

**INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION
MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between innovative research and university education management for change in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted non-experimental design of correlational research type. The population of the study consist of 418 staff members (233 from Rivers State University's Faculty of Education and 185 from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education) with a sample of 370 employees (200 from Rivers State University's faculty of education and 170 from Ignatius Ajuru University's faculty of education). Data was collected using Innovative Research Questionnaire (0.83) and University Education Management for Change (0.87). Face and content validity of the instruments was established by experts in the field of test and development and reliability was estimated using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. Two hypotheses were developed for the study. Data analysis was done using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings showed that there is a substantial association between creative research and university education management transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria. Therefore, the researcher conclude and recommend that the government should provide universities with enough technology so that staff members have access to cutting-edge tools that will enhance their proficiency with digital tools and stimulates creative thinking in their research.

Keywords: Innovative, Research, University, Education, Management and Transformation.

Introduction

The importance of new research cannot be overstated. Innovative research is critical in educational management to drive national and global transformation. Innovation research is the

act of creating and commercializing new ideas, establishing new processes, or altering how your firm produces money (Lack, 2022). Innovation research is an integral part of the idea development process. Many decisions that turn an idea into action are guided by innovation research. The goal of innovation research is to find solutions to recognized or undefined demands. Innovation research prepares administrators and students for a dynamic workplace by allowing them to acquire abilities including creativity, adaptability, and resilience. Innovation is a word that is frequently used. To innovate is to alter something or approach a task in a novel way. An individual does not need to invent in order to innovate. Adaptability and ingenuity are ingrained in invention. (Brownson, 2022) asserts that there are no precise definitions for innovation research, particularly in the context of educational management for both domestic and international transformation. The essence of innovation education is being willing to view issues from new angles and approach them in novel ways.

Innovation research in educational management recognizes that educational manager utilizes new method of decision making, planning strategies, coordination, staffing and leadership styles. This enables educational managers to use technology for decision making and provide greater ways to facilitate clearer and better communication between school management with powerful tools for effective planning (Okon, 2018). This type of research in education management comes from identifying problems, watching and learning from others, to develop new methods to address these problems. It is the catalyst for

change and also helps prepare educational managers with the new method of decision-making by providing them with new opportunities to develop skills such as creativity, adaptability, and resilience.

Research on innovation in educational management facilitates the development of skills for efficient planning and decision-making in the educational process, as well as for managing the educational process more effectively. Adali (2020) claims that innovation research also contributes to the introduction of new and additional technology for the management of the educational system. Innovation research is essential to education management's ongoing development. In order to create environments where people have the deeper knowledge and skills necessary to participate in today's economy and society and lead meaningful lives, it can be helpful to consider alternative perspectives on ways to organize the educational system that go beyond the current institutional arrangements (Frank, 2020). Information and communication technology (ICT) innovation can be fueled by a variety of reasons and has the potential to revolutionize education. Brain research and learning sciences can deepen our understanding of how learning occurs, offer fresh insights into persistent problems, guide the development of novel approaches, or support already-established ones.

Another important source of innovation is educational research as well as the creation, exchange, and efficient application of information. It can offer a helpful foundation for professional practice and policy formation. But there are still gaps in our understanding of the dynamics of innovation, and there are poor connections between research and policy (and practice) (Salida, 2021). Teams that adopt an innovative approach are more equipped to adapt to possible changes, pivot, and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. Additionally, it can give a business a competitive edge by facilitating the creation of superior goods and services.

Dami (2022) claims that innovation research produces both national and global change. National and global change refers to modifications to the environment that have the potential to affect the Earth's ability to support life, such as shifts in the climate, leadership styles,

decision-making abilities, land productivity, oceans or other water resources, atmospheric chemistry, and ecological systems. The terms "national" and "global" describe the growing changes that occur in the world, particularly in the educational system. Salida (2021) asserts that social, cultural, technological, political, economic, and legal changes are all included in the category of global change in a societal context. Globalization and global integration are terms that are intimately tied to society and global transformation. Urbanism and long-distance trade marked the beginnings of globalization. Changes on a national and international level introduce new competencies for managing educational affairs, particularly with regard to digitalization policy and its application to contemporary educational challenges.

The topic of innovation research in management has become more and more prevalent recently, both in academic circles and among management consultants (Cimera, 2019). According to Birkin (2018), innovation in management is the creation and application of a practice, structure, technique, or management process that is novel to the highest degree of advancement in the industry and that is carried out in order to support the achievement of organizational goals. When compared to other forms of innovation, management innovation is exceptional in its capacity to effect significant and long-lasting improvements in the competitive advantage (Breen, 2020). Having and using managerial abilities, tenacity, and bravery in accepting accountability for enacting changes that spur advancement and performance are all necessary for innovation in management. In terms of innovation in education, this is an intentional endeavor that seeks to bring novelty into a particular setting. It is pedagogical in that it seeks to significantly enhance students' readiness through contact and interactivity (Béchar, 2021). In order to provide students with access to knowledge, a pedagogy that fosters personality development, and political, social, and democratic education, the principal must organize every aspect of their work in accordance with the goals of education (Palade, 2019).

The process of achieving educational aims and objectives through group and cooperative human efforts in an appropriate setting is known

as educational management. The operation of educational institutions entails direction, leadership, and supervision of individual activities toward the accomplishment of the institution's objectives. This is known as educational management (Campbell, 2017). It serves as a tool for achieving effective governance. This suggests that several stakeholders, including educators and administrators, as well as the kinds of administrative policies that managers implement, are needed to provide high-quality management. Fundamentally, education management is a service, activity, or tool that helps the educational process achieve its goals more effectively and completely (Frank, 2018). Education management calls for judicious resource allocation and direction as well as a high standard of accountability from all staff members, principal included. The operation of educational institutions entails direction, leadership, and supervision of individual activities toward the accomplishment of the institution's objectives. This is known as educational management. Management of the available material and human resources as well as assessment of educational endeavors are components of educational management. These are impossible to accomplish without productive innovation research.

Planning, coordinating, managing, budgeting, staffing, controlling, and guiding are among the indices of educational management that innovative research can bring about. Planning is the cornerstone of all sustainable development. A set of digital skills and knowledge activities carried out by the school manager to fulfill the educational aims and objectives are related to innovation research as a tool for efficient educational management. According to Collin (2020), having digital skills and knowledge can help administrators make decisions and take appropriate action to meet goals and objectives in education. This is known as effective governance. It entails a variety of techniques or competencies employed by department heads to manage educational institutions, including budgeting, organizing, leading, guiding, digitizing, assessing, and managing employees' efforts to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Robinson, 2017).

The following tasks are made easier and more efficiently by innovation research for educational management: motivating people to work toward educational goals and objectives through digital skills and knowledge on the growth and development of both individuals and groups for collective purpose; inspiring, improving, guiding, and listening; and encouraging people to get things done quickly. Additionally, it influences employee behavior in the direction of staff educational goals and helps transform the business through digital skills and knowledge that lead to the attainment of desired goals. Among other things, digital skills aid in guiding, teamwork development, discipline maintenance, frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, professional growth, planning, and directing. Good educational management helps teachers choose the best teaching techniques, classroom layouts, and other elements that will most likely support successful learning in classrooms (Frank, 2018).

Educational managers can effectively achieve their aims and objectives by using the managerial competence and ability to make logical decisions that innovation research offers. The success of the changes occurring in the educational system for the creation of the new CCMASS policy is largely determined by educational administration. Brown (2022) highlighted that creative development of nations and positive institutional transformation are brought about by inventive research (Ezeocha, 2017). It is a tool for creating policies, organizing, innovating curricula, communicating effectively, establishing school authority, teaching, being a perfectionist, and developing ideologies. It is impossible to overstate the value of innovation research in educational management. In order to improve the job performance of education policies, staff, teachers, and students' academic performance in schools, it gives educational managers a new method of acquiring digital skills and knowledge. These skills and knowledge can aid in directing, guiding, budgeting, planning, evaluating, providing material resources, and exercising good leadership. It also acknowledges that teachers require mandate modifications and that necessary organizational changes must be made. Research on innovation in educational administration contributes to the

establishment of sustainable reforms and advancements in the efficient operation of educational systems. It supports innovative approaches to education system planning and efficient decision-making.

Innovation research is the source of planning and decision-making processes. Making decisions entails choosing a deliberate plan of action from a predetermined, competitive set of options that address both the educational objectives and the presumed optimal means of accomplishing them (Simon, 2019). It is a step-by-step procedure that ends with a single set of decisions that prompts or propels action. According to Ukeje (2019), decision-making is the process by which a principal selects the course of action from a range of options. The principal can make decisions, plan, report, and offer feedback for the achievement of educational goals and objectives with the support of effective decision-making. Planning is the process of establishing goals and targets and creating plans to reach them. Managers are better able to assess the current state of educational obstacles when they plan the activity. Thinking through the steps necessary to accomplish a desired objective is the process of planning. Planning is predicated on the ability to attain educational objectives and foresight. It facilitates the process of defining a project's goals and objectives as well as the resources and steps required to meet those objectives. According to Williams (2019), planning aids in providing an overall operational framework and directions to the staff's working level in order to accomplish the aims and objectives of education.

Education managers at Rivers State-owned universities deal with a variety of issues that make creative research more difficult. The following factors have contributed to the poor implementation of educational policies that have hampered innovative research: insufficient infrastructure, particularly in the areas of electrical and internet connectivity; a lack of research ethics; a lack of digital facilities for the development of digital skills; an ineffective research methodology; an ineffective library system; poor infrastructural management; low accessibility of data and information; insecurity; non-funding of research; a lack of mentorship; a

lack of training; a lack of motivation; and a lack of payment hazards and publication allowances. Nevertheless, a number of issues, including inadequate planning and decision-making, are blamed for the issue of creative research and university educational management for national and international development. Effective university education management for both national and global change is predicted to result from educational management's adoption of these cutting-edge research projects, such as the use of digital skills and information to enhance planning and decision-making. This has worried educational administrators, stakeholders in education, and the general public to the point where numerous scholars have tried to address the issue, but it still exists. The goal of this study, Innovative Research and University Education Management for National and Global Change in Rivers State, is to objectively close this gap that has been established.

Purpose of the Study

The specific purpose of this study include;

1. To ascertain the connection between innovative research and department head decision-making for national transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the connection between innovative research and department head planning for change in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

- Ho1: There is no significant relationship between innovative research and department head decision making for national transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Ho2: There is no significant relationship between innovative research and department head planning for national transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted non-experimental design of correlational research type. The population of the study consist of 418 staff members (233

from Rivers State University's Faculty of Education and 185 from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education). The sample size of 370 of staff members (200 from Rivers State University's faculty of education and 170 from Ignatius Ajuru University's faculty of education) were selected for the study. The instrument titled Innovative Research Questionnaire (IRQ) and University Education Management Transformation Questionnaire (UEMTQ) were used for data collection. The instrument is divided into two parts A and B. Part B is the selection of staff key elements, while Part A is the Head of Department data option. The response option used on the instrument in cluster one (1) are Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D).

Research assistants received training in data administration and collecting. Face and content validity of the instruments was established by experts in the field of test and development and reliability was estimated using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient which stood at 0.87 and 0.83, respectively. Data analysis was done using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Result

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between innovative research and department head decision making for national transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Relationship between Innovative Research and Head of Department Decision Making for Change in Rivers State, Nigeria

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal	Remark
Innovation research	3907	62711	233167	0.68	Strong Positive relationship
Decision making	14664	880440			

n = 370, *Significance < .05 alpha level, df = 368, critical r-value = 0.139

Table 1 shows the relationship between innovative research and head of department decision making for change in Rivers State. From the Table, it was revealed that correlation coefficient (r), is 0.68. This suggests that innovative research and head of department decision-making for change have a very high positive relationship in Rivers State. Furthermore, result demonstrates that, at 368 degrees of freedom and 0.05 alpha levels, the computed r-value of 0.68 is higher than the

critical r-value of 0.139. Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproved. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between innovative research and head of department decision making for change in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant connection between innovative research and department head planning for national transformation in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Relationship between innovative research and head of department planning for change in Rivers State

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	r-cal	Remark
Innovation research	4391	79196	261964	0.52	Strong Positive relationship
Planning	14664	880440			

n = 370, *Significance < .05 alpha level, df = 368, critical r-value = 0.139

Table 2 shows the relationship between innovative research and head of department planning for change in Rivers State. From the Table, the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.52. This suggests that the relationship between innovative research and head of department planning for change have a high positive association in Rivers State. Also, result in the Table demonstrates that, with 368 degrees of freedom and 0.05 alpha level, the computed r-value of 0.52 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.139. Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproved. Therefore, in Rivers State, Nigeria, there is a strong correlation between innovation research and head of department planning for change.

Discussion of Findings

It was reviewed that there is a substantial beneficial association between university education management and department head decision-making for change in Rivers State, based on the findings shown in Table 1. This is thought to be accurate since the staff members' experiences with department heads' decision-making can motivate them to produce creative research that has the potential to positively impact the country. The study's findings are consistent with those of Umoh (2013), who discovered that one of educational management's responsibilities when doing their duties is making decisions. Furthermore, Jackson (2017) noted that decision-making supports educational management in achieving goals and objectives related to national transformation in education. The second table's result shows that, for national change in Rivers State, there is a good association between the head of department planning and university education management. This result is consistent with Williams' (2019) finding that planning aids educational management in accomplishing goals and objectives related to national transformation.

Conclusion

The study's findings led to the conclusion that, in Rivers State, Nigeria, innovative research and university education management have a significant association for change. This is because study indicates a substantial relationship between innovative research for change in Rivers State, Nigeria, and the study

also find out that innovative research and university management have a significant association for decision-making and planning that aligns with digital skills and knowledge.

Recommendations

The study's conclusions led to the formulation of the following suggestions.

1. To improve staff members' digital literacy, university education management should embrace cutting-edge research that aligns with digital skills and knowledge.
2. The government should give universities enough technology so that faculty members have access to cutting-edge tools that will enhance their proficiency with digital tools and stimulate creative thinking in their research.

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