



# Educational Leadership for Institutional Transformation and Upliftment in Public Universities in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This paper explored the role of educational leadership in bringing about institutional transformation in Nigerian universities. The paper provided a general overview of the topic, including a brief literature review. Also, it states the purpose of the paper on how educational leadership enhance institutional transformation and upliftment. Such as building a strong foundation, developing and implementing professional development programmes for lecturers, promoting equity and access to education, developing curricula and standards for schools, etc. Drawing on literature and case studies, the paper outlines the key challenges faced by educational leaders which include; financial pressures, delayed visionary planning, another challenge is the need for change management and others, as well as the strategies they can use to overcome these challenges. The paper concluded that educational leadership for institutional transformation and upliftment in public universities in Nigeria is a complex and challenging task. It requires leaders to create a shared vision and mission, measure and evaluate progress, and build a supportive organizational culture. With strong leadership, public universities in Nigeria can continue to grow and improve, providing quality education for all. The paper, therefore, suggested that educational leaders must focus on developing a clear vision and mission, as well as monitoring and steering the transformation process. They must also build strong relationships with government officials and other stakeholders, and create a culture of accountability.

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Institutional Transformation, Upliftment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership can be defined as the process of guiding and managing an educational institution, to promote student success and achieve the institution's goals. Educational leaders can include people such as vice-chancellors, registrars, directors, deans, and heads of departments (Cloete & Bunting, 2001). For example, we could talk about the challenges facing these universities, such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and low student retention rates. The role of educational leaders in developing and implementing effective policies cannot be overemphasized. For example, educational leaders can work with other stakeholders to develop policies that address key issues, such as student retention, teacher recruitment and retention, and school safety. Educational leaders can also ensure that policies are effectively implemented, by providing adequate training and support to staff, monitoring compliance, and evaluating the impact of policies.

Educational leaders can identify areas where additional resources, such as financial resources, human resources, and material resources, are needed. They can then work to secure and allocate these resources effectively and efficiently (Stone et al., 2020). This can include advocating for additional funding, developing partnerships with external organizations, and making strategic decisions about how to use resources. The current state of education in Nigeria is characterized by low literacy rates, high dropout rates, and inadequate infrastructure. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the literacy rate in Nigeria is only 62%, meaning that over a third of the population is illiterate. The primary school completion rate is also low, at just 52%. In addition, many schools lack basic infrastructure, such as electricity, water, and sanitation facilities. These conditions make it difficult for students to learn and lecturers to teach effectively.

Educational leaders in Nigeria face some challenges, including inadequate funding and lack of qualified lecturers. Many educational leaders have worked to improve the quality of education by advocating for increased funding from the government, implementing teacher training programmes, and developing new curricula. For example, the University of Ibadan has implemented several reforms to improve the quality of education, such as increasing the number of qualified faculty and developing new courses (Ogunyinka et al., 2015). Another example is the University of Lagos, which has worked to address the issue of inadequate infrastructure by developing partnerships with private organizations and international donors. These partnerships have allowed the university to improve its facilities, including computer labs, libraries, and classrooms. Additionally, the university has implemented many strategies to improve the retention of students, such as providing financial assistance and mentoring programmes.

In Nigeria, many students are not fully engaged in their education, which can lead to poor academic performance and dropping out of school. Educational leaders can promote student engagement by implementing strategies such as personalized learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning (Asikhia, 2010). For example, the American University of Nigeria has implemented a project-based learning programme, in which students work on real-world projects with local organizations. Educational leaders play a crucial role in developing and implementing effective policies, implementing best practices, and allocating resources to areas of need. They can also create a positive school climate and culture that promotes student learning and development. These strategies can also be used to promote student retention and success. One example is the use of mentoring programmes, which can provide students with the support and guidance they need to stay in school and succeed. For example, the Ahmadu Bello University in

Zaria has implemented a mentoring programme for first-year students, which has helped to improve retention rates (Adegbamigbe, 2018). Additionally, the university has developed an academic support centre, which provides tutoring and other services to students who need extra help.

Therefore, managing change involves identifying needs, planning, implementing plans and evaluating the success of the change. In the changing process, leaders play a key role in managing the change. They facilitate each element of the change process and look for opportunities to delegate to make their staff involved in the change process. Transforming education requires a significant increase in investment in quality education, and a strong foundation in comprehensive education, and must be underpinned by strong political commitment, sound planning, and robust evidence based on functional educational leadership (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). Educational leadership is built on the premise of constructing and applying knowledge in ways that make a positive difference. Through collaboration and communication, professionals in educational leadership work with diverse communities and build partnerships to promote positive outcomes by setting and meeting transformative goals.

While many educational leadership professionals have advanced degrees and can work in academic settings, they are practitioners who work in applied positions. By connecting theory to real-world projects and contexts, educational leaders take a comprehensive, evidence-based, relational approach to problem-solving. Educational leadership are also often referred to administrative positions in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities. Many educational leadership professionals work as principals or vice principals, instructional coordinators, and academic deans (White-Smith, 2012). These individuals help to meet the needs of students, families, and teachers so that each person has the opportunity to reach their goals and experience positive outcomes. Improving efficiency, effectiveness and value for money has become the top priority for institutional transformation. Transformational leaders know how to encourage, inspire and motivate employees to perform in ways that create meaningful change. The result is an engaged workforce that's empowered to innovate and help shape an organization's future success (Yoganandham, 2022).

Because of the several challenges faced by the universities, there are calls for a major transformation to repair challenges and enhance our capacity to act together for a more sustainable and just future. They must ensure the right to lifelong learning by providing all learners of all ages in all contexts the knowledge and skills they need to realize their full potential and live with dignity (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). Education can no longer be limited to a single period of one's lifetime. Everyone, starting with the most marginalized and disadvantaged in our societies, must be entitled to learning opportunities throughout life both for employment and personal agency. A new social contract for education must unite us around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge and innovation needed to shape a better world anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022). The educational system is majorly influenced by the communication, exchange of ideas, funding and research of scholars and the government. It is worthy of note that these pertain to only public schools and universities. It is on this premises that this paper examined educational leadership for institutional transformation and upliftment.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### Educational Leadership

Every year schools are looking for ways to improve their system and provide students with the best possible education, which is where good education leadership comes into play. Surprisingly enough, many people involved in their local educational system are uncertain as to what defines educational leadership. Education leadership is a combined process that utilizes the forces, knowledge and talents of teachers, parents and teachers to improve not just the quality of education but also the education system itself (Mishra et al., 2020). An educational leader serves as a guide and influences other educators in an administrative setting. In some cases, it may be a team of educational leaders. Leaders in these executive roles work toward finding ways to improve learning and to improve the process of educating students. They serve in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions as well as early childhood education centres. School site leaders, directors, principals, and assistant administrators are employed to work either as the sole educational leader or in small teams.

The primary purpose of educational leadership is to ensure academic success through process, material and training improvements (Mulford et al., 2005). This is mainly accomplished through collaboration with different individuals, such as educators, parents, students, public policymakers and the public. From a business perspective, educational leadership is a form of academic management and quality control. Educational leadership is centred on certain key principles. First, educational leadership creates a vision of academic success for all students (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020). This is important because there has always been a historical gap between students on different socioeconomic levels and high and low-achieving students. Second, educational leadership strives to maintain a safe and receptive learning environment. That is, a healthy school environment is key to providing comfortable, orderly and structured classrooms. Third, educational leadership delegates responsibility to others. This means that teachers, parents and even students are empowered to take responsibility and accept accountability. Fourth, instructional methods and curriculum content must be continually improved. Fifth, the field of education must borrow and adapt modern management tools, processes and techniques (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2020).

Here are the roles of educational leadership:

- Create a vision of academic success for all students regardless of socioeconomic levels
- Aspire to maintain a responsive, healthy and safe learning environment
- Delegate responsibility to everyone involved
- Improve curriculum content and instructional methods
- Education systems obtain and adapt current management tools and techniques

Educational leadership includes the principal, vice principal, dean of students or faculty, college provost, supervisor or director, instructional coordinator, university vice-chancellor, Registrar, etc (Oleszewski et al., 2012). This individual (educational leadership) is responsible for shaping, outlining, and guiding the educational mission of a particular educational institution. They set the tone of high expectations and standards for the entire student body and work to shape an environment that is conducive to the success of every student. Until approximately thirty years ago, educational leaders were seen as managers, and the standards of excellence were largely

reserved for students deemed to be worthy of a college education. By shifting the role of the educational leadership to a more active and invested one, the expectation of maximum achievement of excellence on the part of every student became a primary tool for school success (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Today, they are also charged with the responsibility of creating an environment that allows both children and adults to focus primarily on the activity of learning.

This entails creating a space that is safe and nurturing, a positive and trusting environment in which each student or teacher can focus on meeting the highest standards and giving their best. So-called soft skills required are the ability to connect with the student body and the faculty, to invest time and energy in structural problem solving, to apply available resources to enrich the school environment, to discern which outside factors may be causing problems, and work with other individuals in both the educational system and the wider community to solve these issues (Tan, 2021). Effective educational leaders are those who take involvement in the community seriously. Both within the learning environment and in the broader human community, these individuals work to solidify relationships, deepen investments in educational excellence, and minimize student and teacher isolation. They draw all shareholders together and encourage them to focus their energy towards a common goal the success and well-being of all students and the achievement of consistently high standards.

More than simply managing resources and situations, they actively work to shape them and promote a greater sense of connection between school and community. They facilitate smooth functionality for student activities and endeavours and act as a liaison between the government and members of the larger community. Additionally, while enforcing the rules, they may engage with students and their guardians to resolve behavioural issues, maintain the systems for attendance, ensure the enactment of the school plans for academic achievement, continuously monitor the performance of these plans as they relate to standards set by local, state, or federal guidelines, and many more regulatory tasks (Jennings, 2010). They also implement teacher training opportunities mostly organised by the government or any Non-Government organization (NGO) to ensure that educators have all the tools they need to effectively educate their students. This particular domain also includes conferences, learning modules, certifications, and other opportunities for educator enrichment. In essence, while they are tasked with ensuring the education of students, they also oversee the education, support, and advancement of faculty.

### **Institutional Transformation and Upliftment**

Institutional transformation means a profound change within an institution which, as a consequence, also affects the outside environment (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Institutional transformation is a process by which the culture within the system is remodelled through a change in its behaviours and processes. Policies that promote diversity and equity among the ranks of faculty often are reshaped and fostered within the university community to cultivate a world-class, broadly inclusive institution. Transforming an institution is by changing laws, or challenging dominant norms, and, likely, the scope for social action and the shape of social relations will also shift. It furthermore encompasses changes in the basic values and beliefs that are dominant in a certain institution, as well as changes in the rules and regulations that lead to certain working results. Processes of change within institutions occur continuously due to their changing environment, thus creating new demands or incentives for change (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). This change happens either unintentionally (thereby risking inefficiency), or in a planned and coordinated way, with executives acting as managers and coordinators. Today

change management has become a professional field for internal actors, consultants and academics (Pundyke, 2020).

In considering the transformative potential of institutional interventions, however, it is important to be modest about the capacity of any institution, or any institutional design, to predictably control human behaviour (Celermajer et al., 2019). Education institutions need to undertake institutional transformation to understand whether they are having the impact that will outlast leadership transitions and become hard-wired into institutional routines and norms. They must also begin to explore ways to leverage collective impact so that discrete and hoarded programmes addressing common challenges can pool their knowledge and resources and increase their overall efficacy. Yet, most initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of under-served groups do not track indicators of improvement at the level of institutional practice or policy or encourage a focus on collective impact. Building on this tradition, the papers sought to explore how educational leadership enhances institutional transformation and upliftment.

### **How Does Educational Leadership Enhance Institutional Transformation and Upliftment?**

The role of educational leadership has become increasingly complex in recent years and they must simultaneously assume roles as academics, crisis managers, politicians, fundraisers, public relations experts, etc. (Hendrickson et al., 2013). Given the rigour and pressure of such a crucial role, institutions seeking a transformational change of any kind must be a core focus. Educational leadership must therefore set the tone and vision for institutional success and wield considerable influence over the operations of the institution. Education institutions are constantly facing internal and external pressures to adapt and change to improve student and institutional success and keep their competitive advantage. However, for some time, education institutions have continued to grapple with their ability to become agents of change in society as budgets are cut, significant leadership transitions occur, and the needs of tomorrow's learners are constantly evolving (Rodriguez et al., 2015).

Educational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing institutional transformation and upliftment. Educational leaders have the responsibility of creating and implementing effective educational policies, fostering a positive learning environment, and promoting continuous improvement within educational institutions. In other words, educational leadership refers to the process of guiding, influencing, and directing individuals or groups towards achieving educational goals and objectives. Effective educational leadership is essential for transforming institutions and uplifting them to higher standards of learning and achievement. It involves various aspects such as vision setting, collaborative decision-making, resource allocation, and building strong relationships within the educational community:

**Vision Setting and Strategic Planning:** An essential component of educational leadership is vision setting and strategic planning. Educational leaders are responsible for developing a clear and compelling vision that guides the institution towards its desired future. A well-defined vision establishes the direction and purpose of the institution and helps align the efforts of all stakeholders towards a common goal. It serves as a roadmap for institutional transformation and upliftment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Educational leaders must effectively communicate this vision and create buy-in from all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members.

For instance, In Nigeria, a great example of vision setting and strategic planning in education is the UBE (Universal Basic Education) programme, which was launched in 1999. The UBE programme aimed to achieve universal basic education by 2015 through a range of initiatives, including expanding access to quality education, improving teacher training, and increasing investment in infrastructure and resources. A key element of the UBE programme was the development of a strategic plan, which set out a clear roadmap for achieving its objectives. The plan included specific targets and timelines and was regularly reviewed and updated to ensure progress was being made. In other words, the UBE programme has made a positive impact on access to education and the quality of teaching and learning in Nigeria.

**Building a Positive Learning Environment:** Educational leadership also involves creating and maintaining a positive learning environment within the institution. A positive learning environment is characterized by a safe, inclusive, and supportive culture that promotes academic achievement and personal growth. Educational leaders play a crucial role in setting the tone for the institution and fostering a climate of trust, respect, and collaboration (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Effective leaders ensure that policies and practices are in place to address the diverse needs of all students, provide access to quality resources and facilities, and promote equity and social justice.

For instance in Nigeria, one of the key initiatives for creating a positive learning environment has been the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs). These committees are responsible for ensuring that schools are safe, well-resourced, and supportive of student learning. They also help to engage parents and the community in the school's work and ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of students. SBMCs have been instrumental in improving school environments and promoting a culture of learning in many parts of Nigeria.

**Promoting Continuous Improvement:** Educational leadership is critical for promoting continuous improvement in educational institutions. Effective leaders utilize data-driven decision-making, assess current practices, and identify areas for improvement. They develop and implement strategies to address these areas and ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the improvement process (Leithwood et al., 2008). Educational leaders promote a culture of continuous learning and professional development, encouraging faculty and staff to enhance their skills and knowledge. By promoting a growth mindset and a commitment to lifelong learning, leaders can uplift the entire institution.

A prime example of promoting continuous improvement in education in Nigeria is the Sokoto State Government's Quality Assurance and Standardisation (QAS) programme. The QAS programme aims to improve the quality of education by developing and implementing standards and benchmarks for schools, monitoring progress, and providing feedback and support. The programme has helped to improve teaching and learning practices, curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment. It has also resulted in an increased number of students sitting for external examinations and achieving higher scores. The success of the QAS programme highlights the importance of educational leadership in driving continuous improvement.

**Collaboration and Team Building:** Collaboration and team building are essential elements of educational leadership. Effective leaders foster a collaborative culture within the institution, encouraging all stakeholders to contribute their expertise and opinions. This collaborative approach leads to shared decision-making, mutual accountability, and a sense of ownership

among all members of the educational community (Bryk et al., 2010). By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, leaders enhance institutional transformation and upliftment, making it more likely that decisions are well-informed and supported by the entire community.

A great example of collaboration and team building in the Nigerian education system is the Edo State Government's Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) Programme. The BEST programme aims to improve the quality of education through partnerships with teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. Through these partnerships, the programme has been able to achieve significant progress in improving teaching and learning, increasing enrollment rates, and developing effective leadership structures. It has also been successful in increasing community engagement and promoting ownership of education at the local level. This demonstrates the value of collaboration and team building in educational leadership.

**Resource Allocation and Management:** Educational leaders must effectively allocate and manage resources to support institutional transformation and upliftment. They ensure that resources, including finances, facilities, and personnel, are distributed equitably and aligned with the institution's goals and priorities. Effective leaders develop systems for monitoring and evaluating resource allocation to ensure that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively (Senge, 2006). They also advocate for additional resources when necessary, recognizing the importance of adequate funding and support to achieve desired outcomes.

One example of resource allocation and management in the Nigerian education system is the Bayelsa State Government's School-Based Management Initiative (SBMI). Under the SBMI, funds are allocated directly to schools, giving administrators more control over the resources they receive. This has enabled schools to address specific needs and improve the quality of education. The initiative has also resulted in increased accountability and transparency, as schools are required to submit reports on the use of funds. This example demonstrates the importance of effective resource management in educational leadership.

**Relationship Building and Partnerships:** Educational leadership involves building strong relationships with various stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members. By establishing these relationships, leaders create a sense of belonging and shared ownership within the institution. They collaborate with external stakeholders, such as businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies, to create partnerships that enhance institutional transformation and upliftment (DiPaola & Hoy, 2011). These partnerships provide additional resources, expertise, and support, enabling the institution to offer unique educational opportunities and expand its reach.

For example, in Bayelsa State, the government has formed partnerships with various organizations to support the implementation of the SBMI. For example, the state government has partnered with the African Development Bank to provide training for school administrators and staff on school-based management practices. The state has also partnered with UNICEF to improve teaching and learning through the provision of materials, equipment, and facilities. These partnerships have enabled the state to better manage resources and enhance the quality of education.

**Building a Strong Foundation:** How each institution navigates transformation efforts varies due to institutional culture, previous change efforts, resources, goals, and timelines. However, the driving factors behind the need for transformational change are often parallel. Changes



within an institution can occasionally be spurred solely by the realization of an opportunity for growth and improvement. However, educational institutions will have to position themselves to react to developments versus using strategic foresight to anticipate future developments. It is indisputable that to endure, education institutions are required to shift in significant ways, especially amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing social uprisings against pervasive systemic racism (Pelletier et al., 2022). With the ongoing challenges facing educational institutions, there ought to be a significant shift in how institutional leaders define and discuss student success. There is a need for empathy across educational institutions for what students experience both inside and outside the classroom and how their experiences affect their overall performance as a student at an institution. Shifting student demographics, needs, and learning preferences has driven institutions to reprioritize, adapt, and, sometimes, completely alter the ways they meet students where they are.

**Developing and implementing professional development programmes for lecturers:** These programmes can help lecturers improve their teaching methods and use new technologies in the classroom. For example, the University of Ilorin has developed a professional development programme for faculty members, which includes workshops, seminars, and online courses. Professional development programmes can not only benefit lecturers but can also have a positive impact on student learning. When lecturers are allowed to learn new teaching methods and use new technologies, they can bring those skills and knowledge into the classroom and improve the quality of instruction. This can lead to improved student engagement, motivation, and achievement.

**Promoting equity and access to education:** In Nigeria, many groups of people face barriers to accessing quality education, such as people living in rural areas, people with disabilities, and people from low-income families. Educational leaders can work to address these barriers by developing policies and programmes that promote equity and access. For example, the National Open University of Nigeria has developed a distance learning programmes that allows students to paper from their homes, regardless of their location (Opeyemi, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic is also an example which had a major impact on education, and it has highlighted the importance of using technology to provide educational opportunities. The increased use of technology has allowed universities to reach a wider range of students, including those who might not otherwise have had access to education.

**Developing curricula and standards for schools:** Educational leaders also play a key role in developing curricula and standards for schools. In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) is responsible for developing and enforcing academic standards and quality assurance mechanisms for universities (Giami & Nwokamma, 2019). Educational leaders are responsible for setting the curriculum and standards for schools. This includes deciding what students should learn and how they should be assessed. Educational leaders must consider several factors when developing curricula and standards, including the needs of students, the resources available, and the goals of the school (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). They must also take into account the latest research and best practices in education.

**Educational Institutions enhance Futures Collaborators:** Universities help to develop a group of people who work together to develop and promote innovative approaches to education (Burns

et al., 2015). These individuals come from a variety of backgrounds, including education, business, technology, and government. They collaborate to develop new models of education that meet the needs of 21st-century learners and prepare them for the future. They may work on projects such as creating new curricula, developing online learning platforms, or exploring the use of new technologies in education (Benn et al., 2014). There are several ways that educational institutions can enhance the work of future collaborators. First, they can provide access to data and resources that can help inform the work of these collaborators. Second, they can create spaces for collaboration and dialogue, such as conferences or working groups. Third, they can support the implementation of new ideas and initiatives developed by the collaborators.

**Educational Leadership enhance the students for Institutional Transformation and upliftment:** Educational leadership can enhance the students' experience and readiness for institutional transformation in some ways. First, educational leaders can create a culture of innovation and risk-taking within the institution. This can encourage students to think outside the box and to be open to new ideas and approaches. Second, educational leaders can provide opportunities for students to participate in decision-making processes, such as student councils or committees. This allows students to have a voice in shaping the future of the institution (Rodriguez et al., 2015).

**Educational leaders create a vision and mission for the institution:** Creating a vision and mission for the institution is a critical first step in educational leadership. The vision should be aspirational and inspiring, while the mission should be clear and concise (Sharma & Jain, 2022). The process of creating a vision and mission typically involves input from a variety of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community members. Once the vision and mission have been developed, they should be communicated widely throughout the institution and used to guide all decision-making (Ibhawoh, 2005). This helps universities to focus the efforts of the institution and give a sense of direction. Second, educational leaders can develop strategic plans to achieve the vision and mission. Third, educational leaders can create an organizational culture that supports the vision and mission. Finally, educational leaders can build partnerships with other institutions and organizations to support the institution's goals

**Educational leaders create an organizational culture that supports the vision and mission:** An organizational culture that supports the vision and mission is essential for effective educational leadership (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). This can be achieved by creating a shared understanding of the values and beliefs that underlie the vision and mission. Leaders can promote these values through communication, modelling, and reinforcement. In addition, leaders can create opportunities for staff and students to live out the vision and mission through their daily work. This can be done by defining the values of the institution, communicating those values to all stakeholders, and modelling those values in their behaviour (Fafunwa, 2003). Educational leaders also create structures and systems that align with the values and goals of the institution. And they can recognize and reward employees who demonstrate the values and contribute to the goals of the institution.

**Educational leaders measure and evaluate progress:** Measuring and evaluating progress is an important part of educational leadership because it allows leaders to assess whether their efforts are having the desired impact. This information can be used to make adjustments to plans and

strategies as needed. In addition, it can help to demonstrate the value of the work being done and build support for future initiatives. There are some ways to measure and evaluate progress, including student surveys, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback. Educational leaders use a variety of methods to measure and evaluate progress, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and data analysis (Cloete & Bunting, 2001). This information can then be used to make changes and adjustments to the institution's plans and strategies. One way is to use key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs are specific metrics that can be used to track and measure progress towards the institution's goals. These can include metrics such as student retention rates, graduation rates, and faculty research productivity. There are many different ways to use KPIs for evaluation. Educational leaders can set targets for each KPI, and then track whether the institution is meeting those targets (Kaner, 2014). They can also compare the institution's performance to other institutions, or the institution's past performance. This can help to identify areas of strength and weakness and to track progress over time.

In other words, educational leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing institutional transformation and upliftment. Through vision setting, strategic planning, building a positive learning environment, promoting continuous improvement, collaboration and team building, resource allocation and management, and relationship building, leaders can transform institutions into thriving centres of learning and growth. By utilizing effective leadership practices, educational leaders can uplift educational institutions, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality education and enabling them to reach their full potential.

Educational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing institutional transformation and upliftment in public universities in Nigeria. Specifically, in terms of governance, curriculum development, and capacity building. Governance is a significant aspect of educational leadership that helps in transforming public universities in Nigeria. Effective leadership at the institutional level is vital in ensuring transparent and accountable governance practices. This involves establishing proper structures and procedures, promoting stakeholder collaboration, and fostering a culture of openness and inclusiveness. With strong leadership, public universities can effectively address issues of corruption, mismanagement, and bureaucracy that hinder their development. According to Ofoegbu and Udejaja (2019), effective educational leadership in public universities in Nigeria can improve governance practices and create an environment conducive to institutional transformation.

Another way in which educational leadership enhances institutional transformation in public universities is through curriculum development. Effective leadership in this area involves aligning the curriculum with local and global needs, as well as providing innovative and relevant programs that meet the demands of the job market. Educational leaders need to be proactive in identifying emerging trends and incorporating them into the curriculum. This can be achieved through collaboration with industry experts, regular curriculum revision, and the implementation of modern teaching and learning strategies. Okeke and Ofoegbu (2020) argued that strong educational leadership promotes curriculum development that is responsive to societal needs, fostering the transformation of public universities in Nigeria.

Furthermore, educational leadership facilitates capacity building among faculty, staff, and administrators in public universities. Investing in the development of human capital is crucial for institutional transformation. Effective leaders provide opportunities for professional development, training, and mentorship programs that enhance the competencies of academic and non-academic staff. This, in turn, improves the quality of teaching, research, and administrative practices within the institution. A study by Adetiloye (2018) emphasizes that strong educational

leadership creates a culture of continuous learning and development, leading to the upliftment of public universities in Nigeria.

Overall, educational leadership is essential for enhancing institutional transformation and upliftment in public universities in Nigeria. By promoting transparent governance practices, aligning the curriculum with societal needs, and investing in capacity building, educational leaders play a significant role in improving the overall quality and reputation of public universities. However, it is crucial to note that educational leadership should not be limited to individual efforts but should also be supported by government policies, adequate funding, and collaboration between stakeholders. With a holistic approach, educational leadership can truly transform public universities in Nigeria, leading to their upliftment and advancement.

### **Risks to Institutional Transformation and Upliftment**

Educational leaders who are saddled with the responsibility to transform institutions face the following risks and challenges. They are:

**Financial Pressures:** The major risk educational institutions have when thinking about institutional transformation is the financial cost. This is a particularly salient issue, as well, since many institutions are facing decreased state and federal support. However, institutions that are not able to embrace change or meet the changing needs of students will face significant costs later in the form of decreased enrollment and revenue. The costs of transformation primarily stem from investment in infrastructure, people, and technology alongside digital transformation, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hai et al., 2021). Institutions that adopt a strategy for managing the costs of their transformational change processes will be more successful. Developing processes for reviewing initiatives, establishing calculations for returns on investment, and developing criteria for accountability is key to ensuring that all investments made are planned for, allowing for the sustainability of the transformation.

**Delay Visionary Planning:** refers to the tendency for educational institutions to resist or delay the adoption of new ideas and approaches. This can be a challenge for educational leaders who are trying to bring about institutional transformation. One reason for this delay is the need for consensus-building and buy-in from various stakeholders within the institution. Another reason is the fear of change and the unknown, which can lead to resistance to new ideas. This lack of delay is a significant cause of institutional failure. Without a coherent and sensible vision (Kanter, 2003) a change effort dissolves into a list of confusing and incompatible projects and as well as enabled by older constructs, such as accreditation timelines, leadership renewal cycles and institutional risk aversion to overcome these barriers, and what influences an institution's ability to balance this perceived risk with the positive impact that transformation could produce? The impact of leadership and the ability of an institution to implement change are two critical factors that can impact transformation. In many ways, the ability of an institution to transform is based on whether the institution is prepared to manage change. While the acceptance of change at the individual or project level is important, adopting enterprise-level change management is key.

**Lack of Change Management:** Educational leaders often face resistance to change from both within the institution and from outside stakeholders.

**Lack of Capacity:** Educational leaders often have to work with limited staff and limited expertise. This can make it difficult to implement changes and monitor and evaluate progress. In addition, the lack of capacity can lead to burnout and turnover among staff, which can further impede progress.

**Lack of Political Support:** Educational leaders often need the support of government officials and policymakers to make changes and secure the resources they need. Without this support, it can be difficult to make any meaningful progress. In addition, educational leaders often have to navigate the complexities of the political landscape, which can be time-consuming and challenging. In other words, political support is essential for educational leaders, but it can be difficult to obtain. Educational leaders may have to navigate a complex web of relationships and interests to get the support they need. They may also have to deal with changing political agendas and priorities, which can make it difficult to maintain momentum for their initiatives.

## CONCLUSION

Educational leadership for institutional transformation and upliftment in public universities in Nigeria is a complex and challenging task. It requires leaders to create a shared vision and mission, measure and evaluate progress, and build a supportive organizational culture. While this is a challenging undertaking, it is essential for the success of the institution and its students. With strong leadership, public universities in Nigeria can continue to grow and improve, providing quality education for all. In addition, effective educational leadership requires leaders to build strong relationships with key stakeholders, such as parents, businesses, and government officials. Leaders must also be adaptable and flexible, as the landscape of education is constantly changing. They must be able to navigate the complex political and financial landscape and make difficult decisions that may not always be popular. They must also be able to advocate for the institution and communicate its value to the wider community.

## Suggestions

The following suggestions were made:

- Educational leadership should develop a step-by-step guide to institutional transformation. In essence, a step-by-step guide for institutional transformation would provide a roadmap for educational leaders, helping them to break down the process into manageable steps. It would also provide a framework for measuring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of their efforts. By providing clear, actionable steps, such a guide could help leaders avoid common pitfalls and maximize their chances of success.
- Educational leadership should ensure the implementation of institutional transformation agendas. This requires leaders to take a hands-on approach, monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed. It also requires them to provide the necessary resources and support for those who are implementing the changes. In addition, leaders should create a culture of accountability, where everyone is held responsible for their role in the transformation process. This will help to ensure that the changes are sustainable and long-lasting.

- Educational leadership should ensure to evaluation and follow of the institutional transformation agendas. Leaders should put in place mechanisms to measure the impact of the changes they are making, both in terms of outcomes and processes. This could include tracking student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and school climate. In addition, leaders should conduct regular reviews of the transformation process, to identify areas of success and areas that need further improvement.
- Educational leadership should ensure proper monitoring and steering of institutional transformation. Leaders need to be able to track progress and identify potential problems early on so that they can make course corrections as needed. In addition, they should provide ongoing support and guidance to those who are implementing the changes, so that everyone is clear on their roles and responsibilities.
- Educational leaders should work to build strong relationships with government officials and other stakeholders. Maintaining strong relationships with government officials and other stakeholders is crucial for educational leaders who are working to bring about institutional transformation. This is because these stakeholders can provide support and resources, as well as valuable feedback and input. In addition, strong relationships can help to build trust and buy-in, which is essential for long-term success.

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