

Educational Management: A Key to Innovative Pedagogical Processes in the Post Covid-19 Pandemic World in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which educational management and leadership, function as a key, to innovative pedagogical methods in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. Relevant literature were reviewed. The study was theoretically hinged on the transformational leadership theory. In particular, the study was conducted at Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu, which is a private institution in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. For the study, a descriptive survey design was used with a population of 25 employees from the university's faculty of education and 10 employees from the quality assurance unit. Questionnaires were employed as tools for gathering data. The data was examined using the mean and standard deviation. The result of the study among others was that the education managers provided an enabling environment for teachers to use e-learning and innovative pedagogical processes in teaching and learning in the post COVID 19 pandemic world. One of the recommendations of this study is that lecturers and educational managers should attend in-service training regularly. It was also recommended that classrooms should be adequately equipped with ICT facilities for effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: Educational management, educational manager, pedagogical processes, innovation, post covid-19 world

Introduction

Since it is protected by specialized professions like management and leadership, education cannot be separated from the competence and dedication of educators in today's society. Education plays a significant part in students' development. An essential component needed for the operation of professional systems is management. According to Siriphong Sauphayana (2021) this is one of the most important criteria in deciding whether a country is prosperous or declining.

Managing involves performing tasks in order to achieve a goal. One of the administrative duties necessary is to determine the organization's strategy and manage staff actions to accomplish these objectives through the deployment of resources. In addition, according to Webster's Dictionary (2022), management is "the act or art of managing: the conducting or supervising of something (such as a business)". There are administrative duties to carry out and objectives to reach in the

subject of education. This includes managing the school program, or educational management. According to Lynch, Asavisanu, P., Kung-on R. and Ye, Y (2020), educational management is the process of successfully and effectively building or maintaining institutions within educational institutions that promote, support and sustain good teaching and learning. The main objectives of educational management are successful team building, communication, information management, problem solving and decision making. Planning an institution's budget and allocating resources effectively are equally crucial.

On the other hand, leadership is a crucial component of university management. Leadership is the practice of directing an organization's talent towards the accomplishment of predetermined goals. Educational leadership is the process of recruiting and inspiring parents, students, and teachers to work together to achieve shared educational objectives (Wikipedia, 2022). With the aim of achieving particular goals, the leadership is in charge of directing day-to-day activities at the university. Saleh (2017) argues that the importance of leadership in the management of universities cannot be overstated when one considers the impact effective leadership has on the management of human and material resources in various disciplines and departments in order to achieve institutional goals and objectives. A society or country with badly managed universities is said to have no edge over other societies because the country's other educational and non-educational institutions rely on the universities to generate competent workforce to run the economy and contribute to the country's economy, As a result, university leadership must be effective and efficient.

Management and the idea of leadership interact. However, while talking about universities, management seems to come up frequently. According to Algahtani (2014), the main difference between management and leadership is that management is seen as a preventative strategy while leadership is seen as a means of transformation and transition. Being a leader also entails having the power to direct others' behavior in order to attain particular goals. Management instead concentrates on making sure that present organizational activities are carried out successfully. Therefore, both managing and leading are crucial since various answers are required as

circumstances change. According to Adeniyi (2015), university workers who are in charge of making decisions in Nigerian universities are referred to as university management, sometimes known as major officers, or stakeholders. Ojelabi (2004) pointed out that there are two perspectives—internal and external—from which university management can be seen. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) are the two regulating bodies in charge of the external dimension. These two organizations are primarily responsible for maintaining standards and ensuring enough funding while also ensuring the order and growth of education in Nigerian institutions. According to Megbekem (2004), committee structures in Nigeria are utilised to run institutions internally and are either answerable to the council or senate. There is a hierarchy of power for every position of authority. According to the organizational chart of the institution, the vice chancellor (the executive director) distributed power to his assistants and department heads, including the university librarian, university bursar, registrar, and deans.

For universities to function effectively, there needs to be a strong focus on educational management and a visionary approach. According to Siriphong (2021), this may comprise maintaining the regular and accurate attendance of both instructors and students, improving discipline, and offering suitable resources to enhance learning. According to the study's findings, after the schools are up and running, inactive managers can focus on creating a vision and setting specific objectives and policies since they are confident that there are systems in place to ensure that they are followed. In universities and other institutions of higher learning, innovation in educational management has also gained popularity. Since the COVID-19 pandemic era of 2020, this has become more pertinent. To improve and encourage effective and efficient teaching and learning within the educational system, environments must be constructed and maintained. These serve as the main purpose and goal of educational leadership and administration. This is doable if total innovation promotes growth and the accomplishment of organisational goals.

Innovative Leadership and Management.

Innovation, according to Hornby (2006), is the process of introducing new products, concepts, or methods in order to get better results. It entails bringing something new while still maintaining

existing procedures, products, or services. In order to find and implement better ideas for the future, one must think beyond what is or a present manner of doing something (Ugwu, 2017). Furthermore, Innovation in education matches the scale of the solution to the scale of the challenges (UNICEF, 2022).

Innovation is described as a planned action intended to provide originality into a setting in the context of higher education (Siriphong & Sauphayana, 2021). This means that students must be prepared to be fully engaged in innovative activities. Leaders in the universities must also structure the curriculum bearing in mind the innovative process. Universities need innovative leadership and management in order to encourage staff and students to be more creative and to learn more quickly. Alonderine and Majauskaite (2016) similarly observed that to produce high quality and academically sound students' new methods and techniques of teaching must regularly be put in place. In this regard there is great need for the managers and leaders of universities to lay great emphasis on the pedagogical processes of the institutions. The teaching processes are what pedagogy is concerned with, according to Radnika (2020). A teacher develops, designs, and creates an activity to implement learning in the learner, who is at the centre of the learning process, is what is more commonly referred to as the act or art of teaching and learning (Saleh, 2021).

Teachers at all levels of education should therefore take care to use the resources, procedures, and instructional styles in a way that significantly enhances student learning. These changes must also be favorable to the students' academic goals. As a result, pedagogical techniques are crucial for fostering student learning, fulfilling academic objectives, and enhancing the system of education as a whole. The effectiveness of pedagogical innovation is essential to the operation of the university. In a similar vein, Sidorenko (2016) contends that the inventiveness of scientific and educational staff members has an impact on the calibre of research and development work by enabling them to keep a high degree of knowledge, potential, and practical experience. This guarantees better training for the more experienced workers. Olena et al. (2020) also asserted that innovation is a way to draw in more financial support, which boosted the universities' competitiveness. Additionally, they saw that including university professors in innovation raised the standard of instruction offered.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in instructional leadership and management practices. The pandemic altered how educational leadership and management were carried out in universities all across the world (Siriphong, 2021). Online teacher professional development was therefore a new concept during the pandemic. Through an analysis of different leaders across the globe, Ellis et al. (2020) discovered that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of creative leadership at universities. To alleviate the effects of the lockdown that COVID-19 had imposed, leaders had to create alternatives based on solutions. Because of this, innovative leaders supported their team members and students in difficult situations by launching new initiatives designed to pave the way for a better future. For teachers and students to teach and learn from home, the educational leaders developed certain e-learning systems. Zoom, Google Hangout(Meet), Skype, Bamboo Learning, Google Classroom, Docebo, WIZIQ, Elucidate, WhatsApp, and Institutions Learning Management System (School Learning Portal) are a few of the e-learning platforms developed. However, effective use of the platforms had basic problems associated with them. Some of the problems encountered were: poor network, constant power failure, financial handicap of teachers and students in procuring airtime and inability of teachers and students to use some of the e-learning platforms because they had little or no knowledge of them. In line with this view Nwafor, (2021), observed that most lecturers were not ICT compliant and the e-learning platforms were not readily available and utilized.

Similarly, the works of Thompson (2021), Adreia (2020), Venke (2014), Educause (2012), and Piletti (2010), identified some innovative pedagogical teaching strategies, to help understand students' outcome better. These strategies often focus on student engagement in the universities and they are: Flip classroom; Blended learning; Personalized learning; Project based learning; Inquiry-based learning; Ask open-ended questions; Jigsaw; Peer teaching; Feedback; Active learning; Role playing; Case study; Cooperative and collaborative work; Differentiated instruction; Problem based learning and problem-solving method; and Group work. However, for the purpose of this study only flip classroom and blended learning will be discussed, to show how

educational management and leadership will encourage their utilization in universities to bring about effective teaching and learning in the post COVID-19 pandemic world.

Flip Classroom: In a "flip" classroom, students work on projects and assignments in the classroom while reviewing lecture materials at home. Before the pupils enter the classroom, the material is practically examined. According to Thompson (2021), in a flip classroom, students complete the homework that is ordinarily sent home electronically while in class. The researcher added that peer-to-peer collaboration is greatly facilitated by flip classrooms. According to this perspective, Vente (2014) noticed that the classroom transforms into an active learning environment where previously studied material is worked on and real-world problem-solving exercises, projects, and group discussions are conducted. Additionally, in a flip classroom, students are the main focus rather than teachers. According to Educase (2012), researchers should focus on the challenges that students face rather than simply presenting the course material. The instructors are adaptable, providing each student and group with specialized guidance and support as they finish their work. The core ideas of the inversion of the classroom, according to Andreia (2020), are as follows: students are encouraged to participate in both in-person and online activities; both the online learning environment and the classroom learning environment are highly structured; and classroom activities involve a significant amount of active learning to ask questions, solve problems, and engage in other activities.

Blended Learning: Blended learning gives students more flexibility over the time, location, path, and pace of instruction by fusing offline and online learning experiences (Thompson, 2021). According to Vente (2014), the dynamics of the classroom have changed as a result of digital information and communication technologies. The researcher went on to say that by incorporating technology into lesson plans and classroom activities, blended learning and hybrid teaching have been made possible. In hybrid education, technologically enabled face-to-face and remote activities are combined. This practice has been utilised in higher education to balance interactions between students and teachers with times when students are studying the material using online resources and other times when instruction is taking place in a classroom. In order to provide a more effective, exciting, and customized teaching and learning process, the face-to-face portion must always be under the teacher's control and value interpersonal relationships (Andreia 2020).

Educational management and leadership of the university has the responsibility of directing, coordinating and motivating the teachers and students to adhere to the innovative pedagogical processes observed so as to achieve the goal of teaching and learning. However, staff innovation, in the opinion of Ridey and Shokolov (2015), is the main focus when evaluating the difficulties of innovation management in the universities. In this situation, it is possible to regard staffing as a requirement for the success of innovative procedures in universities (Walder, 2014). The creative manager should hire qualified personnel to handle all aspect of the colleges' business. Staff training and retraining are also encouraged to give them access to current technology information. Nwafor (2021) contends that colleges and universities should provide all of their faculty members and students with workshops, training sessions, and refresher courses on how to use e-learning platforms for instruction. Financing, university environment and infrastructure are very important aspect of university life and they must be adequately provided and utilized for effective teaching and learning in line with innovative process (Olena et al, 2020).

Higher institutions in Nigeria include Universities, polytechnics, institutes and colleges of education. Higher education is acquired from the institutions and this is the education acquired after secondary school. Universities offer degrees and they are established in Nigeria by Federal Government, State Government, private individuals and organizations. Enugu state has six universities, one federal government owned, one state owned and four privately owned. These are University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Abani, Renaissance University, Coal City University, Enugu, Caritas University Enugu and Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu respectively.

The foundation of this research is transformative leadership. According to Burns (1998), this is the leadership style that results in adjustments in both social structures and individuals. By effecting significant and constructive change in the followers, transformational leadership ultimately aims to transform followers into leaders. According to Boberg and Bourgeois (2016), the need for creative and transformative leadership has grown in the education sector.

A leader who inspires, corporates, stimulates, and motivates followers to develop their creative abilities is said to be practicing transformational leadership, according to Siriphong (2021). According to Supapawawisit et al. (2018) in Aas et al (2019), leadership benchmarking activities encourage innovation in school management and leadership in Norway and Thailand. They also observed greater rates of innovation at universities with risk-taking cultures and policies. As the needs of consumers and the nature of organizations evolve, businesses concentrate on innovation to remain viable. Traditional leadership techniques, however, cannot work in the contemporary company context since they discourage employee innovation. According to Siriphong (2021), colleges are embracing innovation and modifying their business plans at the urging of organizational leaders. Innovative leadership is an optional pathway to competitiveness and success for universities due to different technological development and shifting procedures and processes.

In the process of reviewing several related literatures for this study, the researcher observed that most research on educational management and innovative pedagogical processes were based on the COVID 19 era. However, not much research was carried out on this topic in the post COVID 19 world. This study, therefore, wishes to close this observed gap.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to ascertain the extent to which educational managers promote innovative pedagogical approaches (such as blended learning and flip classrooms) in higher education in the post-COVID-19 era. This study was able to gather data in order to determine the degree to which university administrators support lecturers' use of e-learning tools for instruction and learning.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent educational managers encourage application of e-learning platforms, flip classroom and blended learning in teaching and learning in universities in Enugu State in post COVID-19 world, specifically to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which the educational managers of the universities provide enabling environment for lecturers to implement the university curriculum using e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in post COVID-19 world.
2. Establish the extent to which lecturers use e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in the implementation of the curriculum in the COVID-19 world.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study covers Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Enugu State. The level scope concentrated on Godfrey Okoye University educational managers and lecturers of faculty of Education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were constructed to guide the study:

1. To what extent do the educational managers of the universities provide enabling environment for lecturers to implement the university curriculum using e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in post COVID-19 world.
2. To what extent do the lecturers use e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in the implementation of the university curriculum in post COVID-19 world.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was used for this study. This is because the respondents' opinions were sought after. Enugu state was the area of the study. Enugu State is one of the 36 states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 35 educators from Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu, 10 university quality control officers and 25 faculty of education lecturers, still in Godfrey Okoye University.

After reviewing the pertinent academic papers for this study, a two-part questionnaire named "educational management and leadership innovative pedagogical processes" was created. an introduction that requested the respondents' personal information. The second segment, which had

two parts, focuses on creative teaching methods. Section A, which had twelve elements, was about educational managers at the university who create an environment that makes it possible to implement the curriculum using innovative pedagogical techniques. There were eight items in Section B about professors employing innovative pedagogical techniques to carry out university curriculum. A four-point Likert scale with the following options was used to generate the survey: very large extent (VGE), great extent (GE), low extent (LE), and very low extent (VLE). For the two research questions, nominal values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 were given, respectively. Three specialists from the college of education at Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu reviewed the instrument.

To determine the items' internal consistency, Cronbach alpha was utilized. Specifically, a trial test was conducted with a sample of 10 educational managers and 10 lecturers from universities in the Anambra State. Using Kumar Richardson formula 21, the instrument's reliability was calculated and found to be 0.76. The researcher then engaged the services of two research assistants who were trained on how to administer and retrieve the instruments from the respondents. The mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S) were used to summarize the results and provide responses to the research objectives. According to the judgment rule, any item with a mean score of 2.50 or above was thought to be favorable, while those with a mean score of 2.50 or lower were thought to be unfavorable.

Result

In accordance with the research questions, the study's findings were presented.

Research Question 1

1. To what extent do the educational managers of the universities provide enabling environment for lecturers to implement the university curriculum using e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in post COVID-19 world.

Table 1: mean scores (x) and standard deviation (S) of the extent the educational managers of the universities provide enabling environment for lecturers to implement the university curriculum using e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in universities in Enugu state.

S/N	Items	Educational Managers			Lecturers			Overall		
		X	S	DECISION	X	S	DECISION	X	S	DECISION
1.	Do educational managers (EDM) encourage lecturers to combine online and physical contact during teaching?	3.5	0.70	Accept	2.8	0.90	Accept	3.2	0.83	Accept
2.	Do EDMs encourage lecturers to give students projects which they can carry out on their own and later discussed face to face?	3.8	0.55	Accept	2.7	0.65	Accept	3.2	2.60	Accept
3.	Do EDMs equip the classrooms adequately with modern ICT facilities for teaching?	2.6	0.97	Accept	2.4	1.12	Reject	2.5	1.1	Accept
4.	Do EDMs encourage the lecturers to utilize e-learning platforms for teaching?	3.0	1.0	Accept	2.8	1.20	Accept	2.9	1.1	Accept
5.	Do EDMs supervise the lecturers to ensure they use e-learning platforms in teaching?	3.4	0.72	Accept	3.6	0.72	Accept	3.5	0.72	Accept
6.	Do EDMs provide strong network for dissemination of information?	2.7	0.68	Accept	2.8	0.65	Accept	2.8	0.67	Accept
7.	Do EDMs motivate lecturers to use e-learning platforms in teaching?	2.8	0.70	Accept	2.4	0.80	Accept	2.6	0.75	Accept
8.	Do EDMs provide for training and retraining of lecturers in the use of modern technology?	2.6	0.65	Accept	2.8	0.65	Accept	2.7	0.65	Accept
9.	Do EDMs attend leadership training?	2.8	0.72	Accept	2.4	0.74	Accept	2.6	0.73	Accept
10.	Is there provision of constant electricity supply in the University?	2.9	0.70	Accept	2.7	0.67	Accept	2.8	0.69	Accept
11.	Do the lecturers willingly use ICT facilities in teaching?	2.5	0.89	Accept	2.6	0.72	Accept	2.6	0.81	Accept

12.	Do lecturers have a clear knowledge of the curriculum	2.7	0.65	Accept	2.7	0.80	Accept	2.7	0.73	Accept
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Table 1 shows that the highest overall score is 3.2 and the lowest is 2.5. All the mean scores are above 2.5. This shows that both educational managers and lecturers agree to a great extent that the educational managers provide an enabling environment for innovation and pedagogical processes in post COVID – 19 pandemic world. Both of them do not agree on item 3 while the managers agreed that the ICT facilities are adequately provided in the classrooms the lectures with 2.4 claim that it is provided to a low extent. However, with overall score of 2.5 on item 3 it is accepted that the classrooms are adequately provided with modern ICT facilities.

Research Question 2:

To what extent do the lecturers use the e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in the implementation of the university curriculum in post COVID-19 world.

Table 2: mean scores and standard deviation of the extent the lecturers use e-learning platforms and innovative pedagogical processes in the implementation of the university curriculum:

S/N	Items	Educational Managers			Lecturers			Overall		
		X	S	DECISION	X	S	DECISION	X	S	DECISION
1.	Does the lecturer use flip classroom method in teaching?	2.4	0.91	Reject	2.7	0.76	Accept	2.6	0.84	Accept
2.	Does the lecturer use blended learning in teaching?	2.8	0.72	Accept	2.8	0.77	Accept	2.8	0.75	Accept
3.	Does the lecturer use e-learning to teach?	3.5	0.68	Accept	3.6	0.68	Accept	3.6	0.68	Accept
4.	Are the lecturers supervised by educational managers to ensure that they use ICT in teaching?	3.7	0.84	Accept	3.7	0.86	Accept	3.7	0.85	Accept

5.	Is the university provided with strong internet network for dissemination of information?	3.1	0.80	Accept	3.5	0.80	Accept	3.3	0.80	Accept
6.	Are lecturers motivated by educational managers?	2.7	0.76	Accept	2.4	0.90	Reject	2.6	0.86	Accept
7.	Are lecturers properly trained in the use of ICT gadgets?	2.6	0.76	Accept	2.8	0.70	Accept	2.7	0.73	Accept
8.	Do lecturers attend workshops to update their knowledge in ICT?	2.5	0.76	Accept	2.7	0.78	Accept	2.6	0.77	Accept

Table 2 indicates that the overall mean scores of both respondents is above 2.5. hence all the respondents agree that lecturers use e-learning platform and innovative pedagogical processes in implementing the university curriculum in post COVID-19 world.

Discussion of the Findings

The result obtained in the study on educational management and leadership: A key to innovative pedagogical processes in post COVID-19 pandemic world in universities in Enugu State has shown that the educational managers and lecturers agreed that an enabling environment is provided for e-learning and innovation. However, both educational managers and lecturers agreed to a great extent that the classrooms should be more equipped with adequate ICT Unit for effective teaching and learning in line with this finding, Olena et al (2020) opined that financing, university environment and infrastructure are very important aspect of university life and they must be adequately provided and utilized for effective teaching and learning in line with innovative pedagogical processes. Educational managers and lecturers also agree to a great extent that lecturers utilize e-learning platforms for teaching, they are innovative and they are trained on the usage of ICT. Similar to this, Nwafor (2021) suggested that colleges organise training seminars,

workshops, and refresher classes on how to use e-learning platforms to instruct all of their faculty members and students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is clear from the study's findings that Godfrey Okoye University's education administrators are continuing to implement the ground-breaking concepts they learned about during the COVID 19 era.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. In order to increase the use of e-learning platforms for teaching and learning, university administration should make sure that the ICT department can easily provide broadband services on university campuses.
2. The University educational managers should attend in-service training regularly to be in line with innovative processes this will enable them guide the lecturers better in discharging their duties of teaching.
3. To enable the use of e-learning platforms for teaching and learning, institutions should prepare their professors to be highly computer literate.

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