty, the community, and the state. Effective planning and leadership in public universities hinge on authenticity to shape their trajectory and impact. Planning within public universities must be directed at institutional authenticity to stand in an environment where the university's mission resonates with the society's values (Breznik & Law, 2019). To Marschlich and Ingenhoff (2021), institutional authenticity gives room for the engagement of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process, ensures that the educational programs, research initiatives, and community outreach efforts reflect the unique context and needs of the society and the world at large. Thus, aligning university educational objectives with society's needs should be able to maintain relevance and promote a sense of belonging among students and faculty alike (Rehman et al., 2023).

According to Srivastava and Mohale (2022), leadership plays a fundamental role in reinforcing institutional authenticity, *per se*, institutional leaders must be able to encourage a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, where all voices are valued and considered. This can only be done through successfully communicating the institution's vision effectively and by also actively listening to feedback and adapting strategies in response to stakeholder input (Baquero, 2023). In the same vein, Grandrita (2023) noted that during strategic planning sessions, leaders should be able to place in order open forums and workshops that encourage dialogue among students, faculty, and local stakeholders, and such inclusive practices can help identify gaps in programming, which highlights areas for growth, by ensuring that the university's trajectory remains responsive to societal changes.

Nonetheless, Brigue and Orlu (2023) and Jung (2022) stated that authentic leadership in public universities requires a commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility, which should be able to model integrity and advocate for policies that promote equity, access, and sustainability. Denaro (2022) emphasized that institutional authenticity involves commitment that can manifest through initiatives that address systemic

inequalities in university education, such as targeted recruitment efforts for underrepresented groups or partnerships with local schools to improve educational access. Institutional authenticity should be able to demonstrate a dedication to social justice, which leaders must not only enhance the university's authenticity but also inspire a sense of purpose and engagement among the university's community. With institutional authenticity, public universities can navigate the complexities of the contemporary needs of higher education, while still maintaining their relevance and integrity (Cox et al., 2024).

Institutional Responsibility and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, public universities bear a significant responsibility not only to their students but also to the society are large (Cauce, 2024). Universities responsibility according to Tobins and Cheta-Maclean (2023) comprises commitment to ethical governance, social equity, and community engagements that are essential in shaping effective planning and leadership strategies within the universities.

Universities have a duty to promote access to education for all, particularly in an era where socioeconomic disparities can hinder opportunities for many faculty, staff and students through effective planning (Zahari et al., 2024). Effective planning essentially involves strategies that increase enrollment and retention rates among underrepresented in society, which can be done and achieved through targeted outreach programs, scholarships, and support services designed to meet the diverse needs of students (Cosentino et al., 2019; Nwedu, 2019). Public universities that encourage inclusivity in their planning efforts fulfill their institutional responsibility and also enrich their educational environments.

According to Ololube (2024), leadership is central in public universities culture of and institutional responsibility. University leaders that champion transparency and accountability ensure that decisions are made with the best interests of all stakeholders in mind. Institutional responsibility involves actively engaging with faculty, students, and community members to gather input and feedback on key initiatives. In situations where universities involve stakeholders in budgetary decisions, it gives room for more equitable allocation of resources and enhances program benefits the entire university community (Ololube, 2019). Such collaborative leadership promotes trust and demonstrates a commitment to the institution's mission.

In addition, institutional responsibility extends beyond the campus to encompass community engagement. Public universities for instance are often viewed as cornerstones of the societies where they are established and their leadership must actively seek ways to contribute positively to local communities (Astin & Astin, 2000). University leaders can achieve this through service-learning programs, research initiatives that address the universities community challenges, and partnerships with other organizations.

Institutional Empathy and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Nigeria is characterized by rapid societal changes and increasing diversity. Public universities face the pressing challenge to foster environments that support its faculty and

students. Institutional empathy according to Ololube (2024) is the ability of an organization to understand and respond to the needs and experiences of its constituents by playing crucial role in shaping effective planning and leadership within these institutions.

Universities are established to serve the demand for high education of students from various cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds. The means or methods in which universities can effectively address these diversities are that university leadership must cultivate empathetic institutional culture (Tobins & Cheta-Maclean, 2023). According to Stewart and Jansky (2022), one of the methods universities can effectively address diversities is not by just recognizing the unique challenges faced by different faculty and student groups but by actively seeking to understand their experiences through engagement and dialogue.

Therefore, planning in public universities must be rooted in the understanding of institutional empathy. Strategic initiatives, such as the development of support services, mental health resources, and culturally relevant curricula must be able to reflect the diverse needs of the faculty and student body (Wiedermann et al., 2023). Silke et al. (2024) highlighted that universities planning that are guided by empathetic understanding must not only address academic challenges but must also promote well-being and a sense of belonging. This evidence remains strong according to Abdellatif and Al-Balushi (2021) that universities that implement mentorship programs faculty and students will always improve retention rates of faculty and students' academic success.

Effective leadership of public universities requires commitment that fosters culture of empathy across the levels of the institution. This includes training faculty and staff to recognize and address the needs of students from different backgrounds. Therefore, institutional leaders must also model empathetic behavior that demonstrates openness and willingness to adapt policies and practices in response to the evolving needs of the society (Zivkovic, 2022).

Thus, institutional empathy is an essential component of effective planning and leadership in public universities. University leaders must create environments that are not only inclusive but also supportive of all students require a holistic approach that do not only enhance the educational experiences but also prepares graduates to navigate and contribute positively to an increasingly complex and interconnected world (Ololube, 2024).

Institutional Self-discipline and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

Institutional self-discipline is the ability of universities to maintain focus on its core mission, adhere to established goals, and uphold ethical standards while navigating the complexities of higher education (Hyatt & Gruenglas, 2023). As public universities face increasing scrutiny regarding their financial sustainability, academic integrity, and social responsibilities, cultivating self-discipline becomes crucial in fostering trust and accountability (Leveille, 2006; Çelik & Razi, 2023).

Majorly, institutional self-discipline requires a clear understanding of a university's mission and values, leadership and planning. Leadership and planning in universities must articulate

a vision that nurtures academic excellence, inclusivity, and engagement (Cortés et al., 2022). When planning university's initiatives, it is essential that decisions align with foundational principles of strategic planning. In allocating resources for new programs or facilities, university leaders must ensure that the support the institution's educational goals rather than merely responding to market trends or external pressures (Mahardhika & Raharja, 2023).

Likewise, Leveille (2006) and Adeusi et al. (2024) stated that institutional self-discipline is reflected in the adherence to ethical standards and accountability measures because public universities are often funded with taxpayer money, which necessitates commitment to transparency and responsible financial management. Therefore, university leaders must implement rigorous oversight mechanisms to track expenditures, assess program effectiveness, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

To Ololube (2024), planning involves setting realistic goals and measuring progress. Institutional self-discipline encourages leaders to establish clear benchmarks and regularly evaluate outcomes. Institutional self-discipline practices do not only facilitate continuous improvement but it also allows universities to remain adaptable in the face of changing circumstances.

Furthermore, nurturing self-disciplined approaches promotes collaboration and shared responsibility within the university (de Jong et al., 2022). Amanchukwu et al. (2015) observed that universities where leaders model self-discipline, they encourage faculty, staff and students to adapt to similar practices, and create situations where everyone is committed to the institution's goals. To collaborate this idea, Abo-Khalil (2024) stated that collective commitment enhances institutional resilience and allows universities to navigate challenges more effectively. Institutional self-discipline approaches do not only enhance institutional effectiveness but also prepares faculty, staff and graduates to thrive in this rapidly changing world, which ultimately makes the public universities role as the cornerstone of society they are established.

Methods

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of the strength of character of institutions in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The research combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

The study was conducted in two phases—the first phase utilized a qualitative review of literature while the second phase involved quantitative survey to gather data on the perceptions of university stakeholders to explore their perceptions in greater depth.

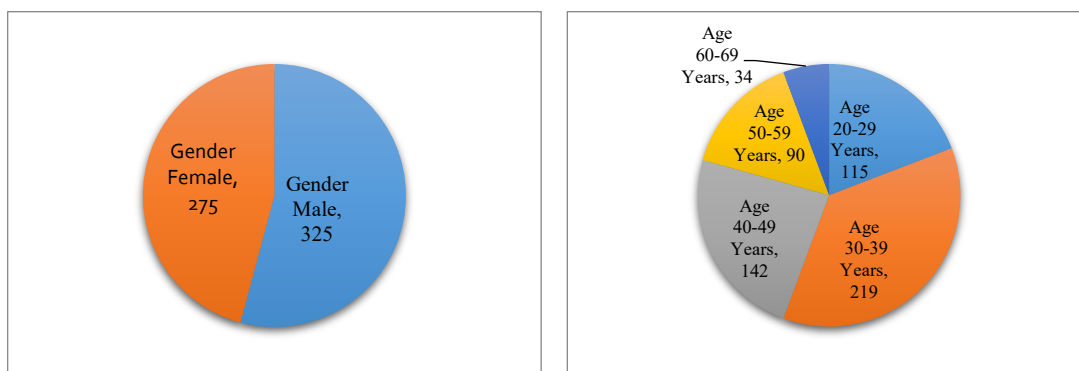
The target population includes faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students, in public universities in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different demographics and disciplines. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size determination, 600

respondents that include faculty members, non-academic staff, and doctoral students respectively.

A thirty-one item self-structured questionnaire tagged the “Strength of Character of Institutions” was developed to assess stakeholders’ perceptions of the strength of character of institutions. 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 integrity, honesty, authenticity, responsibility, empathy, and self-discipline. The Likert scale offered a unique section for respondents to express their perceptions or experiences that are related to the statements concerning what role the strength of character of institutions play in the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. 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 $\alpha = .916$ and $.887$ was obtained respectively.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The answers to the research questions were derived from the six-point Likert scale of $6+5+4+3+2+1 = 21 \div 6 = 3.50$. Any mean score of 3.50 or higher indicates agreement, while any mean score falling below 3.50 represents disagreement. On the part of the correlation analysis, Kendall’s Tau-b was employed and tested at .05 level of significance. This choice for the use of Kendall’s Tau-b was because it quantifies how well the relationship between strength of character of institutions enhance planning and leadership outcomes in universities.

Results



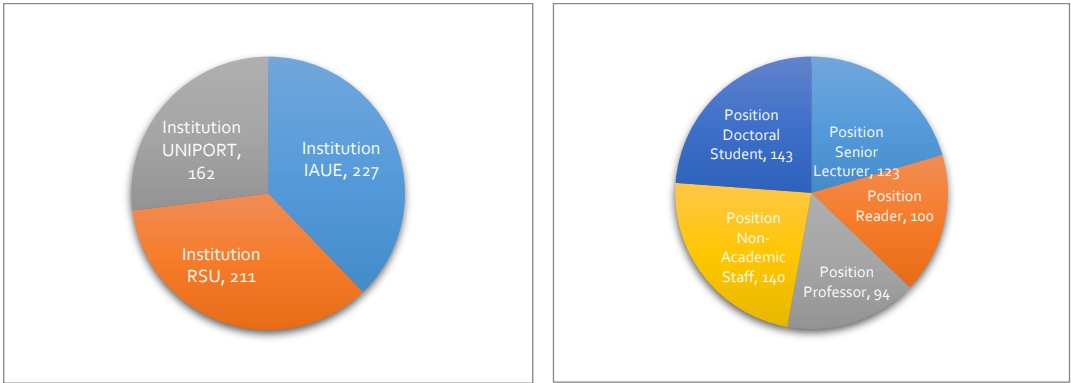


Figure 2: Pie Charts Showing Respondents Demographic Information

Figure 2 presents the pie charts demographic information of respondents from the survey titled 'Strength of Character of Institutions,' displayed in a Pie chart that categorizes the diversity of the sample population across dimensions such as gender, age, institutional affiliation, and professional roles, thereby highlighting the range of respondents' perspectives represented in the study. The gender distribution indicates that male respondents form a slight majority, comprising 54.2% (325 individuals), compared to 45.8% (275) for females, which suggests a relatively balanced gender representation among the participants, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives on institutional character. In terms of age, a considerable proportion falls within the 30-39-year age group at 36.5% (219 individuals), followed by the 40-49 age group at 23.7% (142) and the 20-29 group at 19.2% (115). This age diversity reflects a mix of perspectives, which could bring varied insights into institutional practices and character due to differing generational views. Institutional affiliation further reveals that IAUE represents the largest portion at 37.8% (227), with RSU at 35.2% (211), and UNIPORT at 27.0% (162), suggesting broad engagement from stakeholders across these institutions. In terms of professional positions, the sample is well-rounded, with doctoral students making up 23.8% (143) and non-academic staff closely following at 23.3% (140), alongside senior lecturers at 20.5% (123), readers at 16.7% (100), and professors at 15.7% (94). This variety in professional roles supports a comprehensive understanding of institutional character across different levels of academic and non-academic engagement. The range of respondents' demographic information offers a clear perspective of drawing insights from individuals at various stages of their careers with unique responsibilities, thereby enriching the assessment of institutional character.

Research Question 1: How does the role of institutional integrity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional integrity in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed respondents agreement that institutional integrity involves adhering to ethical standards, promoting transparency, and ensuring

accountability in all aspects of university life. This is reflected in the mean of 4.3500 (SD = 1.63359) for institutional integrity as a cornerstone of governance and 4.0767 (SD = 1.64782) for its role in ethical adherence. The data further underscore the importance of fostering trust within the academic community, with a mean of 4.1750 (SD = 1.56369), which is crucial for enhancing education quality and research outcomes. Transparent governance structures that engage stakeholders, including faculty and students, received a mean of 3.8200 (SD = 1.55509). Continuous training on ethics and compliance to promote a culture of integrity was rated at 4.2183 (SD = 1.51365), indicating agreement on the role of development programs in nurturing institutional integrity. With an overall grand mean of 4.1280 and a standard deviation of 1.58276, the data confirm that respondents agree on the critical role institutional integrity plays in improving leadership effectiveness and strategic planning in public universities. Based on the analyzed results, institutional integrity is considered essential for effective governance, influencing the universities' operational success, reputation, and stakeholder relationships.

Research Question 2: How does the role of institutional honesty improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses related to the role of institutional honesty in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed respondents' agreement that institutional honesty is essential for effective planning and leadership, as reflected in a mean score of 4.1283 (SD = 1.42779). Institutional honesty, which encompasses transparency, ethical behavior, and commitment to truthfulness, was rated with a mean of 3.9067 (SD = 1.54767), showing the respondents' acknowledgment of its significance. Additionally, the role of honesty in fostering an environment of trust, accountability, and collaboration among university stakeholders was underscored with a mean score of 3.9500 (SD = 1.53452). The importance of institutional honesty in building credibility and promoting a culture of inclusivity was rated at 4.0650 (SD = 1.47911). Transparency, being a fundamental element of institutional honesty, particularly in decision-making and resource allocation, received a mean score of 3.9567 (SD = 1.48834). Engaging honestly with stakeholders in discussions and feedback was rated at 4.1300 (SD = 1.57816), highlighting its role in promoting a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. With a grand mean of 4.0227 and a standard deviation of 1.50926, the data confirm that respondents agree on the crucial role institutional honesty plays in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 3: How does the role of institutional authenticity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 3 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional authenticity in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed respondents' agreement that institutional authenticity refers to the genuine alignment of a university's mission, values,

and practices with the needs of its stakeholders, as reflected in a mean score of 4.0983 (SD = 1.51740). Respondents also agreed that the alignment of educational objectives with societal needs is essential for maintaining relevance and promoting a sense of belonging among students and faculty, as shown by a mean of 3.8000 (SD = 1.59088). The role of authentic leadership, which involves a commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility, was acknowledged with a mean score of 3.6533 (SD = 1.72862). Additionally, the ability of public universities to navigate contemporary higher education needs while maintaining relevance and integrity was rated with a mean of 3.8183 (SD = 1.77499). With a grand mean of 3.8424 and a standard deviation of 1.65297, the data confirm that respondents agree on the importance of institutional authenticity in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 4: How does the role of institutional responsibility improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 4 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional responsibility in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed respondents' agreement that institutional responsibility includes a commitment to ethical governance, social equity, and community engagement, as reflected in a mean score of 4.6367 (SD = 1.74922). Respondents also acknowledged the duty of universities to promote access to education, especially in addressing socioeconomic disparities, as shown by a mean score of 3.8700 (SD = 1.74495). The importance of inclusivity in planning efforts, which enriches the educational environment, was rated with a mean of 3.8583 (SD = 1.74164). Additionally, active engagement with faculty, students, and community members for feedback on key initiatives was rated at 3.5283 (SD = 1.79012). With a grand mean of 3.9733 and a standard deviation of 1.75648, the data confirm that respondents agree on the significant role of institutional responsibility in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 5: How does the role of institutional empathy improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 5 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional empathy in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed that respondents agree that institutional empathy is essential for understanding and addressing the needs of university constituents, as reflected in the mean score of 3.9017 (SD = 1.75322). Respondents further noted that university leadership must foster an empathetic culture to address diversities effectively, with a mean score of 3.7950 (SD = 1.56857). Strategic initiatives such as support services, mental health resources, and culturally relevant curricula, reflecting the diverse needs of students and faculty, were rated with a mean of 3.6017 (SD = 1.45138). Additionally, a commitment to fostering empathy within university leadership earned a mean of 3.6783 (SD = 1.56491). Modeling empathetic behavior and adapting policies to meet societal needs

was rated with a mean of 3.6933 (SD = 1.70709), while creating inclusive and supportive environments for students, essential for preparing graduates for a complex world, had a mean of 3.8183 (SD = 1.72925). With a grand mean of 3.7480 and a standard deviation of 1.62907, the data confirm that respondents agree on the importance of institutional empathy in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Research Question 6: How does the role of institutional self-discipline improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 6 provides the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses regarding the role of institutional self-discipline in improving the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed that respondents agree on the critical importance of institutional self-discipline for effective planning and leadership, with a mean score of 4.1467 (SD = 1.84956). Respondents also recognized that self-discipline involves maintaining focus on the university's core mission, adhering to goals, and upholding ethical standards amidst the complexities of higher education, as reflected by a mean of 4.5267 (SD = 1.68345). Additionally, the role of self-discipline in helping leaders articulate a vision that fosters academic excellence, inclusivity, and engagement was rated at 4.4983 (SD = 1.69454). The importance of adhering to ethical standards and accountability measures was highlighted with a mean of 4.4083 (SD = 1.75311), while the necessity of transparency and responsible financial management in publicly funded universities was rated at 4.3883 (SD = 1.72892). Lastly, the role of nurturing self-disciplined approaches to promote collaboration and shared responsibility within the university was rated highly, with a mean of 4.5817 (SD = 1.76310). With an overall grand mean of 4.4250 and a standard deviation of 1.74544, the data confirm that respondents agree on the significant role institutional self-discipline plays in enhancing leadership and planning in public universities.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional integrity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Integrity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
1.	Institutional integrity is a cornerstone of effective governance in public universities, which influences not only their operational success but also their reputations and relationships with stakeholders.	4.3500	1.63359	Agree
2.	Institutional integrity involves adhering to ethical standards, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability in all aspects of university life.	4.0767	1.64782	Agree
3.	University integrity is vital to foster trust within the academic community and beyond, ultimately impacting the quality of education and research.	4.1750	1.56369	Agree
4.	Transparent governance structures are essential for institutional integrity. Effective leaders engage various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and community members, in planning processes.	3.8200	1.55509	Agree
5.	Continuous training and development programs on ethics and compliance are able to promote culture of integrity, and equip all members of the university with the knowledge and tools to navigate ethical dilemmas to nurture institutional integrity.	4.2183	1.51365	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.1280	1.58276	Agree

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional honesty improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Honesty and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
6.	Institutional honesty is essential for effective planning and leadership in public universities.	4.1283	1.42779	Agree
7.	Institutional honesty encompasses transparency, ethical behavior, and a commitment to truthfulness in all institutional dealings.	3.9067	1.54767	Agree
8.	When universities embrace honesty, they foster an environment of trust, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the community.	3.9500	1.53452	Agree
9.	Institutional honesty helps build credibility and encourages buy-in from the university community, promoting a culture where everyone feels valued and heard	4.0650	1.47911	Agree
10.	Transparency is a cornerstone of institutional honesty and leaders must be open about their decision-making processes and the criteria used for resource allocation, policy changes, and strategic initiatives.	3.9567	1.48834	Agree
11.	Engaging honestly with stakeholders in meaningful discussions and inviting feedbacks from them makes universities promote a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.	4.1300	1.57816	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.0227	1.50926	Agree

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional authenticity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Authenticity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
12.	Institutional authenticity refers to the genuine alignment of a university's mission, values, and practices directed at the needs of its stakeholders.	4.0983	1.51740	Agree
13.	University's educational objectives must align with society's needs and should be able to maintain relevance and promote a sense of belonging among students and faculty alike.	3.8000	1.59088	Agree
14.	Authentic leadership in public universities requires a commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility, which should be able to model integrity and advocate for policies that promote equity, access, and sustainability.	3.6533	1.72862	Agree
15.	Public universities can navigate the complexities of the contemporary needs of higher education, while still maintaining their relevance and integrity.	3.8183	1.77499	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	3.8424	1.65297	Agree

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional responsibility improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Responsibility and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
16.	Institutional responsibility encompasses commitment to ethical governance, social equity, and community engagements that are essential in shaping effective planning and leadership strategies within the universities.	4.6367	1.74922	Agree
17.	Universities have a duty to promote access to education for all, particularly in an era where socioeconomic disparities can hinder opportunities for many individuals.	3.8700	1.74495	Agree
18.	Public universities that encourage inclusivity in their planning efforts fulfill their institutional responsibility and also enrich their educational environments.	3.8583	1.74164	Agree
19.	Institutional responsibility involves actively engaging with faculty, students, and community members to gather input and feedback on key initiatives.	3.5283	1.79012	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	3.9733	1.75648	Agree

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional empathy improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Empathy and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
20.	Institutional empathy is the ability of institutions to understand and respond to the needs and experiences of its constituents by playing crucial role in shaping effective planning and leadership within the institutions.	3.9017	1.75322	Agree
21.	The means or methods in which universities can effectively address diversities are that university leadership must cultivate empathetic institutional culture.	3.7950	1.56857	Agree
22.	Strategic initiatives, such as the development of support services, mental health resources, and culturally relevant curricula must be able to reflect the diverse needs of the faculty and student body.	3.6017	1.45138	Agree
23.	Effective leadership of public universities requires commitment that fosters culture of empathy across the levels of the institution.	3.6783	1.56491	Agree
24.	Institutional leaders must model empathetic behavior that demonstrates openness and willingness to adapt policies and practices in response to the evolving needs of the society.	3.6933	1.70709	Agree
25.	University leaders who create environments that are not only inclusive but are also supportive of all students require a holistic approach that do not only enhance the educational experiences but also prepares graduates to navigate and contribute positively to an increasingly complex and interconnected world.	3.8183	1.72925	Agree
Grand Mean and SD		3.7480	1.62907	Agree

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation and variance of how the role of institutional self-discipline improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

s/n	Institutional Self-discipline and Public Universities Planning and Leadership	Mean	SD.	Remarks
26.	Institutional self-discipline in public universities is paramount for effective planning and leadership.	4.1467	1.84956	Agree
27.	Institutional self-discipline is the ability of universities to maintain focus on its core mission, adhere to established goals, and uphold ethical standards while navigating the complexities of higher education.	4.5267	1.68345	Agree
28.	Institutional self-discipline helps leaders in universities to articulate a vision that nurtures academic excellence, inclusivity, and engagement.	4.4983	1.69454	Agree
29.	Institutional self-discipline is reflected in the adherence to ethical standards and accountability measures	4.4083	1.75311	Agree
30.	Public universities are often funded with taxpayer money, which necessitates commitment to transparency and responsible financial management.	4.3883	1.72892	Agree
31.	Nurturing self-disciplined approaches promotes collaboration and shared responsibility within the university.	4.5817	1.76310	Agree
	Grand Mean and SD	4.4250	1.74544	Agree

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Institutional integrity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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

		Institutional Integrity	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Integrity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.464**	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 one, which posits that institutional integrity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership

of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .464, 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 importance of fostering institutional integrity to enhance the overall leadership and strategic direction within public universities in Rivers State, contrary to Hypothesis One, which proposed no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional integrity is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional integrity are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional integrity plays a crucial role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 2: Institutional honesty does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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

		Institutional Honesty	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Honesty	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.728**	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 two, which posits that institutional honesty does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .728, 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 critical role of institutional honesty in enhancing the overall leadership and strategic direction within public universities in Rivers State, contrary to Hypothesis Two, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional honesty is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional honesty are associated with more

effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional honesty plays a significant role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 3: Institutional authenticity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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

		Institutional Authenticity	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Authenticity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.404**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 9 presents the results from the Kendall’s Tau-b analysis of hypothesis three, which posits that institutional authenticity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .404, 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 importance of fostering institutional authenticity to enhance the overall leadership and strategic planning within public universities in Rivers State, contrary to Hypothesis Three, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional authenticity is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional authenticity are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional authenticity plays a crucial role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 4: Institutional responsibility does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 10: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional responsibility and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Responsibility	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Responsibility	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.400**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.400**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 10 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis four, which posits that institutional responsibility does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .400, 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 critical role of institutional responsibility in enhancing the overall leadership and strategic planning within public universities in Rivers State. This is contrary to Hypothesis Four, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional responsibility is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional responsibility are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional responsibility plays a crucial role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 5: Institutional empathy does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 11: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional empathy and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Empathy	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Empathy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.472 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.472 **	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 11 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis five, which posits that institutional empathy does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .472, 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 importance of institutional empathy in enhancing the overall leadership and strategic planning within public universities in Rivers State. This is contrary to Hypothesis Five, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional empathy is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional empathy are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional empathy plays a crucial role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Hypothesis 6: Institutional self-discipline does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 12: Kendall's Tau-b analysis of institutional self-discipline and the planning and leadership of public universities

		Institutional Self-Discipline	Planning and Leadership
Institutional Self-Discipline	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	600	600
Planning and Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.477**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	600	600
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 12 presents the results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis six, which posits that institutional self-discipline does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .477, 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 crucial role of institutional self-discipline in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities in Rivers State, contrary to Hypothesis Six, which suggested no significant relationship. Consequently, the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis suggests that institutional self-discipline is positively correlated with improved planning and leadership in public universities. This implies that higher levels of institutional self-discipline are associated with more effective planning and leadership practices. Thus, the data indicate that institutional self-discipline plays a critical role in shaping the planning and leadership outcomes in these institutions.

Discussion of Findings

Institutional Integrity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis one, which posited that institutional integrity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .464, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). Consequently, the rejection of the null hypothesis highlights the significant role of institutional integrity in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities. The positive correlation denotes that leaders who demonstrate integrity build trust, foster accountability, and promote ethical decision-making, all of which are essential components for successful governance in public universities.

These findings are supported by the idea of Mukoro and Ojeje (2024), who stated that transparent governance structures are essential for institutional integrity and effective leaders engage various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and community members, in planning processes. They emphasized the importance of integrity in leadership, noting its influence on decision-making processes, organizational culture, and the relationship between leaders and stakeholders. This collaborative approach raises a sense of ownership and accountability, encouraging a culture where diverse perspectives are valued. Moreover, establishing clear decision-making processes enhances trust and promotes a shared commitment to the universities mission.

According to Ololube (2024), ethical leadership is another crucial aspect that fosters institutional integrity, and leaders who model ethical behavior and decision-making, serves as role models for faculty, staff, and students. Therefore, universities that conduct regular audits evaluate their success and identify areas for improvement. These practices promote transparency and demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement. They ensure that the institution develops to response to the emerging challenges and opportunities. As asserted by Çelik and Razi (2023), some circumstances, societal norms and values has impacted the principles of institutional character, because when a nation tolerates corruption, it will be challenging for universities to uphold ethical standards.

In addition, the findings of the study is in agreement with the contention of Ololube (2017), that integrity is essential for maintaining the credibility and public image of higher education institutions. Universities led by individuals with a strong moral compass tend to perform better in terms of resource allocation, stakeholder relationships, and policy implementation (Agbor et al., 2023). Notwithstanding, the findings from this study are consistent with the broader literature of Brigue and Orlu (2023), which reinforces the idea that leadership integrity is not just desirable but necessary for public universities to achieve their strategic goals. In summary, the data strongly suggest that institutional integrity plays a critical role in shaping the leadership and planning outcomes of public universities in Rivers State, supporting the idea that integrity in leadership fosters a transparent, accountable, and ethically grounded institutional environment.

Institutional Honesty and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings of the Kendall's Tau-b analysis on hypothesis two, which explored the relationship between institutional honesty and public universities' planning and leadership, reveal a correlation coefficient (τ) of .728, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). The rejection of the null hypothesis underscores the significant role of institutional honesty in enhancing leadership and strategic planning. Leaders who exhibit honesty create an environment of transparency, fairness, and accountability, which are essential for driving institutional success. The positive correlation between institutional honesty and leadership in public universities aligned with the position of Ololube (2024), who pointed out that

engaging honestly with stakeholders in meaningful discussions and inviting feedbacks from them makes universities promote a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

Similarly, Brigue and Orlu (2023) saw that ethical leadership plays a critical role in promoting institutional honesty. They argue that when university leaders demonstrate high levels of honesty, it positively impacts stakeholders' perceptions, which leads to a more inclusive and engaged institutional environment. Therefore, university leaders must model integrity, demonstrating commitment to ethical practices in both their actions and communication to advance success. Therefore, it will be safe to state that the foundation of honesty does not only enhance the university's reputation but also contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the institution in an increasingly complex educational landscape (Adree, 2023).

The broader literature of Kapur (2024) supported the findings, stating that when universities embrace honesty, they foster an environment of trust, accountability, and collaboration among stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the community. This work aligns well with the current study's findings, emphasizing that honesty promotes transparency, which is crucial for long-term institutional success. Agbor et al. (2023) further elaborates on the benefits of honesty in university governance, by pointing out that clear communication is often a byproduct of honest leadership. Their research found that honesty facilitates equitable decision-making processes, reducing instances of conflict and mismanagement within institutions.

Ololube (2017) argued that honesty is not only essential for leadership credibility but also for maintaining public confidence in educational institutions. Universities led by honest leaders are more likely to maintain high standards of governance and are better positioned to meet their strategic goals. His research demonstrates that universities with transparent and honest leadership tend to perform better in key areas such as resource management, stakeholder relations, and policy implementation. In sum, the positive correlation between institutional honesty and leadership effectiveness, as supported by existing literature, highlights the necessity of ethical governance in the strategic management of public universities. The data suggest that honest leadership fosters an environment of ethical governance, transparency, and accountability, all of which are pivotal for effective university administration and strategic planning.

Institutional Authenticity and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis three posited that institutional authenticity does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .404, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). The rejection of the null hypothesis emphasized the critical role of institutional authenticity in enhancing leadership and strategic planning. These findings are in line with Brigue and Orlu (2023) who stated that authenticity in leadership suggests that leaders who are transparent, genuine, and consistent in their

values and actions foster an environment of trust, collaboration, and ethical governance, all of which are essential for successful institutional management.

To Marschlich and Ingenhoff (2021), institutional authenticity gives room for the engagement of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process, ensures that the educational programs, research initiatives, and community outreach efforts reflect the unique context and needs of the society and the world at large. Thus, aligning university' educational objectives with society's needs should be able to maintain relevance and promote a sense of belonging among students and faculty alike (Rehman et al., 2023).

According to Srivastava and Mohale (2022), leadership plays fundamental role in reinforcing institutional authenticity, per se, institutional leaders must be able to encourage a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, where all voices are valued and considered. This can only be done through successfully communicating the institution's vision effectively and by also actively listening to feedback and adapting strategies in response to stakeholder input (Baquero, 2023).

In the same vein, Grandita (2023) noted that during strategic planning sessions, leaders should be able to place in order open forums and workshops that encourage dialogue among students, faculty, and local stakeholders, and such inclusive practices can help identify gaps in programming, which highlights areas for growth, by ensuring that the university's trajectory remains responsive to societal changes. In summary, the findings from this study supported by broader literature, the results highlight the importance of authenticity in fostering a transparent, accountable, and ethically grounded leadership approach. Authentic leaders, by aligning their values with their actions, contribute significantly to the strategic success of public universities.

Institutional Responsibility and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of hypothesis four posited that institutional responsibility does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .400, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it highlighted the critical role of institutional responsibility in enhancing leadership and strategic planning within public universities. The correlation between institutional responsibility and leadership align with the assertion of Tobins and Cheta-Maclean (2023), who found that university responsibility comprises commitment to ethical governance, social equity, and community engagements that are essential in shaping effective planning and leadership strategies within the universities.

Institutional responsibility involves the obligations of public universities to fulfill their mission while upholding ethical, financial, and social accountability. Ananyi (2022) affirmed that teachers' responsibilities significantly impact resource accountability and utilization for promoting effective goal attainment in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Ananyi (2022) study highlighted the essential role that teachers play in ensuring resources

are efficiently managed and aligned with institutional objectives, particularly in the context of public education.

In situations where universities involve stakeholders in budgetary decisions, it gives room for more equitable allocation of resources and enhances program benefits the entire university community (Ololube, 2019). Their study emphasized that public universities, by adhering to principles of responsibility, foster an environment where planning and leadership are aligned with the core objectives of transparency, accountability, and performance. Similarly, University leaders that champion transparency and accountability ensure that decisions are made with the best interests of all stakeholders in mind.

The current study's findings resonate with this notion, reinforcing that responsibility directly contributes to the leadership effectiveness of public universities. In line with these findings, Zahari et al. (2024) argued that institutional responsibility extends beyond administrative duties to encompass a broader role in societal leadership, especially in educational settings. Leaders in universities who emphasize responsibility are more likely to integrate long-term goals with ethical governance, leading to sustainable institutional outcomes. Ololube (2024) lamented that leadership is central in public universities culture of and institutional responsibility. In summary, leaders who prioritize responsibility foster a transparent, accountable, and ethically responsible environment that positively influences the university's ability to meet its strategic objectives.

Institutional Empathy and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The results from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis three posited that institutional empathy does not significantly improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .472, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). Consequently, the rejection of the null hypothesis signifies that institutional empathy plays a crucial role in the enhancement of planning and leadership within public universities. Empathy, as a leadership quality, contributes to fostering an inclusive, supportive environment where the concerns of staff and students are acknowledged, thus enhancing overall institutional governance.

The findings align with broader assertion of Stewart and Jansky (2022), that one of the methods universities can effectively address diversities is not by just recognizing the unique challenges faced by different faculty and student groups but by actively seeking to understand their experiences through engagement and dialogue. Empathy is seen as a critical trait in contemporary leadership because it encourages open communication and collaboration, leading to better decision-making processes. The means or methods in which universities can effectively address these diversities are that university leadership must cultivate empathetic institutional culture (Tobins & Cheta-Maclean, 2023).

The positive correlation in this study indicated that when leaders in public universities demonstrate empathy, they are likely to cultivate a more harmonious environment, thus facilitating improved strategic planning and leadership. Mayer et al. (2020) highlighted that

empathetic leaders are better at understanding and addressing the needs of their followers, which is essential for conflict resolution and effective management. Furthermore, Ololube (2017) argued that empathy contributes significantly to improving organizational culture by ensuring that all members of the academic community feel heard and understood. When university leaders are empathetic, they are more likely to engage in participatory decision-making, creating an environment where various stakeholders are involved in shaping institutional strategies.

This leads to more inclusive and effective leadership practices, which this study's findings affirm. Silke et al. (2024) highlighted that universities planning that are guided by empathetic understanding must not only address academic challenges but must also promote well-being and a sense of belonging. This evidence remains strong according to Abdellatif and Al-Balushi (2021) that universities that implement mentorship programs faculty and students will always improve retention rates of faculty and students' academic success. Institutional empathy enhances strategic planning by fostering trust, open communication, and collaboration among stakeholders, thus contributing to the overall success of public universities in Rivers State.

Institutional Self-discipline and Public Universities Planning and Leadership

The findings from the Kendall's Tau-b analysis of Hypothesis six posited that institutional self-discipline does not significantly enhance the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The results revealed a correlation coefficient (τ) of .477, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results demonstrated that institutional self-discipline is a critical factor in improving leadership and planning outcomes within public universities. Self-discipline in leadership fosters a structured and principled approach to governance, which is essential for effective strategic planning.

The findings of this study aligned with the literature of Leveille (2006) and Adeusi et al. (2024) who stated that institutional self-discipline is reflected in the adherence to ethical standards and accountability measures because public universities are often funded with taxpayer money, which necessitates commitment to transparency and responsible financial management. Therefore, university leaders must implement rigorous oversight mechanisms to track expenditures, assess program effectiveness, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

Amanchukwu et al. (2015) observed that universities where leaders model self-discipline, they encourage faculty, staff and students to adapt to similar practices, and create situations where everyone is committed to the institution's goals. To collaborate this idea, Abo-Khalil (2024) stated that collective commitment enhances institutional resilience and allows universities to navigate challenges more effectively. Sonmez and Adiguzel (2020) asserted that leaders who exhibit high levels of self-discipline tend to create environments

characterized by focus, accountability, and consistency, which are vital for organizational success.

In the situation of public universities, this means that leaders with self-discipline can set clear goals, manage resources effectively, and ensure that institutional objectives are met. Such disciplined leadership ultimately enhances the planning process by ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards common goals. The study's results corroborate this view, indicating that self-discipline in leadership positively impacts the broader planning and leadership dynamics within public universities. Therefore, the evidence strongly suggests that institutional self-discipline is a pivotal factor in enhancing the planning and leadership capabilities of public universities in Rivers State. Leaders who embody self-discipline contribute to a culture of accountability, resilience, and focus, which are essential for effective governance and strategic planning.

Conclusion

Institutional character that is defined by values such as integrity, accountability, transparency, self-discipline and dedication to academic excellence directly influences the effectiveness of university leadership. Strong institutions foster environment where strategic planning aligns with long-term educational goals, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and that quality education is provided. Leadership that is underpinned by these values, cultivates a culture of collaboration, encourages innovation, and attracts both faculty and students committed to achieving institutional objectives.

The character of public universities has a significant impact on their ability to navigate challenges such as funding constraints, infrastructural deficits, and changing policy landscapes. Leaders who emphasize ethical conduct and inclusive decision-making are better equipped to address issues and to implement sustainable solutions. Strong institutional character enhances the reputation of universities, making them more attractive to both local and international stakeholders, including potential students, researchers, and funding partners.

Recommendations

From the findings obtained in this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Institutional leaders should encourage integrity amongst stakeholders to further improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should promote honesty in order to advance improved planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should raise the spirit authenticity improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should support responsibility to further improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

- Institutional leaders should encourage empathy amongst stakeholders to advance the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Institutional leaders should promote self-discipline in stakeholders to further improve the planning and leadership of public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Generalizability and Limitation of the Study

The study's findings may have limited generalizability beyond Rivers State due to its focus on a specific geographical and cultural context. However, the differences in socio-economic, environmental, and infrastructural biases across regions may influence the applicability of the results elsewhere. Nonetheless, the sample size and demographic characteristics might not represent broader population but it represents its scope and context from where the study was carried out. Therefore, future research could address these limitations by conducting comparative studies across multiple regions to capture diverse perspectives. Longitudinal studies could also explore changes over time, while incorporating mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insights into underlying factors. Expanding the scope to include varied contexts enhances the robustness and relevance of findings.

References

- Abdellatif, H., & Al-Balushi, M. (2021). Correlation between enrollment of students in mentoring program and their academic achievements: A Cross-sectional study. *Cureus*, 13(11), e19477. Doi: [10.7759/cureus.19477](https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.19477).
- Abo-Khalil, A. G. (2024). Integrating sustainability into higher education challenges and opportunities for universities worldwide. *Heliyon*, 10(9). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29946>.
- Adeniyi, D. S. (2022). Ethical Considerations in the Nigerian Public Service and Governance. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, VI(VII), 639-641.
- Adeusi, K. B., Jejenewa, T. O., & Jejenewa, T. O. (2024). Advancing financial transparency and ethical governance: Innovative cost management and accountability in higher education and industry. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*, 6(5), 1533-1546. DOI: 10.51594/ijmer.v6i5.1099.
- Adree, B. (2023). The Role Of Ethical Leadership In Fostering Organizational Trust And Integrity. *ISAR Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 1(1), 9-12.
- Agbor, C. N., Ololube, N. P., & Cheta-Maclean, S. (2023). Institutional leadership practices in situations and the use of alternatives in policy analysis in Nigerian teacher education systems. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 5(1), 85-109.
- Agwoje, S. E., & Okeleke, M. C. (2023). Institutional leadership and the management of change in the 21st century university education. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 5(4), 393-417.
- Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. *Management*, 5(1), 6-14.
- Ananyi, S. O. (2022). *Resources accountability and utilization for goal attainment in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State*. Unpublished M.Ed Dissertation. Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.

- Astin, A. W., & Astin, H. S. (2000). *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*. W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- Bamiro, O. A. (2024). Enhancing the quality of institutional leadership and governance of Nigerian universities towards sustainable management and optimal performance. Paper developed for the Retreat for all Principal Officers, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments and Heads of Units and other Senior members of staff of the Elizade University, held at Faculty of Law Complex of the University, 3rd April 2024.
- Baquero, A. (2023). Authentic leadership, employee work engagement, trust in the leader, and workplace well-being: A moderated mediation model. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 16, 1403-1424. Doi: [10.2147/PRBM.S407672](https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S407672).
- Breznik, K., & Law, K. (2019). What do mission statements reveal about the values of top universities in the world? *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27(5), 1362-1375. DOI: [10.1108/IJOA-08-2018-1522](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-08-2018-1522).
- 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.
- Cauce, A. M. (2024). The role of universities in catalyzing social change. <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/the-role-of-universities-in-catalyzing-social-change>.
- Çelik, Ö., & Razi, S. (2023). Facilitators and barriers to creating a culture of academic integrity at secondary schools: an exploratory case study. *International Journal of Education Integrity*, 19(4), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-023-00125-4>.
- Chanda C. T., & Lufeyo, C. (2024). Leadership for Sustainable Development in Africa: A Comprehensive Perspective. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 5(2), 2395-2410.
- Cortés, J. D., Rivera, L., & Carbonell, K. B. (2022). Mission statements in universities: Readability and performance. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 28(2), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iiedeen.2021.100183>.
- Cosentino, C., Fortson, J., Liuzzi, S., Harris, A., & Blair, R. (2019). Can scholarships provide equitable access to high-quality university education? Evidence from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 71, 102089. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.102089>.
- Cox, D., Boaks, J., & Levine, M. (2024). Integrity and the University. *Philosophy of Management*, 23, 109-124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-023-00243-6>.
- Daniel-Ozah, L. (2024). Morality in educational leadership as a correlate for institutional management in Rivers State. *International Journal of Economics, Environmental Development and Society*, 5(2), 180-200.
- de Jong, L., Meirink, J., & Admiraal, W. (2022). School-based collaboration as a learning context for teachers: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 112, 101927. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.101927>.
- Dei, G. E. (2024). Educational leadership for institutional transformation and upliftment in public universities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 17(1), 127-142.
- Denaro, K., Dennin, K., Dennin, M., & Sato, B. (2022). Identifying systemic inequity in higher education and opportunities for improvement. *PLoS One*, 17(4), e0264059. Doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0264059.
- Eden, C. A., Chisom, O. N., & Adeniyi, I. S. (2024). Cultural competence in education: Strategies for fostering inclusivity and diversity awareness. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, 6(3), 383-392.
- Euben, D. R. (2022). Academic freedom of individual professors and higher education institutions: The current legal landscape. American Association of University Professors. <https://www.aaup.org/issues/academic-freedom/professors-and-institutions>.

- Grandrita, D. M. (2023). Improving Strategic Planning: The Crucial Role of Enhancing Relationships between Management Levels. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(10), DOI: [10.3390/admsci13100211](https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13100211).
- Hyatt, J., & Gruenglas, J. (2023). Ethical Considerations in Organizational Conflict. *IntechOpen*. Doi: 10.5772/intechopen.1002645.
- Jung, J. Y. (2022). The Effect of Authentic Leadership of Deans and Directors on Sustainable Organizational Commitment at Universities: Mediated by Organizational Culture and Trust. *Sustainability*, 14, 11051. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141711051>.
- Kapur, R. (2024). Academic honesty: Essential in achievement of educational goals. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382640476_Academic_Honesty_Essential_in_Achievement_of_Educational_Goals.
- Leveille, D. E. (2006). *Accountability in higher education: A public agenda for trust and cultural change*. Center for Studies in Higher Education.
- Mahardhika, B. N., & Raharja, S. (2023). The importance of strategic planning with modern trends in education. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(2), 1807-1820.
- Manginte, 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>.
- Marschlich, S., & Ingenhoff, D. (2021). Stakeholder engagement in a multicultural context: The contribution of (personal) relationship cultivation to social capital. *Public Relations Review*, 47(4), 102091. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2021.102091>.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2020). Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings, and Implications. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(3), 197-215. DOI: [10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02).
- 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).
- Mukoro, A. S., & Ojeje, M. (2024). Leadership integrity framework for improving university governance in Nigeria: Promoting stability and innovation. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 6(2), 251-262.
- Nafi, N. B., & Kamaluddin, A. (2019). Good Governance and Integrity: Academic Institution Perspective. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(3). DOI: [10.5430/ijhe.v8n3p1](https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n3p1).
- Nguyen, B., & Crossan, M. (2022). Character-Infused Ethical Decision Making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 178, 171-191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04790-8>.
- Nwafor, I. N., & Ololube, N. P. (2024). The impact of bureaucratic structures on the performance of school principals in public secondary schools. *International Journal of Environment, Engineering and Education*, 6(2), 96-106. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55151/ijeedu.v6i2.135>.
- Nwedu, C. N. (2019). Strategies and Opportunities for Student Recruitment and Retention in African Universities: Lessons from Western Universities. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Research*, 1(2), 1-9.
- Okeleke, M. C., & Agwoje, S. E. (2023). Leaders strategic planning method and effective management of public universities in the south-south region of Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Environmental Development and Society*, 4(4), 412-435.
- Ololube, N. P. (2017). *Educational management, planning and supervision: model for effective implementation (2nd Edition)*. Pearl Publishers.
- 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.
- Ololube, N. P., Elechi, S. K., & Uriah, O. A. (2018). Educational leadership and management (ELM): Institutional leaders value functions for effective management of universities. In N. P. Ololube (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of institutional leadership, policy and management* (pp. 111-133). Pearl Publications.

- Rehman, N., Huang, X., Andleeb, I., & Iqbal, M. (2023). Sense of belonging and retention in higher education: An empirical study across Chinese universities. *Brazilian Journal of Education, Technology and Societ*, 16(4), 1067-1082. DOI: [10.14571/brajets.v16.n4.1067-1082](https://doi.org/10.14571/brajets.v16.n4.1067-1082)
- Schnackenberg, A. K., & Tomlinson, E. C. (2014). Organizational transparency: A new perspective on managing trust in organization-stakeholder relationships. *Journal of Management*, 42(7), 1-56. DOI: [10.1177/0149206314525202](https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314525202).
- Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Silke, C., Davitt, E., Flynn, N., Shaw, A., Brady, B., Murray, C., & Dolan, P. (2024). Activating Social Empathy: An evaluation of a school-based social and emotional learning programme. *Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy*, 3, 100021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sel.2023.100021>.
- Sonmez, C. F., & Adiguzel, Z. (2020). Analysis of leader effectiveness in organization and knowledge sharing behavior on employees and organization. *Sage Open*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020914634>.
- Srivastava, U., & Mohale, S. (2022). Role of trust in the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Indian bank employees. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 12, 616-664. doi: [10.4236/ajibm.2022.124033](https://doi.org/10.4236/ajibm.2022.124033).
- Stewart, T. T., & Jansky, T. A. (2022). Novice teachers and embracing struggle: Dialogue and reflection in professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education: Leadership and Professional Development*, 1, 100002. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tatelp.2022.100002>.
- Tobins, G. N. A., & Cheta-Maclean, S. (2023). Institutional leaderships and corporate social responsibility for sustainability. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 5(3), 309-319.
- Wiedermann, C. J., Barbieri, V., Plagg, B., Marino, P., Piccoliori, G., & Engl, A. (2023). Fortifying the Foundations: A Comprehensive Approach to Enhancing Mental Health Support in Educational Policies Amidst Crises. *Healthcare (Basel)*, 11(10):1423. doi: 10.3390/healthcare11101423.
- Zahari, A. I., Said, J., Muhamad, N., & Ramly, S. M. (2024). Ethical culture and leadership for sustainability and governance in public sector organisations within the ESG framework. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 10(1), 100219, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100219>.
- Zivkovic, S. (2022). Empathy in leadership: How it enhances effectiveness. 10th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development and 10th International OFEL Conference "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Essence of Organisational Well-Being". Held 01-02 April, 2022 at At: Dubrovnik, Croatia https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361952690_Empathy_in_Leadership_How_it_Enhances_Effectiveness.