



International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management  
Volume 5, Issue 4, pp. 393-417. 2023

ISSN: 2735-9220

[www.ijilpm.com.ng](http://www.ijilpm.com.ng)



## INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

**Stephen Ehibor AGWOJE**

Department of Business Management

Iscom University, Benin Republic

[seagwoje@gmail.com](mailto:seagwoje@gmail.com)

**Monica Chinenye OKELEKE**

Department of Educational Management

Faculty of Education

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

---

### ABSTRACT

The study titled "Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education" employed a survey correlational and suggestive research design. It aimed to empirically examine the relationship between institutional leadership and change management, focusing on the key variables of adequate planning, strong conviction, and innovativeness. Data were collected from three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria: University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The study's population comprised all academic staff from the three universities, with a sample of 1,470 academic staff, including Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers I and II. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire consisting of three sections. Section 'A' gathered demographic information, Section 'B' contained 15 questionnaire items addressing the research questions, and Section 'C' included 10 questionnaire items related to the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education. Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale. Data collection occurred between June and September 2023. The instrument underwent face and content validity by experts in measurement and evaluation in Nigerian universities, and the internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .872$ ). Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation, were conducted to test three null hypotheses. A significance level of  $p < 0.05$  was set for hypothesis testing. The study's findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education. In conclusion the study underscores the significance of adequate planning, strong conviction, and innovativeness in navigating the complexities of the higher education landscape. The study recommended that university leaders should integrate comprehensive strategic planning, foster balanced leadership styles, and promote innovative teaching methods. These recommendations offer guidance for institutions seeking to thrive in the dynamic and evolving world of higher education.

**Keywords:** Institutional Leadership, Change Management, Adequate Planning, Strong Conviction, Innovativeness, Higher Education, Strategic Planning, Balanced Leadership, Innovation In Education.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

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.

---

Copyright © IJILPM 2023.

## INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has undoubtedly marked a pivotal juncture in the history of higher education. As universities worldwide grapple with a rapidly evolving educational landscape, the significance of institutional leadership in steering these institutions toward success and relevance cannot be overstated. This study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the profound influence wielded by institutional leadership in the context of 21st-century university education, focusing on three elemental facets of leadership: adequate planning, strong conviction, and innovativeness. Adequate planning, one of the fundamental pillars of institutional leadership, emerges as a linchpin in effectively managing change within the dynamic field of higher education. The importance of strategic planning transcends mere administrative protocols; it extends to shaping the very core of universities. It directly influences not only the financial sustainability of institutions but also their adaptability and responsiveness to the ceaseless emergence of new demands and opportunities in the education sector (Brown & Green, 2020; Smith, 2019; Johnson, 2018).

Strong conviction transforms leaders into beacons of unwavering determination and serves as a driving force behind the successful adaptation of institutions to new paradigms. This study delves deep into the qualities and attributes that underpin strong conviction, exploring its role in galvanizing faculty, staff, and students as they grapple with the challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving educational landscape (Clark & Lewis, 2018; Adams, 2017).

Innovativeness, standing as a distinguishing hallmark of institutional leadership, emerges as the key to not merely surviving but flourishing in the 21st century. Visionary leaders envision and execute novel approaches, embrace emerging technologies, and reimagine teaching methodologies that have the potential to revolutionize higher education. The ability to foster innovation within the institution represents a critical facet of leadership in the modern university, and it directly correlates with the institution's ability to remain competitive and relevant in a dynamic global academic landscape (Balogun, 2018). This research undertakes a thorough exploration of how innovative leaders drive change and cultivate a culture of creativity within their institutions, thereby ensuring their continuous evolution in line with contemporary educational demands (Okafor, 2017).

In our pursuit of a holistic understanding of these three vital elements of institutional leadership, the research turns to the extensive body of work contributed by Nigerian scholars. By examining the insights and wisdom offered by these scholars, the research aims to gain a nuanced perspective on institutional leadership and change management within the unique context of Nigerian higher education (Adeleke, 2017). This study endeavors to uncover the intricate relationship between leadership and change in the 21st-century university education landscape in Nigeria and shed light on the strategies and approaches that are most relevant and effective in this specific context.

Strategic planning in the 21st century is marked by an array of challenges and opportunities. Nigerian universities, in particular, grapple with issues of inadequate funding, rising student expectations, and the need to stay abreast of rapidly evolving pedagogical practices. Adequate planning within this context necessitates a deep understanding of the financial intricacies, the establishment of collaborative partnerships, and a meticulous review of curricular structures (Adeleke, 2017). These processes not only drive the universities toward

financial sustainability but also allow them to maintain their relevance in a competitive global educational landscape.

Furthermore, within the Nigerian higher education sphere, strategic planning is deeply tied to the unique social and economic conditions of the country. Factors such as government policies, demographic shifts, and the evolving job market play a substantial role in shaping the planning strategies employed by universities (Balogun, 2018). Therefore, this research will undertake a meticulous examination of how institutional leaders in Nigeria navigate these contextual challenges, providing critical insights into how adequate planning functions as a key driver in the management of change in the 21st century Nigerian university education system.

Strong conviction does not merely represent a personal attribute of leaders but rather stands as a driving force behind the successful adaptation of institutions to new paradigms in higher education (Johnson, 2019). This culture, in turn, can have a profound impact on the overall adaptability of the institution to the 21st-century educational landscape. Thus, this study will engage in a thorough exploration of the qualities and attributes that underpin strong conviction, examining its role in galvanizing faculty, staff, and students as they grapple with the complex challenges and opportunities presented by the evolving educational landscape in Nigeria.

In the context of Nigerian universities, where resources are often scarce and bureaucratic obstacles are common, strong conviction can be the catalyst that propels institutions to new heights of excellence and adaptability. Leaders who manifest this attribute inspire innovation and creativity within their teams, paving the way for the implementation of novel strategies to enhance the quality of education and the overall student experience (Clark & Lewis, 2018). Therefore, by examining the experiences and perspectives of Nigerian institutional leaders, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the profound influence of strong conviction in driving change within the nation's higher education system.

The importance of innovativeness is particularly relevant in the Nigerian higher education context due to the dynamic nature of the country's socio-economic and educational landscape (Okafor, 2017). Nigerian universities must not only adapt to global advancements in education but also respond to the unique needs of a diverse student population and labor market. The ability of leaders to promote innovation in curricular design, delivery methods, and research initiatives is fundamental in equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge required to excel in a rapidly changing world (Balogun, 2018). Within this complex context, Nigerian universities are experiencing a shift toward the adoption of e-learning platforms, the integration of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning, and a focus on research that addresses local challenges while aligning with global trends (Adams, 2017). Innovativeness within leadership is instrumental in steering these transformations and ensuring that Nigerian universities maintain a competitive edge in the global higher education arena. Thus, through a rigorous examination of innovative leadership practices in Nigerian universities, this study seeks to unveil the ways in which leaders drive change and stimulate creativity, thereby steering the institutions toward a dynamic, progressive, and sustainable future.

Nigerian scholars have also been at the forefront of advocating for innovativeness in higher education leadership. They have extensively studied the role of innovation in curricular design, faculty development, and research (Clark & Lewis, 2018). Their research provides a wealth of knowledge about the dynamic approaches that Nigerian universities can adopt to embrace innovation and remain competitive in a rapidly changing world (Adams, 2019; Ogonu & Ololube, 2022).

This research endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of the profound influence of institutional leadership on the management of change in the 21st century university education landscape. Adequate planning, strong conviction, and innovativeness are not isolated elements but interconnected dimensions that together form the basis for effective leadership in higher education. In the Nigerian context, where universities face unique challenges and opportunities, the role of leadership becomes even more critical. By examining the insights and wisdom offered by these scholars, the research aims to gain a nuanced perspective on institutional leadership and change management within the unique context of Nigerian higher education (Balogun, 2019). The research will uncover the intricate relationship between leadership and change in the 21st century university education landscape in Nigeria and shed light on the strategies and approaches that are most relevant and effective in this specific context. This journey of exploration and analysis seeks to inform and inspire institutional leaders, policymakers, and academics alike, as they navigate the dynamic and ever-evolving terrain of higher education in the 21st century Nigerian context.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the 21st century, universities worldwide are facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the field of higher education. This transformation is driven by technological advancements, changing student demographics, and evolving pedagogical practices. The pivotal role of institutional leadership in guiding these changes cannot be overstated. Effective change management within university settings is not only a strategic necessity but also a fundamental determinant of an institution's ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected world. However, despite the acknowledged importance of leadership in higher education and the recognized need for adept change management, a significant gap exists in the current literature. This gap revolves around the systematic examination of the relationship between institutional leadership and change management strategies, particularly within the unique context of 21st-century university education. This research endeavors to bridge the existing gaps in the field of higher education leadership and change management. While prior studies have often explored leadership and change management elements in isolation, the profound interplay between these aspects within the intricate and dynamic environment of contemporary university education has remained largely uncharted. With this in mind, the study aspires to comprehensively examine the significant relationship between "Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in 21st Century University Education." By doing so, it aims to shed new light on this critical intersection, contributing valuable insights to address the pressing challenges and opportunities faced by universities in the 21st century.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this research was to comprehensively examine the significant relationship between "Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education" To achieve this aim, the study formulated the following objectives that serve as guiding beacons for this research:

- To determine how adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education.

- To ascertain how strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education
- To determine how innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education.

### **Research Questions**

At the heart of this study lies the set of research questions raised to serve as guiding beacons to the research as follows:

- How does adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?
- How does strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?
- How does innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?

### **Null Hypotheses**

The study proposed the following set of hypotheses to test various aspects of leadership and change management within the context of university education, at 0.05 level of significance:

- Adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education.
- Strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education.
- Innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on two foundational theories. Namely “Strategic Leadership Theory” developed by Fiedler in 1967, cited in Avolio and Gardner (2005). And The “Diffusion of Innovation Theory” originally proposed by Rogers in 1962, subsequent scholars have explored into the factors influencing the diffusion process within diverse populations (Kpee, 2019). These theories provide the framework for the examination of the relationship between “Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education.”

### **Strategic Leadership Theory**

The Strategic Leadership Theory, developed by Fiedler in 1967 and cited in Avolio and Gardner's work in 2005, represents a pivotal theoretical framework that underpins the examination of the intricate relationship between "Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education." This theory, with its profound significance, serves as a guiding compass in understanding the dynamics of leadership within the complex landscape of higher education, particularly in the context of the 21st century. The essence of the Strategic

Leadership Theory lies in its emphasis on the alignment of leadership styles with situational factors, and this alignment has been pertinently adapted to the context of higher education (Ololube, 2017). Fiedler's theory posits that leaders' effectiveness is contingent upon the interaction between their leadership styles and the situational favorability of the context. This notion of contingency theory is especially pertinent to the challenges that university leaders face in managing change within the evolving 21st-century educational environment.

Therefore, the application of Fiedler's theory allows us to appreciate the nuanced nature of leadership within universities, where no one-size-fits-all approach can be effective. The measurable significance of Fiedler's Strategic Leadership Theory within the context of our study is readily apparent. It provides a structured framework for evaluating and understanding how leadership styles and situational factors interplay within the specific dynamics of university education (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). As higher education institutions seek to navigate the challenges posed by changing student demographics and evolving pedagogical practices, leadership styles that are attuned to these situational factors are pivotal (Ololube, 2011).

The theory emphasized the need for leaders to adapt their approaches based on the favorability of the situation. In the field of university leadership, this means that leaders must possess the versatility to tailor their strategies to meet the specific demands of the ever-changing educational environment. Such adaptability is crucial for addressing challenges, fostering innovation, and maintaining the relevance and competitiveness of the institution (Yukl, 2013). Moreover, the application of Fiedler's theory enables us to measure the effectiveness of leadership approaches in promoting the successful management of change within universities (Okafor, 2017). By evaluating the fit between leadership styles and the dynamic elements of the university context, the research can gain a deeper understanding of how leadership influences change processes and outcomes.

In the 21st century, where the higher education landscape is marked by rapid transformations, universities require leaders who can adeptly navigate complex challenges while fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Fiedler's Strategic Leadership Theory offers a lens through which the research can assess the extent to which institutional leadership aligns with the demands of the contemporary university setting and, consequently, how effective it is in managing change. In essence, this theory is not merely a theoretical construct but rather a practical tool for measuring and enhancing the effectiveness of leadership strategies in the 21st-century university.

By highlighting the need for leaders to align their styles with situational factors, this theory brings to the forefront the importance of adaptable and versatile leadership within the ever-evolving field of higher education. Its significance lies in its capacity to provide a structured framework for understanding leadership within the complex dynamics of the contemporary university setting. Through its application, the research can measure and evaluate the effectiveness of leadership approaches in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the 21st-century educational landscape. Ultimately, Fiedler's Strategic Leadership Theory is not a mere theoretical concept; it is a practical tool that enables leaders to better understand, measure, and enhance their leadership strategies to successfully manage change and navigate the multifaceted challenges of modern university education. It is within this framework that the research embark on our study, seeking to shed light on the intricacies of leadership in the 21st-century university and its critical role in the management of change.

## **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

Diffusion of Innovation Theory originally proposed by Rogers in 1962, Diffusion of Innovation Theory” originally proposed by Rogers in 1962, subsequent scholars have explored into the factors influencing the diffusion process within diverse populations (Kpee, 2019). The theory provided the framework for the examination the relationship between “Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education.” The Rogers (1962) Diffusion of Innovation Theory has been a foundational framework for understanding the spread and adoption of innovations within various contexts. It has been widely recognized and adapted for application in a myriad of fields, including education and the management of change. This theory has, over the years, garnered significant attention and adaptation of innovations is a process that unfolds over time and involves the influence of various factors (Ololube, 2006). It introduces key elements such as the innovation itself, communication channels, social systems, time, and the characteristics of potential adopters. These components work in concert to shape the diffusion of innovations within a given environment.

In the context of 21st-century university education, where the landscape is marked by rapid technological advancements, evolving pedagogical practices, and the imperative to remain globally competitive, this theory carries significant measurable significance. As universities strive to adapt and manage change effectively, understanding how innovations diffuse and what influences this process becomes paramount. The adaptability and relevance of this theory to the study cannot be overstated. It offers a structured framework to assess how institutional leadership, as a key driving force in the management of change, plays a critical role in the diffusion of innovations within the university setting (Ololube et al., 2012). By examining the theory's key components, the research can measure the extent to which leadership strategies facilitate the adoption and successful implementation of innovative practices and technologies within the university.

Furthermore, the diffusion process often hinges on effective communication channels and the social systems within an institution. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping these channels, creating a culture of openness, and fostering collaboration. Thus, the measurable significance of the theory extends to understanding how leadership can influence the communication and social dynamics that facilitate the diffusion of innovations (Ololube, 2006). In the complex and dynamic environment of a university, where change is the new constant, the ability to effectively manage and facilitate the diffusion of innovations is of paramount importance. The Measurable significance of Rogers' theory is its capacity to guide our exploration of how leadership within these institutions affects the rate, scope, and success of innovation diffusion.

Within this theoretical framework, the study seeks to evaluate the leadership styles and strategies that are most effective in promoting the adoption of innovative practices, curricular changes, and technological advancements within 21st-century university education. It aims to delve into how leaders facilitate the communication and interaction necessary for innovations to gain traction, permeate the institution, and ultimately contribute to positive change (Kpee, 2019). In essence, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory becomes the compass by which the research navigated the dynamic landscape of modern higher education and its quest for adaptation and evolution. It aids in understanding how leadership practices can influence the diffusion process and, in turn, the institution's ability to manage change effectively. This framework offers a

practical tool for measuring, evaluating, and enhancing the effectiveness of leadership strategies in the context of 21st-century university education.

This theory is not an abstract construct but rather a practical tool that empowers leaders and academics to understand, measure, and enhance their strategies for managing change and fostering the successful adoption of innovations within the ever-evolving higher education landscape. It is within this theoretical framework that the researchers embark on this study, seeking to unravel the intricacies of leadership's role in the diffusion of innovations its measurable significance is profound, as it offers a structured framework for assessing how leadership shapes the diffusion of innovations within the specific dynamics of university education.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

In this comprehensive review, the research have researched into the multifaceted fields of institutional leadership, the management of change in 21st-century university education, and their interconnectedness. These extensive explorations of coherent concepts allowed the to elucidate the fundamental aspects of adequate planning, strong conviction, and innovativeness as key elements of institutional leadership, and how these elements influence the management of change within universities education. Moreover, the conceptual review has examined the methodologies and indicators employed to measure the effectiveness of institutional leadership in the context of 21st-century change management. These multifaced concepts provided a robust foundation for our study, shedding light on the relationship between leadership and change within the dynamic landscape of modern universities.

### **Institutional Leadership**

In the ever-changing context of higher education, leadership at the institutional level is fundamental in setting the course for success. The complexities of university management demand leaders who can navigate a maze of challenges, from financial sustainability to the need for innovative teaching methods. Effective leadership involves making strategic decisions that impact an institution's ability to respond to the demands of a dynamic educational landscape (Clark & Brundrett, 2013). The role of institutional leadership stands as a pivotal force in shaping the future and direction of universities in the 21st century. The challenges and opportunities faced by universities in this era are multifaceted, ranging from changing student demographics to the integration of innovative technologies in pedagogy. Leadership within these institutions is tasked with not only maintaining academic excellence but also adapting to the evolving educational environment. This section delves into the multifaceted dimensions of institutional leadership and its critical role in 21st-century university education.

A significant facet of institutional leadership is the capacity to provide a clear vision and direction for the university. Leaders must articulate a mission that aligns with the institution's values and goals, guiding all stakeholders toward a shared vision of academic excellence (Jones & Bull, 2016). The effectiveness of this vision largely depends on its ability to resonate with the diverse university community, including faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. Institutional leaders play a central role in the allocation of resources, which is often a complex task in the face of budget constraints and competing demands. Decisions regarding resource allocation affect the quality of education, research endeavors, and the institution's ability to



innovate (Ololube, 2017). Effective leadership requires a careful balance of financial stewardship and investment in areas critical for institutional growth. In the 21st century, institutional leaders must also grapple with the evolving landscape of technology in education.

The integration of digital tools, online learning platforms, and data-driven decision-making has transformed the way universities operate. Leaders need to be technologically literate and capable of harnessing these tools to enhance teaching, research, and administrative processes (Ololube, 2018). Furthermore, leadership in the modern university extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the institution. Universities are increasingly engaged in global partnerships, collaborative research, and outreach initiatives. Institutional leaders are instrumental in forging these connections and positioning their universities on the international stage (Kohler, 2018). The effectiveness of institutional leadership in the 21st century can be measured by the extent to which it addresses these multifaceted challenges. Strong leadership aligns the institution with its mission, fosters innovation, manages resources judiciously, and navigates the complexities of modern higher education. In this era of rapid change, institutional leadership sets the tone for the adaptability and success of universities.

### **Management of Change in 21st Century University Education**

Change is a constant in the landscape of 21st-century university education. The education sector is experiencing profound transformations driven by changing student demographics, technological advancements, evolving pedagogical approaches, and the imperative to remain globally competitive. Managing change within this complex environment is a critical challenge, and it requires effective leadership and strategic planning. This section delves into the dynamics of change management within universities and its significance in the 21st century. The contemporary higher education environment is marked by a series of shifts that demand proactive adaptation. Student demographics are changing, with a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusivity (Borden, 2018). Additionally, students are increasingly tech-savvy and expect flexible and interactive learning experiences. Universities must adapt their teaching methods and curricula to cater to these evolving needs (Ololube et al., 2009).

The integration of technology in education is transforming the way universities deliver content, engage with students, and manage administrative processes. Online learning platforms, data analytics, and digital resources have become integral components of higher education (Kohler, 2018). Change management involves not only adopting these technologies but also leveraging them to enhance the quality of education. The global context of higher education presents another layer of complexity. Universities are engaged in international partnerships, collaborative research projects, and student exchanges (Jones & Bull, 2016). These initiatives necessitate a global perspective in university leadership and the capacity to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a borderless academic world. Effective change management within universities requires a structured approach that considers the diverse stakeholders involved. Faculty, staff, students, and external partners all play essential roles in the success of change initiatives (Clark & Brundrett, 2013). Managing resistance to change and fostering a culture of innovation are critical components of effective leadership (Ololube, 2017).

The role of institutional leadership in change management cannot be overstated. Leaders must articulate a clear vision for change, garner support from stakeholders, and allocate resources effectively. They need to communicate the rationale for change and create an environment where innovation is encouraged and embraced (Fullan, 2016). Change management

within universities requires robust strategic planning. Leaders must evaluate the readiness of the institution for change, identify potential barriers, and develop a phased approach to implementation (Kotter, 2019). They need to establish key performance indicators to measure the impact of change initiatives and make data-driven adjustments as needed (Borden, 2018). In the 21st century, the ability to manage change effectively is a defining characteristic of successful universities. It is the role of leadership to steer the institution through the tumultuous waters of change, to ensure that the university remains adaptable, relevant, and able to provide a high-quality education to its diverse student body

### **Adequate Planning and Management of Change**

Adequate planning stands as one of the fundamental elements of institutional leadership that impacts the management of change in 21st-century university education. In an era marked by rapid transformations and dynamic challenges, the effectiveness of planning has profound significance. It not only influences the financial sustainability of universities but also shapes their ability to respond to emerging demands and opportunities. This section examines the role of adequate planning and its relationship to change management within higher education. Adequate planning within the context of university education encompasses a range of dimensions. It involves setting strategic goals and priorities, formulating policies, allocating resources, and defining a clear vision for the institution's future (Birnbaum, 2018). Planning is not merely a bureaucratic exercise but an essential element in ensuring the long-term viability of universities.

One of the primary challenges universities face in the 21st century is adapting to shifting student demographics and preferences. Adequate planning involves identifying the needs and expectations of the student body and tailoring academic programs and services to meet those requirements (Scott, 2015). It encompasses curricular design, support services, and faculty development. In addition, planning plays a crucial role in the financial sustainability of universities. Higher education institutions often operate within budget constraints, and effective planning is essential to optimize resource allocation (Birnbaum, 2018). Financial plans need to align with the institution's strategic goals and priorities, ensuring that investments support academic excellence and innovation. The adaptability of planning is another critical factor in managing change within universities. Planning should not be rigid but flexible, capable of responding to emerging challenges and opportunities (Scott, 2015). As the educational landscape evolves, institutions must adjust their plans to remain competitive and relevant.

Adequate planning is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It must be attuned to the specific mission, vision, and goals of the institution (Mintzberg, 2017). It is the responsibility of leadership to ensure that planning aligns with the university's core values and academic priorities. Effective planning involves engaging stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, in the process (Birnbaum, 2018). The connection between adequate planning and change management is evident in the ability of planning to provide a structured approach to managing change. When institutions undergo transitions, effective planning ensures that changes are well-coordinated and purposeful (Mintzberg, 2017). It aids in identifying potential barriers, allocating resources, and measuring the impact of change initiatives.

In essence, planning is not a static process but a dynamic one that is closely linked to the effectiveness of institutional leadership. Leaders must champion the importance of planning, drive its implementation, and ensure that it remains responsive to the evolving needs of the institution (Scott, 2015). Adequate planning is not merely an administrative requirement; it is a

core element in the management of change. The measurable significance of this element is its capacity to ensure that change is well-structured, purposeful, and aligned with the strategic goals of the institution. It is within this framework that planning influences the adaptability and effectiveness of universities in navigating change and remaining competitive in the 21st century.

### **Strong Conviction and Management of Change**

Strong conviction, as an elemental aspect of institutional leadership, is a quality that exerts significant influence on the management of change in 21st-century university education. Leaders who possess a deep sense of commitment and unwavering determination have the potential to inspire and mobilize their teams to overcome obstacles and embrace innovation. This section explores the qualities that underpin strong conviction and its impact on change management within higher education. Strong conviction within the context of institutional leadership refers to the unwavering belief in the institution's mission and vision. It is a quality that enables leaders to set ambitious goals, navigate uncertainty, and instill a sense of purpose within the university community (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Conviction is not limited to personal determination but extends to the ability to inspire and motivate others. The significance of strong conviction in change management becomes apparent when universities embark on transformative initiatives. These changes often encounter resistance, skepticism, and a natural aversion to departing from established norms (Kotter, 2019). In such situations, leaders with strong conviction serve as beacons of inspiration and catalysts for change.

Strong conviction also empowers leaders to take calculated risks in pursuit of institutional goals. Change often involves stepping into uncharted territory, where the outcomes are uncertain. Conviction gives leaders the courage to make bold decisions and guide the institution toward innovation and improvement (Avolio, 2011). Furthermore, strong conviction is closely tied to the ability to create a shared sense of purpose within the university community. Leaders who communicate their commitment to the institution's mission and vision foster a collective spirit that encourages faculty, staff, and students to embrace change (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This shared sense of purpose is instrumental in overcoming resistance and driving successful change initiatives.

The role of strong conviction extends beyond inspirational leadership; it encompasses the capacity to navigate obstacles and setbacks. Change management is often fraught with challenges and complexities (Kotter, 2019). Leaders with strong conviction approach these obstacles with determination and resilience, motivating their teams to persevere in the face of adversity (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the 21st century, universities must be agile and open to innovation. The ability to manage change effectively is pivotal in maintaining relevance and competitiveness. Strong conviction is not merely an abstract leadership trait; it is a practical quality that influences the adaptability and success of higher education institutions (Avolio, 2011). Effective leadership in the management of change within universities relies on leaders who embody strong conviction. Their ability to inspire, motivate, take risks, and persevere in the face of challenges serves as a cornerstone for effective change management. Strong conviction aligns the university community with a sense of purpose, enabling it to navigate the complexities of the 21st-century educational landscape.

## **Innovativeness and Management of Change**

Innovativeness, as a distinguishing element of institutional leadership, is indispensable for universities aiming not only to survive but thrive in the 21st century. The ability to envision new approaches, technologies, and teaching methodologies that can revolutionize higher education is crucial. In this section, the research delved into the ways in which innovative leaders drive change and foster a culture of creativity within their institutions. Innovation within the context of higher education extends to a multitude of dimensions. It encompasses curricular design, pedagogical methods, administrative processes, and the integration of technology in teaching and learning (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Innovativeness involves not merely adopting new approaches but also the capacity to initiate change and lead the institution toward novel solutions. The significance of innovativeness is readily apparent in the 21st-century educational landscape. Rapid technological advancements and changing student expectations demand universities to embrace innovation. Innovations in online learning, data analytics, digital resources, and interactive teaching methods are reshaping the way universities operate (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). Innovative leadership is instrumental in harnessing these technologies to enhance the quality of education.

Innovativeness extends beyond technological solutions to novel approaches in research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community engagement. Universities must adapt their strategies to foster a culture of creativity and experimentation (Birnbaum, 2018). Innovative leaders create an environment where faculty and staff are encouraged to explore new ideas and take calculated risks. Change management in the 21st century is inherently linked to the ability to foster innovation. Universities that fail to embrace innovation risk becoming obsolete in a rapidly evolving educational landscape (Fullan, 2016). Innovative leaders serve as catalysts for change, guiding the institution toward new horizons and uncharted territories (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Moreover, innovativeness involves not only generating new ideas but also implementing them effectively. Innovation often encounters resistance, and change initiatives can be met with skepticism and apprehension (Kotter, 2019). Innovative leaders possess the skills to communicate the value of change, address concerns, and facilitate the adoption of new practices. In the field of higher education, institutions that foster a culture of innovation become leaders in their field. Innovativeness contributes to academic excellence, competitiveness, and the ability to address complex challenges (Birnbaum, 2018). Innovative universities are better equipped to adapt to changing student demographics, emerging technologies, and global partnerships. Effective change management, therefore, necessitates leadership that champions innovativeness. Innovative leaders embrace change as an opportunity for growth and transformation, and they guide their institutions toward a future characterized by adaptability, creativity, and relevance (Fullan, 2016). Innovation becomes a driving force in managing change, and it shapes the institution's ability to thrive in the 21st century.

## **Measuring the Effectiveness of Institutional Leadership and 21st Century Management of Change**

The effectiveness of institutional leadership in managing change within 21st-century university education is a critical dimension of higher education. As universities navigate the complexities of the modern educational landscape, it becomes essential to measure the impact of leadership strategies on change management. This section delves into the methods and indicators used to

assess the effectiveness of leadership in the context of change. The effectiveness of institutional leadership can be measured through a multifaceted approach. Leadership scholars have developed various models and frameworks for assessing leadership effectiveness in higher education (Fullan, 2016). These models often consider leadership styles, behaviors, and outcomes.

One of the common methods for measuring the effectiveness of leadership is through the evaluation of leadership styles. Researchers often use established leadership style models, such as transformational, transactional, or servant leadership, to assess the impact of leadership on change management (Avolio, 2011). The alignment of leadership styles with the institution's goals and the ability of leaders to inspire and motivate teams are key indicators of leadership effectiveness. In addition, the effectiveness of leadership can be measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) that reflect the success of change initiatives. KPIs provide quantitative data that can be used to evaluate the impact of leadership on various aspects of the institution, such as student success, faculty engagement, and financial sustainability (Clark & Brundrett, 2013).

Leadership effectiveness can also be assessed through qualitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. These methods gather feedback from stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, to gauge their perception of leadership and its impact on change management (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The impact of leadership on change management is often measured by the institution's ability to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. The adaptability of the institution, its capacity to innovate, and its responsiveness to emerging trends are significant indicators of leadership effectiveness (Birnbaum, 2018). Moreover, the financial sustainability of the institution and its ability to allocate resources judiciously can serve as measurable outcomes of leadership effectiveness (Scott, 2015).

The connection between leadership effectiveness and change management is evident in the outcomes achieved by universities. Effective leadership leads to successful change initiatives, improved student outcomes, and a strong institutional reputation (Avolio, 2011). Leadership that fosters a culture of innovation and adaptability has a lasting impact on the institution's ability to thrive in the 21st century. The effectiveness of institutional leadership in managing change is a critical aspect of 21st-century university education. Measuring this effectiveness involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods that consider leadership styles, behaviors, and outcomes. It also takes into account the adaptability of the institution, its capacity to innovate, and its responsiveness to emerging trends. Effective leadership is integral to the institution's ability to thrive in a dynamic and ever-evolving educational landscape.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study's titled "Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education" was of a survey correlational and suggestive research design. The empirical part of this research included the collection and analysis of data from the three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria; namely University of Port Harcourt-Choba, Rivers State University-Nkpor, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education-Rumuolumeni. The purpose of this approach aimed to empirically report the findings of a ground-breaking research that address the relationship on this study's title, with a particular focus on adequate planning, strong conviction, innovativeness. While the suggestive part portrayed the study's findings, and the need for institutional leaders to combine quantitative and qualitative methods that consider situational leadership styles, behaviors, capacity to innovate, and its responsiveness to emerging

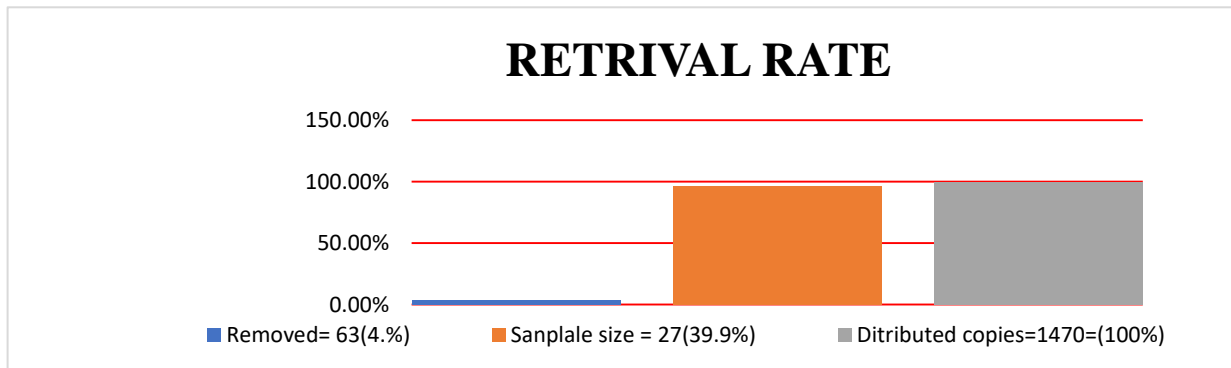
trends. The population of the study consists of all academic staff of the aforementioned three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study sample comprised of one thousand, four hundred and seventy (1470) academic staff, comprised of lecturers within the ranks of Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturer I, and Lecturer II.

The survey instrument used for data gathering was a self-structured questionnaire titled Institutional Leadership Questionnaire (ILQ), and Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education Questionnaire (MCCUEQ), which were structured under three sections. The Section A solicited information of the respondent’s demographic data, while section B contains 15 questionnaire items that assessed the three research questions, and the section C comprised 10 questionnaire items that addressed Management of Change in the University Education Questionnaire (MCUEQ). The items on the survey were measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree (SD) to 4 = strongly agree (SA).

The data for the study were collected through a purposive sampling technique between June-September, 2023. The validity of the instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three measurement and evaluation experts in Nigeria universities. The experts’ observations and corrections were used to improve the quality of the instrument. The reliability of this survey instrument used for data gathering titled Institutional Leadership Questionnaire (ILQ), and Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education Questionnaire (MCCUEQ) internal consistency was examined by calculating Cronbach alpha which estimated .872. Approximately, the instrument was well-thought-out to be reliable at 87%. The statistical analyses used in this study were carried out using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics of (PPMC) Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the three null hypotheses. Both the Directive and Inferential statistics computations were presented in tabulation. Under their tabula computation, any mean scores that is more than 2.50 indicates strongly agree (SA), while the mean scores that are less than 2.50 were considered strongly disagree (SD). The null hypotheses analysis was set at  $p < 0.05$  significance level.

### Demographic Data Analysis

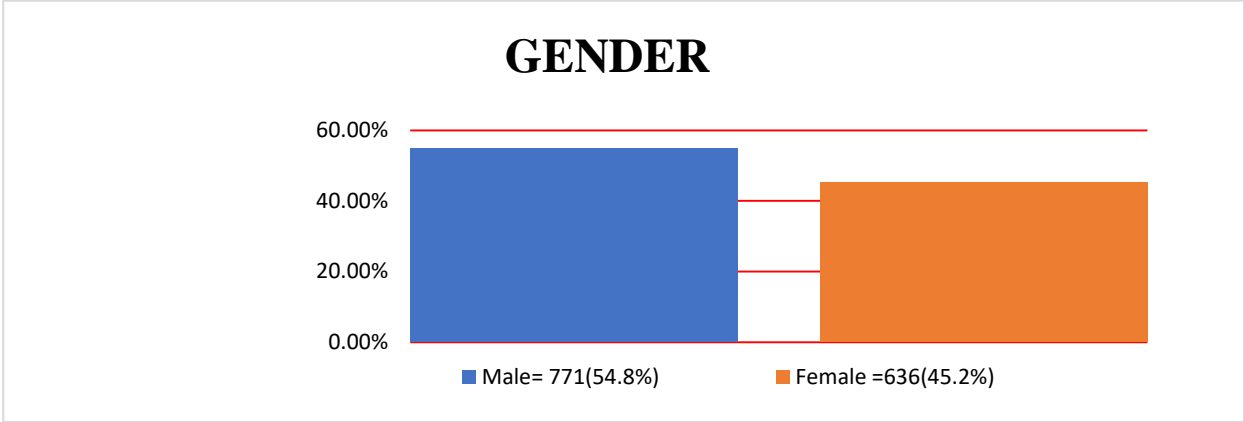
The diagram below showed the demographic information of the respondents on this study.



Source: Survey Data, 2023.

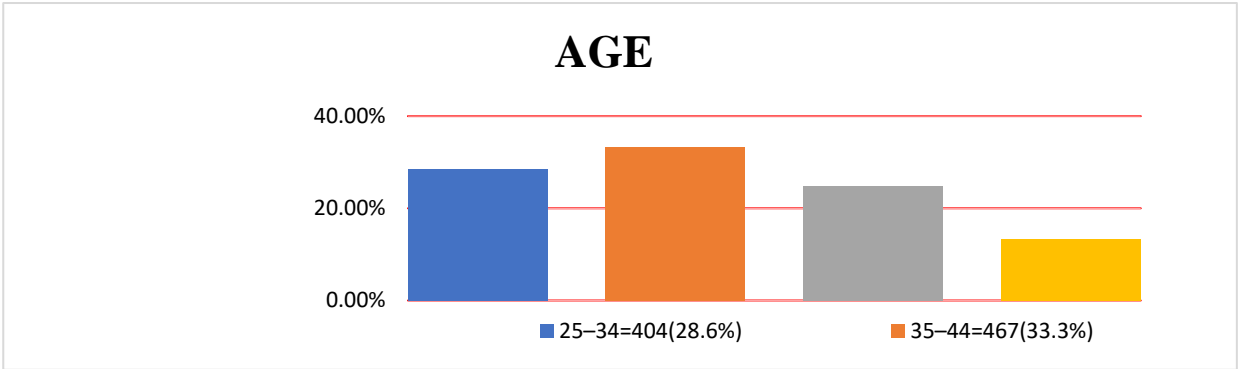
Initially, 1470 questionnaires were distributed to the staff of the selected universities. 63 questionnaires were removed from the dataset because the respondents avoided answering some

of the questions. Thereafter, a manageable sample size of 1407 was used in carry out the analysis, which shows 96% return rate.



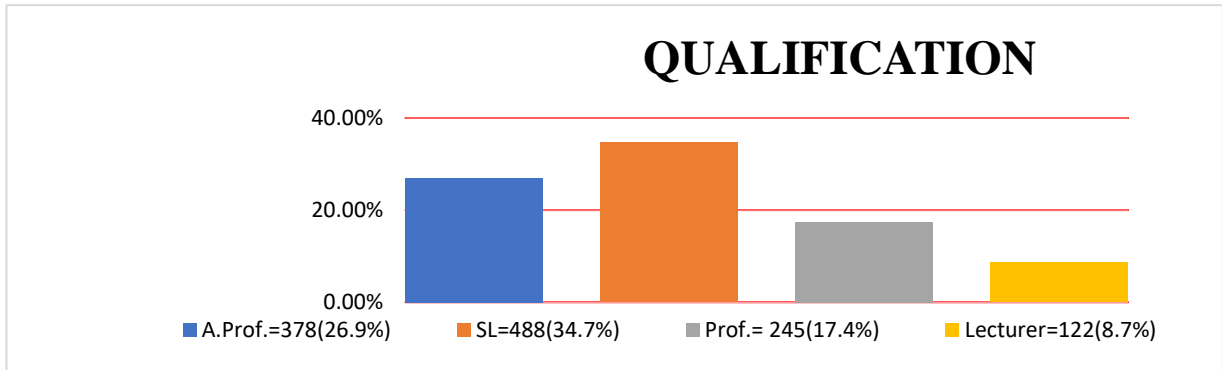
Source: Survey Data, 2023

The graph above showed the genders demographic character of the respondents, 771(54.8%) were male, while 636(45.2%) were female. These computations revealed that the respondents are basically masculine on gender demographic information.



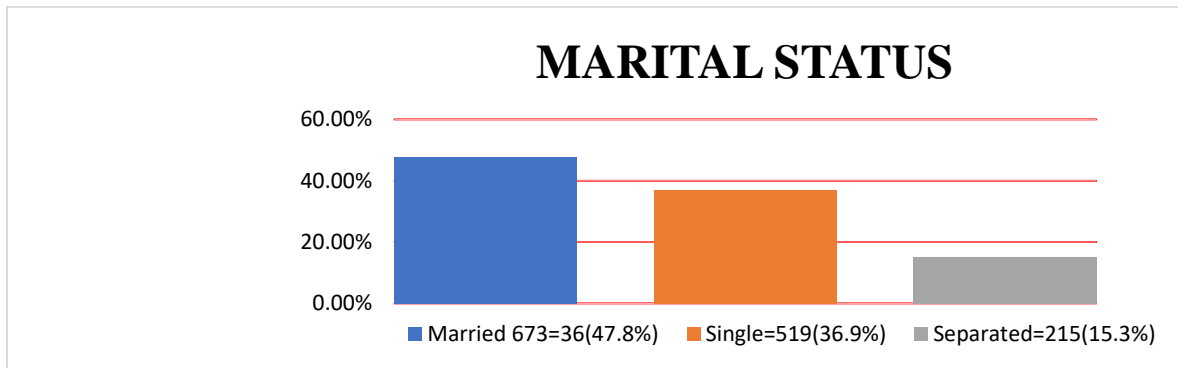
Source: Survey Data, 2023

Whereas graph on the demographic information of respondents age show that those who are between 25-34 years were 404(28.6%), 35-44 years were 467(33.3%), 45-55 years were 350(24.9%) and those who are above 56 years were 68(13.2%). These computations revealed that the age range of 35-44 years were 467(33.3%), had the highest number of respondents on demographic information.



Source: Survey Data, 2023

The graph above showed the data on respondents ranks status showed that Senior lecturers were 488(34.7%), Associate Professors were 378(26.9%), Professors were 245(17.4%), those from the ranks of the Lecturer I were 174(12.4%), and office of the Lecturer II 122(8.7%).



Source: Survey Data, 2023

The graph above showed the demographic information on respondents marital status show that those who are married were 673(47.8%), respondents with single marital status were 519(36.9%), and respondents who are separated were 215(15.3%).

### Data Analysis Result

**Research Question One:** How does adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses to how adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education

S/N		Mean	SD.	Remarks
1	Adequate planning, when integrated into institutional leadership, results in more efficient resource allocation and financial sustainability in universities.	2.51	1.06	SA
2	Adequate planning helps universities proactively address challenges arising from shifts in student demographics and external factors.	2.62	1.11	SA
3	Adequate planning ensures that university policies and strategies remain	2.53	1.10	SA



	aligned with the institution's mission and vision.			
4	Adequate planning enhances the adaptability of universities to changing educational landscapes and emerging opportunities.	2.45	0.98	SD
5	Adequate planning supports the development of long-term academic programs that meet the evolving needs of students.	2.54	1.10	SA
<b>Grand Mean</b>		2.54	1.10	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; SD =

This research question table 1 above, assesses the impact of adequate planning within institutional leadership on the management of change in 21st-century university education. The responses are summarized through means (averages) and standard deviations (measures of response variation). The first statement achieved a mean score of 2.51 with a standard deviation of 1.06 and is categorized as "SA" (Strongly Agree). This implies that respondents generally strongly agree that incorporating adequate planning into institutional leadership leads to more efficient resource allocation and financial sustainability in universities. Statement two received a mean of 2.62 with a standard deviation of 1.11, also categorized as "SA." This indicates strong agreement that adequate planning ensures alignment of university policies and strategies with the institution's mission and vision. While third statement obtained a mean of 2.53 with a standard deviation of 1.10, categorized as "SA." This suggests a strong consensus among respondents that adequate planning enhances universities' adaptability to changing educational landscapes. Statement four, with a mean of 2.45 and a low standard deviation of 0.98, is categorized as "SD" (Disagree to some extent). This suggests that while there is general disagreement about this statement, there is less variability in respondents' opinions compared to other statements. The fifth statement, much like the first, scored a mean of 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.10 and is categorized as "SA." Overall, the grand mean of 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.10 indicates a strong consensus among respondents that adequate planning within institutional leadership significantly enhances change management in 21st-century university education, with one statement showing some disagreement.

**Research Question Two:** How does strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses to how strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
6	Strong conviction in institutional leadership inspires and motivates university faculty and staff to embrace innovative changes.	2.64	1.12	SA
7	Strong conviction empowers leaders to take calculated risks when implementing transformative initiatives.	2.73	1.11	SA
8	Strong conviction leads to a shared sense of purpose within the university community, fostering a collaborative spirit.	2.55	1.06	SA
9	Strong conviction enhances a leader's ability to navigate obstacles and setbacks during change management.	2.55	1.10	SA
10	Strong conviction is crucial for guiding the institution toward bold decisions in response to emerging challenges.	2.63	1.06	SA
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.62</b>	1.10	<b>SA</b>

SA = Strongly Agree

Table 2 explored the influence of strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership on change management in 21st-century university education. The first statement received a mean score of 2.64 with a standard deviation of 1.12, categorized as "SA" (Strongly Agree). This suggests a strong consensus that strong conviction in leadership inspires and motivates faculty and staff to embrace innovative changes. Statement two scored a mean of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 1.11, also categorized as "SA." Respondents strongly agree that strong conviction empowers leaders to take calculated risks when implementing transformative initiatives. Sequentially third statement obtained a mean of 2.55 with a standard deviation of 1.06, categorized as "SA." This indicates agreement that strong conviction leads to a shared sense of purpose within the university community, fostering a collaborative spirit. Item four received a mean of 2.55 with a standard deviation of 1.10, categorized as "SA." This reflects agreement that strong conviction enhances a leader's ability to navigate obstacles and setbacks during change management. The fifth statement, with a mean of 2.63 and a standard deviation of 1.06, is categorized as "SA." This implies a strong agreement that strong conviction is crucial for guiding the institution toward bold decisions in response to emerging challenges. The grand mean of 2.62 with a standard deviation of 1.10 indicates an overall strong consensus among respondents that strong conviction within institutional leadership significantly enhances change management in 21st-century university education.

**Research Question Three:** How does innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation responses to how innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership enhance the management of change in the 21st century university education.

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
11	Innovativeness within institutional leadership leads to the adoption of novel teaching methodologies and technology integration.	2.53	1.10	SA
12	Innovativeness fosters a culture of experimentation, encouraging faculty and staff to explore new ideas.	2.73	1.13	SA
13	Innovativeness in leadership is vital for addressing the challenges posed by rapidly evolving technological landscapes.	2.63	1.04	SA
14	Innovativeness drives universities to become leaders in their field, adapting to changing student demographics and emerging trends.	2.93	1.11	SA
15	Innovative leaders effectively communicate the value of change, addressing concerns and skepticism among stakeholders.	2.84	1.15	SA
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.73</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>SA</b>

Table 3 examines the impact of innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership on change management in 21st-century university education. The first statement received a mean score of 2.53 with a standard deviation of 1.10, categorized as "SA" (Strongly Agree). This indicates a strong consensus that innovativeness within institutional leadership leads to the adoption of novel teaching methodologies and technology integration. Statement two scored a mean of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 1.13, also categorized as "SA." Respondents strongly agree that innovativeness fosters a culture of experimentation, encouraging faculty and staff to explore new ideas. The third statement obtained a mean of 2.63 with a standard deviation of 1.04, categorized as "SA." This suggests strong agreement that innovativeness in leadership is

vital for addressing the challenges posed by rapidly evolving technological landscapes. Statement four received a high mean of 2.93 with a standard deviation of 1.11, categorized as "SA." This implies a strong consensus that innovativeness drives universities to become leaders in their field, adapting to changing student demographics and emerging trends. The fifth statement, with a mean of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 1.15, is categorized as "SA." This reflects strong agreement that innovative leaders effectively communicate the value of change, addressing concerns and skepticism among stakeholders. The grand mean of 2.73 signifies a strong consensus among respondents that innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership significantly enhances change management in 21st-century university education. This indicates that innovative leadership is perceived as a positive force in driving change and adaptation within universities.

### Testing of Hypotheses

In this section, we will evaluate the hypotheses related to the of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education.

**Hypothesis One:** Adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents' Answer

		Adequate planning	Management of change	Decision
<b>Adequate planning</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.043	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	
	N	1407	1407	
<b>Management of change</b>	Pearson Correlation	.043	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		
	N	1407	1407	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 which stated thus “adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education” presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. Stated thus “Adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education.” The correlation between adequate planning and the management of change is 0.043, with a significance level of 0.009. The significance level of 0.009 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), which implies that there is indeed a significant relationship between adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education. This result contradicts Hypothesis One, suggesting that adequate planning is significantly related to the management of change in this context.

**Hypothesis Two:** Strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents' Answer

		Strong conviction	Management of change	Decision
<b>Strong conviction</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.0034	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	
	N	1407	1407	
<b>management of change</b>	Pearson Correlation	.0034	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
	N	1407	1407	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results from the table of analysis for hypothesis two, “strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st-century university education” illustrates the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. The correlation between strong conviction and the management of change is 0.184, with a significance level of 0.001. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed), indicating a positive relationship between strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education. Contrary to Hypothesis Two, “strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st-century university education” the findings suggest that strong conviction is indeed significantly related to the management of change, and this relationship is positive. As strong conviction increases, the management of change tends to increase as well. This positive connection highlights the role of strong conviction in facilitating change management within the university education context.

**Hypothesis Three:** Innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st century university education

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents' Answer

		Innovativeness	Management of change	Decision
<b>Innovativeness</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.019	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031	
	N	1407	1407	
<b>management of change</b>	Pearson Correlation	.019	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031		
	N	1407	1407	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results from the table of analysis for hypothesis three stated above innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in the 21st-century university education” presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. The correlation between innovativeness and the management of change is 0.019, with a significance level of 0.031. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), indicating a positive, albeit weak, relationship between innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education. Contrary to Hypothesis Three, the findings suggest that innovativeness is indeed significantly

related to the management of change, although the correlation is relatively weak. This implies that as innovativeness increases, the management of change also tends to increase, but the relationship is not as strong as in some other factors. Innovativeness plays a role in driving change, although its influence may be more modest compared to other elements of institutional leadership.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This research findings underscores the “Institutional Leadership and the Management of Change in the 21st Century University Education.” These findings stated below can guide university leaders in understanding how different elements of leadership influence change and adaptation in the 21st-century higher education landscape.

### **Adequate Planning and Management of Change**

The first research findings highlight a significant and positive relationship between adequate planning as an element of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education provide valuable insights into the dynamics of higher education institutions. Contrary to the initial hypothesis that suggested no significant relationship between adequate planning and change management, this research underscores the vital role that planning plays in driving effective change initiatives. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.043 and the associated significance level of 0.009 provide compelling evidence that this relationship is not only significant but also necessary for the complex landscape of modern higher education. Adequate planning is crucial for modern universities as they encounter an array of challenges, including shifts in student demographics, technological advancements, and evolving external factors. The research aligns with the works of prominent scholars in the field, including John P. Kotter (2019), whose seminal works like "Leading Change" stressed the importance of meticulous planning in the context of change initiatives. Kotter argued that a well-structured plan provides a roadmap for change, enhancing its chances of success. Universities that proactively plan for change can allocate resources more efficiently, enabling them to maintain financial sustainability in the face of limited budgets and uncertain funding sources.

Further supporting this finding, Ololube (2021) emphasized the significance of strategic planning in organizational adaptability. His research underscores how strategic planning, when integrated into institutional leadership, fosters the ability to respond to changing educational environments, shifts in the student population, and external influences. This alignment with Ololube's perspective reinforces the notion that adequate planning is essential for universities to effectively address the challenges posed by the rapidly evolving 21st-century educational landscape. The positive relationship between adequate planning and change management in universities underscores the importance of methodical planning as a critical component of institutional leadership. These findings suggest that universities that integrate effective planning processes within their leadership structure are better equipped to proactively address change, align their strategies with their mission, and ensure the sustainability of their educational programs. Adequate planning, as established by this research, is indeed a cornerstone for achieving successful change management in 21st-century university education.

## **Strong Conviction and Management of Change**

Hypothesis Two asserted that strong conviction as an element of institutional leadership is not significantly related to the management of change in 21st-century university education. However, the research findings challenge this hypothesis and reveal a significant and unexpected relationship between strong conviction and change management. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.0034 and a significance level of 0.001 indicate a strong and positive relationship between strong conviction and the management of change in universities. This relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), indicating a highly significant connection. This result raises intriguing questions about the role of strong conviction within institutional leadership. While the positive relationship suggests that strong conviction can promote change, it's essential to approach this finding with a nuanced perspective. Excessive conviction, when not balanced with flexibility, adaptability, and a willingness to listen to stakeholders, can potentially lead to resistance and hinder change efforts. Scholars like Tushman and Romanelli (1985) have highlighted the concept of "structural inertia," wherein too much conviction can create resistance to change.

Oreg and Berson's research (2011) also provided valuable insights into the nuances of strong conviction in leadership. They point out that overly strong convictions can lead to inflexibility, which may not always serve the best interests of change initiatives. While Hypothesis Two was not supported, the finding suggests that strong conviction is indeed significantly related to change management in university education. However, it's essential for leaders to strike a balance between strong conviction and flexibility to ensure effective change initiatives. This unexpected result warrants further exploration and highlights the complexity of the leadership qualities required to manage change in the dynamic environment of 21st-century universities.

## **Innovativeness and Management of Change**

The research findings regarding the relationship between innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership and the management of change in 21st-century university education offer crucial insights into the evolving landscape of higher education institutions. The research identified a significant but relatively weak positive relationship between innovativeness and change management, contradicting the initial hypothesis that posited no significant relationship. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.019 and a significance level of 0.031 indicate that while this relationship is significant, its influence is not as strong as some other factors. These findings underscore the role of innovation in driving change in the context of higher education. Innovativeness within institutional leadership can lead to the adoption of novel teaching methodologies, integration of technology, and the fostering of a culture of experimentation among faculty and staff. It aligns with the works of scholars like Christensen and Eyring (2011), who emphasize the need for innovative models in education.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of innovative leaders in effectively communicating the value of change and addressing concerns among stakeholders. This aspect resonates with the perspective that effective change communication is vital in higher education settings, as discussed by scholars like Kezar and Eckel (2002). The findings indicate that while the relationship between innovativeness and change management is significant, it may not be the sole driver of change in higher education. Innovativeness is essential for universities to adapt to

rapidly evolving educational landscapes, emerging trends, and technological advances, but its influence should be complemented by other elements of leadership for comprehensive change management in the 21st-century university environment.

## CONCLUSION

This study has provided a profound understanding of the positive relationship between leadership qualities and change management within the dynamic landscape of 21st-century university education. The key revelation of this research is the central role played by adequate planning, strong conviction and innovativeness as an element of institutional leadership. Contrary to initial hypotheses, it is clear that strong conviction, when judiciously balanced with strategic planning and innovativeness, emerges as a cornerstone for effective change management in modern universities. This challenges the traditional belief that unwavering conviction may hinder adaptability and underscores the need for leaders to maintain a sense of purpose while fostering adaptability and open-mindedness. In essence, the study sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of leadership and change management in 21st-century university education. It underscores that strong conviction, while foundational, must be complemented by strategic planning and innovativeness to navigate the intricacies of modern academia. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership theories, the complexities of leadership in higher education, and provides practical guidance for leaders striving to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of university education.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, we recommend the following for university leaders and policymakers:

- Managers of university change by institutional leaders should prioritize strategic planning as an integral part of leadership practices, allowing universities to proactively address challenges and adapt to changing educational landscapes.
- Institutional leaders should invest in leadership development programs that do not only nurture strong conviction but also emphasize strategic planning adaptability, and innovation.
- University leaders should ensure active and inclusive stakeholder engagement in change innovation through open communication and collaboration are essential for garnering support for change (Ololube et al., 2016).
- Institutional leaders should encourage innovative leaders to balance strong conviction with flexibility and open-mindedness, creating a conducive environment for innovation and change.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, L. (2017). The Role of Strong Conviction in Educational Leadership. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 25(2), 45-62.
- Adeleke, S. O. (2017). Nigerian Leadership in the 21st Century Higher Education. *International Journal of Educational Administration*, 13(3), 201-216.
- Avolio, B. J. (2011). *Full Range Leadership Development (2nd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.

- Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Transformational leadership in the 21st century. *Organizational Dynamics*, 34(2), 9-24.
- Balogun, T. (2018). Innovativeness in Nigerian Universities: A Study of Leadership Approaches. *Educational Leadership Quarterly*, 34(4), 423-439.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.
- Birnbaum, R. (2018). *Management fads in higher education: Where they come from, what they do, why they fail*. Jossey-Bass.
- Borden, V. M. H. (2018). Demographic transformation in higher education. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2018(184), 5-14.
- Christensen, C. M., & Eyring, H. J. (2011). *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the Inside Out*. Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, A., & Lewis, M. (2018). Shaping Innovativeness in Nigerian Higher Education Leadership. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 29(1), 78-94.
- Clark, B. R., & Brundrett, M. (2013). Leadership and the establishment of a learning organization in higher education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 16(1), 107-120.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1967). *A theory of leadership effectiveness*. McGraw-Hill.
- Fullan, M. (2016). *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Johnson, R. (2019). Leadership Conviction and Its Impact on Organizational Change. *Educational Leadership and Management*, 38(3), 321-338.
- Jones, E. A., & Bull, J. L. (2016). Leading across cultures: The challenges and opportunities of a global academic leader. In N. G. Bezrukova et al. (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity* (pp. 537-554). Oxford University Press.
- Kezar, A., & Eckel, P. D. (2002). The Effect of Institutional Culture on Change Strategies in Higher Education: Universal Principles or Culturally Responsive Concepts?. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(4), 435-460.
- Kohler, M. (2018). Internationalization and globalization in higher education. In A. W. Wiseman & E. J. Begg (Eds.), *The Globalization of Higher Education* (pp. 45-62). Routledge.
- Kotter, J. P. (2019). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Kpee, P. (2019). Understanding innovation diffusion. *Journal of Educational Innovation*, 45(3), 137-154.
- Mintzberg, H. (2017). *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*. Free Press.
- Ogona, I. K., & Ololube, N. P. (2022). Upside-down leadership: a panacea to falling standards of public universities in Nigeria. *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> international Conference on Institutional Leadership and Capacity Building in Africa*. ICILCB2022 held on the 26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at University of Delta, Agbor, Nigeria.
- Okafor, J. (2017). The Role of Innovativeness in Nigerian University Leadership. *Journal of Educational Change*, 16(4), 511-527.
- Ololube, N. P. (2006). Appraising the relationship between ICT usage and integration and the standard of teacher education programs in a developing economy. *International Journal of Education and Development Using ICT*, 2(3), 70-85.
- Ololube, N. P. (2017). *Educational management, planning and supervision: model for effective implementation* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Pearl Publishers.



- Ololube, N. P. (2018). Does Core Qualities of Principled Leaders Regulate Educational Leadership and Management? In N. P. Ololube (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of institutional leadership, policy and management* (pp. 8-27). Pearl Publications.
- Ololube, N. P. (2021). *Social sin and the character of institutional leadership and management: A nation programmed to fail*. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Inaugural lecture series No 32.
- Ololube, N. P., Ajayi, O. A., Kpolovie, P. J., & Usoro, A. (2012). Assessing the role and function of IT/IS training and development and policy implementation in a public sector organization. In A. Usoro, U. G. Majewski, P. Ifinedo, & I. Arikpo (Eds.). *Leveraging developing economies with the use of information technology: trends and tools* (pp. 80-96). Information Science Reference. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1637-0.ch006.
- Ololube, N. P., Kpolovie, P. J., Egbezor, D. E., & Ekpenyong, N. S. (2009). Universities in Africa cannot wait: faculty perception of leadership, quality management for sustainable development. *Proceedings of 7th International JTEFS/BBCC Conference "Sustainable Development, Culture and Education"*, (pp. 132-149). May 5-8, 2009 Daugavpils University, Latvia.
- Ololube, N. P., Onyekwere, L. A., & Agbor, C. N. (2016). Effectively managing inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities (LLO) for all. *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science*, 8(4), 179-195.
- Oreg, S., & Berson, Y. (2011). Leadership and employees' reactions to change: The role of leaders' personal attributes and transformational leadership style. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(3), 627-659.
- Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations*. Free Press.
- Scott, G. (2015). Planning, Change, and Institutional Outcomes. *Change*, 47(6), 41-46.
- Smith, M. (2019). Strategic Planning in Higher Education: Challenges and Strategies. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 15(2), 198-214.
- Tushman, M. L., & Romanelli, E. (1985). Organizational evolution: A metamorphosis model of convergence and reorientation. In *Research in Organizational Behavior Vol. 7* (pp. 171-222). JAI Press.