

EXPLORING THE PRAXIS OF CAMPUS MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Management is at the heart of higher education. As such, practices are crucial to its meeting of educational standards. Hence, this study explored the extent of management practices along efficiency, accountability, participatory decision-making, and transparency as assessed by the student-stakeholders. Results show that management practices are observed to a very great extent. However, there remains to be a significant implication on the higher education institution's sustainable development through its continuous observance of quality and effective management practices that cater not only to students but to all other stakeholders of the institution.

Keywords: accountability, efficiency, participatory decision-making, management practices, transparency

Introduction

Management in education has become the prerogative of higher education institutions and optimum allocation and use of resources have become one of the chief aims of all higher education institutions (Sengupta et al., 2022). The growing demand for higher education services encourages universities to pay more attention to the upgrading of their management systems and methodologies to achieve quality standards. To this end, they must implement effective management practices to ensure the success and growth of their institutions. These practices include strategic planning, budgeting and financial management, human resources management, and stakeholder engagement. By implementing strategic planning, higher education institutions (HEIs) can set clear goals and objectives, identify priorities, and develop strategies to achieve them (Aman et al., 2019; Selvitopu & Kaya, 2020). This strategic management planning helps ensure that all members of the institution are working towards a common vision and are focused on the institution's long-term success.

However, HEIs face numerous management challenges that require effective solutions. These challenges include greater autonomy, increasing competition to attract students, rising education costs, technological advancements, industry globalization, changing expectations of stakeholders, and the trend towards privatization (Anh et al., 2021). These challenges necessitate the implementation of improved management and leadership practices in higher education institutions. To address these challenges, higher education institutions need to prioritize effective strategic planning, adapt to technological advancements, diversify revenue streams, enhance marketing and branding strategies, foster a culture of innovation and adaptability, and prioritize the needs and expectations of stakeholders. In addition, higher education institutions must also address issues related to operational efficiency, resource allocation, faculty and staff management, student retention and success, accreditation and quality assurance, and aligning institutional goals with societal needs. (Manenzhe & Ngirande, 2021).

Essentially, budgeting and financial management practices are crucial for higher education institutions. They must effectively allocate resources, monitor financial performance, and ensure transparency and accountability in financial decision-making. By doing so, institutions can make informed financial decisions, manage financial risks, and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the institution. Furthermore, effective human resources management practices are essential in higher education institutions (Shodiq, 2019). These practices include recruitment and hiring processes, professional development opportunities for staff and faculty, performance management systems, and promoting a positive and inclusive work environment. By implementing these practices, institutions can attract and retain talented individuals, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and optimize the contributions of their human capital. Similarly, stakeholder engagement is also a crucial management practice in higher education institutions. It involves actively involving all relevant stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and industry partners, in decision-making processes and fostering a strong sense of shared ownership and collaboration. (Pais et al., 2022).

The above-cited crucial elements in the effective and strategic management of HEIs necessitate quality management practices anchored on efficiency, accountability, participatory decision-making, and transparency. On the one hand, efficient campus management practices are essential in higher education institutions to ensure smooth operations and create a conducive learning environment for students (Mongkoldhumrongkul & Sukkanta, 2022). These practices include optimizing resource allocation, streamlining administrative processes, and implementing sustainable practices to maximize efficiency. Efficient campus management practices also involve utilizing technology and data analysis to make informed decisions and improve overall operational efficiency (Fang & Wang, 2022).

Accountability is another crucial aspect of campus management in higher education institutions. In order to maintain accountability, institutions should establish clear roles and responsibilities, set performance expectations, and regularly evaluate and report on progress (Chen & Pang, 2022). Transparency, on the other hand, is a key principle in campus management practices. It involves open communication, sharing relevant information, and making decisions in a clear and unbiased manner (Day et al., 2022). Likewise, participatory decision-making is an important aspect of campus management in higher education institutions. It involves involving key stakeholders, such as faculty, staff, and students, in the decision-making process to ensure their voices are heard and considered (Ambariyanto et al., 2018). By implementing efficient campus management practices, higher education institutions can enhance their overall effectiveness and governance, leading to improved student satisfaction, academic performance, and institutional reputation among other benefits (Kassem et al., 2021).

Premised on the foregoing concepts and issues in campus management of HEIs, this study endeavored on assessing the extent of management practices as observed and perceived in an educational context.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the system theory as postulated by Parson (1977). The system theory, postulated by Parson (1977), explores the idea of a system as a collection of individuals who interact based on a shared understanding of cultural symbols. He defines a system as a group of individuals who engage in interactions guided by a commonly understood system of cultural symbols. Also, this theory highlights how individuals within a system rely on cultural symbols to navigate their interactions and maintain social order.

This theory is applied in the school system in that, a school as a system also has various inputs that are processed to produce outputs with feedback. Effective management of education depends on the availability and management of resources, accountability and participatory decision-making (good governance) towards the realization of educational goals.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative descriptive method of research to determine the extent of management practices along efficiency, accountability, participatory decision-making, and transparency. The setting of the study is at a higher education institution, a state university, in Norther Luzon. The respondents involved in the study were the 243 college students from all year levels in four colleges of the campus. The study made use of a survey questionnaire adopted from Kadir & Nimota (2019) with their study titled *Good Governance Issues in Education System and Management of Secondary Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria* published in *EJEP: EJournal of Education Policy*.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the extent of management practices along efficiency as assessed by the respondents. The category mean of 3.39 indicates that there is a “Very Great Extent” of management practices along efficiency as assessed by the respondents. In addition, all indicators are likewise assessed as practiced to a very great extent.

Specifically, the indicators with the highest mean scores are “*The campus ensures development of information communication technology in school to improve education quality*”, “*CSU Andrews keeps record of resources for effective management to enhance the achievement of educational goals and objectives.*”, “*The campus encourages academic community to review the academic offer and engage students and faculty in course design.*”, and “*The campus sets performance targets that are communicated to employees and students.*”, with mean scores of 3.45, 3.44, 3.43, and 3.41, respectively.

The above finding stands to reason as ICT plays a crucial role in development. As aptly cited by Mutagahywa (2012) and Hanimoglu (2018) that ICT boosted the impact of governance and management in educational institutions and showed various benefits from using mobiles and computerized applications in education., most specifically e-learning and life-long learning.

On the other hand, the indicator “*The campus has income-generating activities within the school that help in enhancing educational objectives.*” received the lowest mean score of 3.30. This has implication on campus empowerment as the generation of fund or income according to Charles (2019) are all activities focused on creating opportunities for communities to productively use locally-available resources in order to develop less state-dependent and more self-reliant communities that are able to take care of themselves. In addition, income-generating activities provide additional benefits that improve the wellbeing of communities; and promote empowerment, self-reliance and community development. Thus, efficiency in public service delivery is critical in enhancing and improving the quality of citizens’ lives. Conversely, inefficient public service delivery has profound adverse effects on the quality of citizens’ lives. It is argued that services and management can positively affect lives through a combination of policy measures spanning improved funding, enhanced monitoring, and increased institutional capacity for improved expansion in physical presence, quality, and the visibility of public services (Gumah & Aziabah, 2020).

Table 1. Extent of management practices along efficiency.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The campus ensures development of information communication technology in school to improve education quality.	3.45	Very Great Extent

2. Maintenance of school facilities such as school building, drinking water and furniture in the campus helps in enhancing educational objectives.	3.33	Very Great Extent
3. The campus has income-generating activities within the school that help in enhancing educational objectives.	3.30	Very Great Extent
4. CSU Andrews keeps record of resources for effective management to enhance the achievement of educational goals and objectives.	3.44	Very Great Extent
5. The campus sets performance targets that are communicated to employees and students.	3.41	Very Great Extent
6. The campus monitors and evaluates key performance indicators, results, and the level of implementation of the action plans, through internal audits, external audits, annual self-assessment.	3.39	Very Great Extent
7. The campus streamlines the use of ICT in teaching and ensures delivery of services by its frontline service providers.	3.33	Very Great Extent
8. The campus encourages academic community to review the academic offer and engage students and faculty in course design.	3.43	Very Great Extent
Category Mean	3.39	Very Great Extent

Table 2 presents the extent of management practices along accountability as assessed by the respondents. The category mean of 3.37 indicates that management accountability is practiced to a “Very Great Extent”. Likewise, the individual indicators show that management accountability is practiced to a very great extent.

From among the six indicators, “*The campus administration has appropriate safeguarding measures for its properties to enhance effective educational system.*” received the highest rating with a mean score of 3.41. Whereas, “*There is an effective and updated record keeping observed by the campus administration.*” received the lowest rating with a mean score of 3.34.

The above findings imply the campus’ accountability as it safeguards its properties and records, establishes clear and transparent rules, provides students and employees annual report on the finance and academic performance, and employs effective allocation of scarce resources. This strategic management is reflective of the management’s flexibility and accountability given the limitations or constraints.

This accountability, according to Hailu & Shifare (2019), is one of the main challenges of public service delivery to include willingness to provide service as per request, sense of belongingness, inconsistencies of rules and regulations, and lack of integration problem among different government service providers.

Table 2. Extent of management practices along accountability.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The campus administration establishes clear and transparent rules that bring about effective realization of educational goals.	3.39	Very Great Extent
2. The campus administration has appropriate safeguarding measures for its properties to enhance effective educational system.	3.41	Very Great Extent
3. The campus administration provides students and employees annual report on the finance and academic performance of the school to enhance quality learning.	3.36	Very Great Extent
4. The campus administration employs effective allocation of scarce resources to enhance quality learning.	3.36	Very Great Extent
5. There is an effective and updated record keeping observed by the campus administration.	3.34	Very Great Extent
6. The campus has a system for appeal where decisions can be contested / challenged by members through well-defined internal channels specified in its procedure.	3.35	Very Great Extent
Category Mean	3.37	Very Great Extent

Table 3 displays the extent of management practices along participatory decision-making as assessed by the respondents. All individual indicators’ mean scores and the category mean of 3.35 indicate that respondents assessed the management practices along participatory decision-making to a “Very Great Extent”.

More specifically, the indicator “*The campus administration provides opportunities for students and employees to play their roles in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for better enhancement of quality education.*” is assessed with the highest mean score of 3.42. On the other hand, the indicator “*The campus administration encourages grassroots participation.*” is assessed with the lowest mean score of 3.28.

The above findings suggest that the campus management is considerate of the contributions that the stakeholders may bring into for the success of the campus plans and targets. It then adheres to participatory management practice which suggests a change in management style should the need arises. Accordingly, management role in decision making and the need for stakeholders’ involvement in decision making process develops managerial skills that will ensure stakeholders as resources from which managers or administrators can tap their knowledge and experience to bring about school effectiveness (Tijani, 2020). In addition, participatory processes have been identified as one of the most powerful engines to provoke real transformations in higher education institutions, in order to help them, and those with whom they engage, face the growing demands and challenges of an increasingly globalized and environmentally exhausted world (Boni & Gasper, 2012).

Table 3. Extent of management practices along participatory decision-making.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is a facilitation of all procedures to allow different sectors to participate in the educational process.	3.35	Very Great Extent
2. The campus administration encourages grassroots participation.	3.28	Very Great Extent
3. There is an effective and active participation of stakeholders in generating essential resources for the school.	3.34	Very Great Extent
4. The campus administration provides opportunities for students and employees to play their roles in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for better enhancement of quality education.	3.42	Very Great Extent
5. The campus administration builds a sense of belongingness which helps to achieve the needed cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the decision.	3.36	Very Great Extent
Category Mean	3.35	Very Great Extent

Table 4 shows the extent of management practices along transparency as assessed by the respondents. Categorically and individually, all indicators are assessed to a “Very Great Extent” and as shown by the category mean of 3.37.

“The campus publishes on its website an annual activity report, including main events information (or specific reports of events) and reports from academic councils and colleges.” is assessed

with the highest mean score of 3.40. Whereas, “*The campus has feedback mechanism and reports results of the same to stakeholders.*” received the lowest mean score of 3.33.

The above findings imply that the campus management practice transparency in its activities and processes. The dissemination of information helps managers accept more participative leadership styles and work configurations, leading to greater stakeholders’ involvement and, ultimately, better relations (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2003). Further, this transparency benefits the stakeholders as they are given bases or references for their actions and progress. The cruciality of transparency in management is illustrated by the findings of Kalokora & Lekule (2019) who emphasized that lack of transparency affects decision-making processes and jeopardizes employees' relationships which lead to poor coordination and low organizational trust. Moreover, stakeholders who transparently have access to such information are more likely to feel empowered and are better able to participate in decision-making (Hollyer et al., 2012).

Table 4. Extent of management practices along transparency.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The campus provides students and employees access to information and educational services.	3.39	Very Great Extent
2. The campus shares information in an open manner.	3.34	Very Great Extent
3. The campus administration involves stakeholders in decision making.	3.35	Very Great Extent
4. The campus provides updates on its activities and performance.	3.39	Very Great Extent
5. The campus publishes on its website an annual activity report, including main events information (or specific reports of events) and reports from academic councils and colleges.	3.40	Very Great Extent
6. The campus has feedback mechanism and reports results of the same to stakeholders.	3.33	Very Great Extent
Category Mean	3.37	Very Great Extent

Table 5 shows the summary table on extent of management practices along the four domains. The over-all mean of 3.37 indicates that there is a Very Great Extent of management practices. From among the four domains, the campus management exhibits extensive practice first on efficiency as this has the highest mean, followed by practices on accountability and transparency, then by participatory decision-making management practices.

Table 5. Summary table on extent of management practices.

Domain	Mean	Interpretation
Efficiency	3.39	Very Great Extent
Accountability	3.37	Very Great Extent
Participatory Decision-making	3.35	Very Great Extent
Transparency	3.37	Very Great Extent
Overall	3.37	Very Great Extent

Conclusion and Recommendations

Management practices in the campus are observed to a great extent. This extensive management practices along efficiency, accountability, participatory decision-making, and transparency reflect the effective management practices employed by educational leaders to the agreement of the students who are the ultimate recipients of management actions. It is underscored, however, that campus management considers sustainability development of their practices which extends to the needs and satisfaction of the stakeholders in general.

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