

## Effective Management Strategies for Tertiary Institution Heads Towards Improving Student Learning Outcomes

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### Abstract

The paper explores effective management strategies of tertiary institution towards improving student learning outcomes. Effective management strategies in education entails setting clear goals and objectives that is in line with the institution's vision and mission, it links to guide decision making and ensures adequate resources allocation geared towards enhancing and achieving good educational outcomes. The study adopted descriptive survey research using questionnaire, three objectives and research question were adopted. The study was conducted among the management heads of the eight tertiary institutions in Imo State. From the findings it was discovered among others that developing clear mission and visions that align with student needs and outcome, setting measurable goals for student success and continuous improvement of staff are some of the effective management strategies. Recommendations were made such as the tertiary institution heads should set clear visions and missions that can be developed and implemented through effective leadership styles to help bring about excellence in student performance generally.

**Keywords:** *Effective, Strategy, Management, Student, Learning outcome*

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### **Background to the Study**

The educational sector is undergoing transformative changes prompted by technological advancement, shifts in education policies and evolving societal needs. Tertiary institution heads are at the forefront to implement this change which requires an apt understanding of how to manage both resources and people effectively. To handle this evolving situation, tertiary institution heads must stay at tune of educational trends, technology enhancements and policy updates with emphasis on how adaptation to these trends impact school operation and student learning outcomes. The emphasis of tertiary institution is to ensure all student graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in life. According to recent data from the National Center for Education statistics reveals a troubling trend where resources should be utilized effectively because of the urgency in improving student outcomes. Effective school administration is far above the management of daily operations. It involves shaping educational environment and directly influencing student learning outcomes. School administrators set the tone for the school culture, influences the morale of staff and make and take up strategic decision that have lasting effect on the institution's direction Leithwood, K. & Riehl, C. (2003).

Effective refers to something that produces the desired or intended result. It can also be described as goal oriented, efficient, and impactful, sustainable and adaptable. Effectiveness refers to the degree to which something achieves its intended goals or purpose. It can be measured in terms of outcomes, impact or result. Being effective in leadership management increases productivity, improved outcomes, enhances reputation and bring about better decision making. Also, individuals or organization can achieve their goals, make positive impact and success in their endeavors.

Management is concerned with planning and formulation of educational policies or programme with a view to achieving educational goals. It is the organizing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating of human and material resources necessary to achieve stated educational objectives (Desmond, 2020).

Management is usually used as a synonym for administration; it is a critical component of educational administration as it involves planning, organization and supervision of educational programs and services (Oku, Emenalo & Okeke 2001). Effective management is essential for promoting student success, improving educational outcomes and creating a positive school culture. Management is the process of planning, organizing and supervising resources to achieve a specific goal. Management is the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing leading and controlling organizational resources (Stella 2012).

Educational leaders use a multitude of strategies to perform these functions. In tertiary institution, there are different programme handled by different leaders of the different faculties. Institutions bring together knowledge, people and raw materials to perform the task that no one individual could do alone. Management for the purpose of educational institutions consists of the activities carried out by the heads of the institutions in their

different offices. They plan, organize and control the major activities of the institution and initiate actions. It is a well-known fact that decision making is a major requirement for each of the managerial functions.

Management is critical in educational administration as it plays a vital role in promoting student good academic success, improving the institutional educational outcome and providing a positive school culture. Nwebo, Uchegbu-basil (2024) identified that effective management improves student learning outcome; creates a positive school culture; foster teacher development and build community engagement. Management involved coordinating and directing the efforts of individual and team to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. Management helps the institutional heads to achieve their goals and objectives. It makes for improvement of employees. Good management can motivate, enhance and engage employees. It helps organizational members to adapt to changing circumstances.

Strategies refer to plans or approaches designed to achieve goals or objective. It involves allocating resources, prioritizing efforts and taking actions to accomplish desired outcomes. Strategies help one to focus on resources towards achieving goals. It provides direction and guidance for decision making. Effective strategies can help an organization achieve a competitive advantage; improve its outcome and result. It can also help an organization adapt to changing circumstances (Marzano, Waters & McNutty 2005).

Anorue, (2020) define strategic planning as a long-range planning by top- level management of an organization that determines the overall goals and aspirations. Strategic planning process includes identifying issues, stating goals, collecting data, preparing the plan, creating and implementation of plans, evaluating alternatives, adopting a plan, implementing and monitoring the plans. Effective management strategies can significantly impact student achievement, motivation and overall well-being. Strategic planning is background to fostering an educational environment that is not only sustainable in development but also anticipates challenges and opportunities in the future (the teachertreasury.com 2024).

Effective management strategies in education entails setting clear goals and objectives that is in line with the institution's vision and mission, it links to guide decisions making and ensures adequate resources allocation geared towards enhancing and achieving good educational outcomes. Tertiary institutions leadership focuses on teaching and learning process, conduct regular classroom feedback, building a positive school culture among student, teachers and staff, provide teacher support and development, parent engagement, data driven instruction and continuous improvement (Hallinger, 2010).

The key major strategies that school heads can employ to achieve student outcome as noted by Hallinger (2010) includes

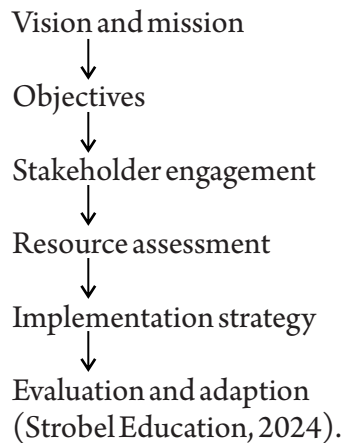
1. Instructional leaderships
  - I. Emphasize teaching and learning
  - II. Regular classroom observation
  - III. Teacher support

2. Setting clear goals and expectation
  - I. Clear vision and mission
  - II. High expectation
  - III. Data driven decision making
3. Building a positive school culture
  - I. Positive relationships
  - II. Safe and supportive environment
  - III. Recognition and reward
4. Teacher support and development
  - I. Professional development
  - II. Mentorship programs
  - III. Feedback and coaching
5. Parent and community engagement
  - I. Parent teacher relationship
  - II. Community partnership
  - III. Communication
6. Data driven instructions
  - I. Data analysis
  - II. Targeted intervention
  - III. Process monitoring
7. Continuous improvement

In school leadership strategies, it transcends mere management responsibilities emphasis is more on inspiring both staff and students of the institution. A leader in tertiary institution acts as a visionary by setting goals and paving ways to achieve the goals by fostering an environment conducive for learning and personal developments. Leadership is very important in educational organization as a result the far-reaching effects on both the accomplishment of school programme as well as the attainment of educational objectives (Uchegbu-Basil, 2020). Leaders motivate, encourage and inspire the actions, behaviours and beliefs of the personnel to achieve educational goals.

Strobel (2024), emphasis that effective leaders commit themselves to intentionally creating environment where everyone can both learn and thrive. Effective communication channel helps build a school community together and influences every area of the management of the institution. Good communication influences every aspect of the school management daily starting with staff, student and to engaging parents and the wider community.

## Developing a school strategic plan



To achieve the above strategies systematically the following will guide the long-term vision and mission of the school leader's effort;

1. Goal & objective -Identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (smart) goals that move schools towards its vision.
2. Stakeholder engagement—Ensures the involvement of all concerned student, staff, community to build collaborative and inclusive planning process.
3. Resource assesses – Evaluate current resources, determine needs including staff technology and financial support strategic initiatives.
4. Implementation strategies – Develop clear action steps detailing how goals will be achieved who will be responsible for what and timelines for completion.
5. Evaluation and adaptation—Create mechanism for monitoring process and making adjustment to strategies based on feedback and changing conditions.

Students come refers to the knowledge, abilities, skills or attitudes that students are expected to attain by the end of a learning experience or programme of study. The student learning outcomes are more often categorize into the four domains of learning. Cognitive domain emphasizes acquisition of mental skills and knowledge in relation to objective; affective domain express attitudes, emotions and values that influence learning behavior; Psychomotor emphasis on physical skills that requires coordinating and interpersonal that emphasis on the collaborative relationship between learners in regard to the objective of the lesson (Anderson,et al 2001). To measure student outcomes, educational institutions use various approaches such as accessing characteristics of students entering higher education and rates at which students complete with respect to programme level assessment.

Student learning outcomes should be informed when appropriate by the following conditions;

- i. Discipline – related skills
- ii. Accreditation and other external accountable expectations
- iii. Program goals and objectives. (veness.gatech.edu 2018)

In addition, the program level of the student learning outcomes should be meaningful in helping the program to accomplish its mission;

- i. Should be stated in measurable terms
- ii. Should reflect the aggregate by focusing on the program as a whole.
- iii. Should be manageable.

Another different way student learning outcome can be categorized or used as noted by Education Rerform (2014) are identifying positive and negative learning outcome of the students by educators, Instructional learning by the end of the instructional period; educational outcome through standard test scores, graduate rates, societal and life outcome as a result of an educational programme. Generally speaking, student outcomes typical refers to either desired learning objectives or standards the school or teachers wants for students to achieve or the educational, societal or life effects that result from students being educated

### **Statement of Problem**

The quality of education in many institutions is facing significant challenges leading to poor student learning outcomes. Despite efforts to improve education, many students continue to struggle with low academic achievement, high dropout rates and poor attendance. Institutional heads are seen to face numerous challenges in managing their institutions among which is limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, poor learning environment, difficulty in motivating teachers and limited focus on student outcome. There seems to be poor student achievement, high dropout rates and limited career opportunities, these challenges seem to affect the ability of institutional heads to create a conducive learning environment that fosters student success. The study is set examine these challenging situations and how it can be managed.

### **Purpose of Study**

The general purpose of this study is to identify effective management strategies of tertiary institution leaders towards improving student learning outcomes. Specifically, the study sets to;

1. Identify effective management strategies of tertiary institution heads
2. To examine the impact of management strategies on student learning outcomes.
3. To develop a framework for effective management by institutional heads to achieve good student learning outcome

### **Research Question:**

1. What management strategies do institutional heads adopt to improve student outcome?
2. To what extent do management strategies of tertiary institution heads affect student learning outcomes?
3. What strategic management framework can institution heads adopt to improve student outcome through effective management.



## Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The area of the study is all public tertiary institutions in Imo State. There are public tertiary institutions in Imo. They are Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri, Imo state University of Education Owerri, Federal university of Technology Owerri, Ozurumba Mbadiwe University Orlu, Federal College of lands and Agricultural Resources Owerri, Federal Polytechnics Nekede Imo State, Imo State polytechnics Umuagwo and Imo State college of Education Ihitte Uboma. The heads of the eight identified tertiary institutions; one of the deputies, the bursar, registrar, librarian and director of academic planning constitute the population. This will give the total population of forty-eight. Because of its size all of them were sampled using census sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was researcher designed questionnaire. The questionnaire titled Effective Management Strategies of Tertiary Institution Heads towards improving Student Outcome (EMSTIHSO) was used. It contains 24 items structured in 4-point likert scale of very high extent (VHE) 4-point, high extent (HE) 3 Points, Low extent (LE) 2 Points and very low extent (VLE) 1 Point. The instrument was validated by an expert in measurement and evaluation and the data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics especially the weighted mean and standard deviation.

**Research question one:** What management strategies do tertiary institutions heads adopt to improve student learning outcome.

**Table 1:** Management strategies institutional heads adopt to improve student learning outcome.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	Remark
1	Develop clear mission and vision that aligns with student needs and outcome	3.3	0.7	Accept
2	Set measurable goals for student success	3.1	0.96	Accept
3	Regularly review strategy to ensure alignment with changing needs of student and industry	3	0.73	Accept
4	Provision of leadership that promotes a culture of excellence and student centeredness.	3	0.79	Accept
5	Continuous improvement where staffs are empowered to identify areas for improvement and implement changes.	3.1	0.96	Accept
6	Regularly solicit feedback from student to identify areas for improvement and enhances student experience.	3.4	0.76	Accept
7	Provide professional development opportunities for faculty to enhance their teaching and research.	2.8	1.00	Accept
8	Invest in infrastructure development that supports student learning including technology, facilities and equipment.	3.2	0.85	Accept

**Research question two:** To what extent do management strategies of tertiary institution heads affect student learning outcomes?

**Table 2:** Effect of the management strategies of tertiary institution heads on learning student outcome.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	Remark
1	Makes for improved academic achievement by promoting student engagement through personalized learning and feedback.	3.1	0.77	Accept
2	Better teacher -student relationship through mentorship program.	3.2	0.19	Accept
3	Management strategies that personalized students such as student learning and feedback leads to student satisfaction	3.2	0.24	Accept
4	Management strategies that focus on career development such as counseling and work integrated learning can help student transits smoothly into the workforce.	2.9	0.95	Accept
5	Fosters positive campus culture that promotes inclusivity, diversity and increases student satisfaction	3.2	0.85	Accept
6	Building partnership with industry partners can provide students with valuable network opportunities and job placement.	3.1	0.93	Accept
7	Management strategies that prioritize quality assurance such as accreditation helps to maintain standard and enhance reputation.	3.2	0.85	Accept
8	Encourages innovation and research can contribute to institutions reputation and attract top students	3.1	0.93	Accept



**Research question 3:** What strategic management framework can tertiary institution heads adopt to improve student learning outcome?

**Table 3:** Strategic management framework of tertiary institution heads to improve student learning outcome.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	Remark
1	Strategic planning that develops a clear vision, mission and goals for the institutions.	3.2	0.58	Accept
2	Adoption of environmental scanning strategies to identify trends, opportunities and challenges.	3.3	0.69	Accept
3	Creating an organizational structure that supports student success.	3.5	0.5	Accept
4	Organize effective resources allocation to support student learning outcome and staff development.	3.1	0.93	Accept
5	Effective leadership style that promotes a culture of excellence, innovation and self-centeredness.	3	0.65	Accept
6	Foster open and transparent communication with stakeholders including student, staff and industry partners.	3.3	0.39	Accept
7	Control by regularly monitor and evaluate performances against establish goals and objective	3.1	0.87	Accept
8	Regularly evaluate students learning outcomes, program effectiveness and institutional performance.	3.2	1.00	Accept

### Discussion of Findings

Findings from table 1 revealed that all the items highlighted are management strategies that tertiary institutional heads can adopt to improve student outcome. Some of them are developing clear mission and visions that align with student needs and outcome, set measurable goals for student success, continuous improvement of staff and implementation of changes, provision of leadership that promotes excellence and student centeredness. This finding is in line with Hallinger (2010) which said that tertiary institutions leadership focuses on teaching and learning process, conduct regular classroom feedback, build a positive school culture among student, teachers and staff, provide teacher support and development, parent engagement, data driven instruction and continuous improvement.

In table 2, the heads of tertiary institutions agreed that effective management strategies impact on student learning outcomes; it makes for improved academic achievement through personalized learning and feedback; better teacher-student relationship through mentorship, encourages research and innovation which enhances institutions reputation, helps to prioritize quality assurance such as accreditation to maintain standard. This agrees with the findings of Nwebo, uchebui-basil (2024), which identified that effective management

improve student learning outcomes; create a positive culture; foster teacher development and build community engagement.

Also, in table 3, it was agreed that the institutional heads can adopt some strategic management framework in order to enhance student outcome such as; strategic planning, environmental scanning strategies, organizational structure, leadership's style, transparent communication. These findings agree with Strobel (2024), which emphasises that the most effective leaders commit themselves to intentional creating environment where everyone can both learn and thrive. Effective communication channel builds a school's community together and influences every area of institutional management. Good communication influences every aspect of the school management on daily basis with staff, student and to engaging parents and wider community.

### **Conclusion**

In tertiary institutions, leadership strategies transcend mere management responsibilities emphasis is more on inspiring both staff and students of the institution. A leader in tertiary institution should acts as a visionary by setting goals and paving ways to achieve the goals by fostering an environment conducive for learning and personal developments.

### **Recommendations**

Based the findings the following recommendations were made;

The tertiary institution heads should set clear visions and missions that can be developed and implemented through effective leadership styles to help bring about excellence in student performance generally.

Tertiary institution should practice student personalized learning by making available facilities that will enhance facilitate it. Good mentorship of student by staff should be encouraged, also tertiary institution heads should encourage research and innovation to bring about quality assurance towards maintaining good academic standard. The leadership of tertiary institutions should adopt good strategies towards enhancing student learning outcome such as establishing good organizational structure, transparent communication to help bring about the best of the learning outcomes from the student that can be recognized globally.

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