International Journal of Innovative Education Research 14(3):223-232, July-Sept, 2026

© SEAHI PUBLICATIONS, 2026 www.seahipublications.org ISSN: 2354-2942

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.21765468

Influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence (EI) on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria

Dr. AMINU Sani, BALI Imrana, HABILA Jerry Bala , ABUBAKAR Abass Sa'ad & BWAKYAUTEN Tanko Yerima

Department of Educational Foundation, Taraba state University, Jalingo, Nigeria

Correspondence emails: Alamintsujalingo@gmail.com, Imranabala22@gmail.com, Habilabala475jerry@gmail.com; Bwakyautentankoyerima@gmail.com; & abbasabubakarsaad@gmail.com; Phones; 08038727143, 08160960657, 08032920130, 08029331714, & 08039589932

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence on the effective management of tertiary institutions. Two research questions guided the study, while two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 3,904 academic and non-academic staff from five tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone. A sample of 390 respondents, representing 10% of the population, was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled *Influence of Leadership on the Management of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (ILMATIQ)*. The instrument was validated by three experts, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.85, while a test–retest reliability coefficient of 0.811 was obtained using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, whereas Chi-square statistics were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that communication effectiveness positively influenced the management of tertiary institutions (cluster mean = 3.19), with a significant Chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 98.255$, df = 21, $p < .05$). Emotional intelligence also positively influenced institutional management (cluster mean = 3.09). Although the Pearson Chi-square value was not significant, the Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 92.544$, $p = .034$) and Linear-by-Linear Association ($\chi^2 = 85.826$, $p = .019$) indicated a significant relationship. The study concluded that communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence are essential leadership competencies for enhancing institutional management. It recommended that tertiary institution administrators strengthen communication systems and promote emotional intelligence through continuous leadership development and capacity-building programmes to improve organizational effectiveness and institutional performance.

Keywords: Communication Effectiveness, Emotional Intelligence, Management of Tertiary Institutions, Leadership Competencies

INTRODUCTION

Management is a systematic process of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling human, material, financial, and information resources to achieve predetermined organizational goals effectively and efficiently. According to Daft (2021), management is the attainment of organizational goals through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational resources. Effective management ensures the proper utilization of available resources, facilitates informed decision-making, promotes accountability, and enhances organizational productivity. Within educational institutions, management encompasses the coordination of academic and administrative activities to ensure the realization of institutional objectives.

Management of tertiary institutions involves the effective administration of teaching, learning, research, staff development, students' welfare, financial resources, and physical facilities to achieve institutional goals. Tertiary institutions occupy a strategic position in national development through the production of skilled manpower, knowledge generation, innovation, and community service. Consequently, their effectiveness depends largely on the quality of management provided by institutional leaders. According to Okebukola and Ajayi (2019), management of tertiary institutions involves strategic planning, effective coordination of academic and administrative activities, prudent resource allocation, staff motivation, quality assurance, and stakeholder participation in institutional governance. Effective management therefore promotes academic excellence, organizational stability, and sustainable institutional development.

In Nigeria, tertiary institutions continue to face numerous management challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructural facilities, increasing student enrolment, policy inconsistencies, industrial disputes, and rapid technological changes. These challenges have increased the demand for institutional leaders who possess not only technical and administrative competencies but also strong interpersonal and communication skills capable of promoting collaboration and organizational effectiveness. In Jalingo Education Zone of Taraba State, the situation appears similar, as institutional managers are expected to coordinate diverse academic and administrative units while responding to the expectations of government, staff, students, regulatory agencies, and the larger society. Effective management in such an environment requires leadership competencies that encourage cooperation, timely information dissemination, conflict resolution, and positive interpersonal relationships.

Leadership is the process of influencing, motivating, and guiding individuals toward the accomplishment of organizational goals. Northouse (2022) defined leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Within tertiary institutions, leadership determines how institutional policies are formulated and implemented, how resources are managed, how conflicts are resolved, and how staff and students are motivated toward achieving institutional objectives. Leadership effectiveness is reflected in the ability of institutional managers to communicate organizational vision, inspire confidence, build productive relationships, and create an enabling environment for academic excellence. Among the numerous leadership variables identified in educational administration literature, communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence have continued to receive considerable scholarly attention because of their significant influence on organizational performance.

Communication effectiveness refers to the ability of institutional leaders to transmit information clearly, accurately, timely, and through appropriate channels in ways that are understood by intended recipients and capable of eliciting the desired responses. Effective communication facilitates coordination, promotes transparency, strengthens teamwork, reduces misunderstanding, and enhances decision-making within organizations. In tertiary institutions, communication effectiveness enables management to disseminate policies, coordinate academic programmes, provide feedback, encourage staff participation, and maintain harmonious relationships among stakeholders. When communication is effective, institutional goals become clearer, employees become more committed to their responsibilities, and organizational activities are executed with greater efficiency.

Conversely, ineffective communication may create confusion, misinformation, delays in decision-making, poor coordination of academic activities, reduced staff morale, and frequent conflicts among institutional stakeholders. In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, communication challenges arise from bureaucratic procedures, inadequate communication facilities, technological limitations, and ineffective feedback mechanisms. Such communication gaps often affect institutional productivity and administrative efficiency. As observed by the researcher, communication effectiveness appears to be a challenge in some tertiary institutions within the Jalingo Education Zone, where information relating to institutional policies, administrative decisions, and academic programmes may not always reach staff and other stakeholders promptly or through appropriate communication channels. This situation may adversely affect the effective management of tertiary institutions.

Another leadership variable that has gained prominence in educational management is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of leaders to recognize, understand, regulate, and appropriately utilize their own emotions while effectively managing the emotions of others. According to Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, emotionally intelligent leaders possess competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and intrinsic motivation, which enable them to build healthy interpersonal relationships and create positive organizational climates. In tertiary institutions, emotionally intelligent leaders are more likely to demonstrate fairness, empathy, effective conflict resolution, sound decision-making, and supportive supervision. These qualities contribute significantly to staff satisfaction, organizational commitment, teamwork, and institutional effectiveness.

The dynamic nature of tertiary institutions requires administrators who can effectively manage interpersonal relationships among academic staff, non-academic staff, students, governing councils, labour unions, and external stakeholders. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are generally more capable of resolving conflicts peacefully, managing stress, motivating employees, responding to stakeholders' concerns, and maintaining organizational harmony. Such leaders promote trust, cooperation, and employee engagement, all of which contribute positively to effective institutional management.

However, inadequate emotional intelligence among institutional leaders may result in poor interpersonal relationships, ineffective conflict management, low staff morale, mistrust, communication breakdown, resistance to change, and reduced organizational commitment. As observed by the researcher, some institutional leaders in tertiary institutions within the Jalingo Education Zone appear to experience difficulties in managing interpersonal relationships, responding appropriately to staff concerns, and resolving workplace conflicts. These challenges may hinder collaboration, weaken institutional cohesion, and negatively affect effective management.

The management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, requires institutional leaders who possess effective communication skills and high emotional intelligence to respond to the increasing complexity of higher education administration. The growing demand for quality teaching, research, innovation, accountability, and stakeholder participation has made these leadership competencies indispensable for institutional success. Effective communication facilitates information sharing and organizational coordination, while emotional intelligence strengthens interpersonal relationships, promotes teamwork, and enhances institutional stability.

Despite various interventions by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Taraba State Government, the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) aimed at improving governance and management in tertiary institutions, challenges relating to administrative effectiveness, communication, staff relations, and institutional performance still appear to persist. It therefore becomes necessary to investigate whether communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence significantly influence the management of tertiary institutions within the Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence that will guide institutional leaders, policymakers, and other educational stakeholders in strengthening leadership practices and improving the overall management of tertiary institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Effective management is indispensable for the realization of the goals of tertiary institutions through efficient coordination of human, financial, and material resources, effective implementation of institutional policies, and the provision of quality teaching, learning, research, and community service. Effective management enhances staff productivity, promotes institutional harmony, facilitates timely decision-making, and ensures the achievement of educational objectives. Consequently, the success of tertiary institutions depends largely on the ability of institutional leaders to communicate effectively, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, and create a conducive working environment for staff and students.

However, as observed by the researcher, the management of some tertiary institutions within the Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, appears to be confronted with several administrative challenges. These include delays in administrative decision-making, poor coordination of academic and administrative activities, ineffective implementation of institutional policies, weak staff commitment, low staff morale, poor teamwork, and inadequate collaboration among institutional stakeholders. There also appear to be communication gaps between management and staff, resulting in misunderstandings, delayed dissemination of information, inadequate feedback mechanisms, and reduced stakeholder participation in institutional affairs. These conditions seem to have affected administrative efficiency and the effective management of tertiary institutions in the study area.

The observed management challenges may be associated with ineffective communication and inadequate demonstration of emotional intelligence by some institutional leaders. Communication effectiveness appears to be inadequate in some institutions, as important information relating to institutional policies, academic programmes, and administrative decisions may not always be communicated clearly, accurately, promptly, or through appropriate channels. Similarly, some institutional leaders appear to experience difficulties in managing interpersonal relationships, resolving workplace conflicts, responding appropriately to staff concerns, and creating a supportive organizational climate. These conditions may contribute to mistrust, poor cooperation, reduced staff motivation, frequent interpersonal conflicts, and ineffective institutional management.

Over the years, the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Taraba State Government, the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have introduced various interventions aimed at improving the management of tertiary institutions through leadership development programmes, staff capacity-building initiatives, quality assurance exercises, institutional accreditation, policy reforms, and infrastructural support. Despite these efforts, challenges relating to ineffective communication, poor interpersonal relationships, conflict management, staff commitment, and administrative efficiency appear to persist in some tertiary institutions within the Jalingo Education Zone.

If these challenges remain unresolved, they may continue to undermine effective institutional management, reduce staff productivity and morale, weaken organizational cohesion, hinder the attainment of institutional goals, and ultimately affect the quality of higher education in the study area. Although previous studies have examined leadership and institutional management, there is limited empirical evidence on the combined influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. This gap in knowledge necessitated this study. It is against this background that the study seeks to examine the influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to examine the influence of:

1. Communication effectiveness on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

2. Emotional intelligence on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of communication effectiveness on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1: Communication effectiveness has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: Emotional intelligence has no significant influence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of communication effectiveness and emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Jalingo Education Zone, which comprises Jalingo and Ardo-Kola Local Government Areas. The population consisted of 3,904 academic and non-academic staff drawn from five tertiary institutions in the zone. A sample of 390 respondents (10% of the population) was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling, ensuring adequate representation of academic and non-academic staff across the institutions.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled *Influence of Leadership on the Management of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (ILMATIQ).* For this study, only the clusters measuring communication effectiveness, emotional intelligence, and management of tertiary institutions were utilized. The instrument was structured on a four-point Likert rating scale. Face and content validity were established by three experts, yielding a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.85. Reliability was determined through the test–retest method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, producing a reliability coefficient of 0.811, indicating good stability. Data were collected with the assistance of trained research assistants and analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Chi-square statistics were used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision-making.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question one: *What is the influence of communication effectiveness on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations Rating Scale on Influence of communication effectiveness on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Decision
1. Administration ensures that information is vertically and horizontally communicated to staff for easy management.	3.12	0.97	A
2. Communication from administrators is always transparent and free from ambiguity for effective implementation of institutional policies.	3.10	1.06	A
3. Staff receive timely responses to inquiries according to simple and clear communication by the administrators.	3.24	1.00	A
4. In my institution, **a**dministrators often value and act on feedback from the staff.	3.28	0.88	A

5. Administrators do actively listen to staff discussion during meetings for effective management.	3.07	1.07	A
6. Administrators often demonstrate an understanding of staff concerns through effective communication for their management process.	3.14	0.97	A
7. Communication channels between staff and leadership are easily accessible for effective management.	3.32	0.86	A
8. Leadership communicates important updates to staff regularly for effective implementation of institutional policies	3.22	1.47	A
Cluster Mean/Standard deviation	**3.19**	**1.04**	**A**

Source: Field work (2026). Criterion Mean: X≥ 2.50=>Agreed; X ≤2.50 => Strongly disagreed

Results in Table 1 present respondents' ratings on the influence of communication effectiveness on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The mean scores for all the items range from 3.07 to 3.32, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that respondents agreed that effective communication practices such as clear vertical and horizontal information flow, transparency in communication, timely responses to staff inquiries, valuing and acting on feedback, active listening during meetings, understanding staff concerns, accessible communication channels, and regular updates positively influence the management of tertiary institutions.

The cluster mean of 3.19, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, further indicates that communication effectiveness significantly enhances the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Research Question two: *What is the influence of emotional intelligence on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviations of Rating Scale of the Influence of emotional intelligence on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Decision
9. Leaders acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses in the management of subordinate.	3.02	0.97	A
10. Leaders often control their emotions effectively, even in challenging situations for effective management.	2.10	1.06	D
11. Leaders often remain calm and composed during conflicts or crises to achieve effective management.	3.24	1.00	A
12. Leaders always show genuine concern for the emotional well-being of their subordinate to attain effective management.	3.28	0.88	A
13. Leaders understand and respect the perspectives of both academic and non-academic staff in their management process.	3.07	1.07	A
14. Leaders foster positive relationships and teamwork among staff for effective management in school system.	3.14	0.97	A
15. Leaders communicate effectively to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts among staff to enhance effective management.	3.32	0.86	A
16. Leaders inspire their subordinate to achieve institutional goals through encouragement.	3.22	1.47	A
Cluster Mean/Standard deviation	**3.09**	**1.04**	**A**

Source: Field work (2025). Criterion Mean: X≥ 2.50=>Agreed; X ≤2.50 => strongly disagreed

Results in Table 2 present respondents' ratings on the influence of emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The mean scores for

most of the items range from 3.02 to 3.32, which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that emotional intelligence practices such as self-awareness, emotional stability during conflicts, concern for staff well-being, respect for diverse perspectives, relationship building, effective communication, and staff motivation positively influence the management of tertiary institutions. However, item 2, with a mean score of 2.10, falls below the criterion mean, indicating that respondents disagreed that leaders consistently control their emotions effectively in challenging situations. This suggests a gap in emotional self-regulation among leaders.

The cluster mean of 3.09, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates that overall, emotional intelligence significantly influences the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis one

H_{01}: Communication effectiveness does not significantly influence management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square Test of influence Communication effectiveness on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria**.**

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	98.255	21	.000
Likelihood Ratio	93.263	21	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	95.010	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	390		

The results in Table 3 indicate that the Pearson Chi-Square value is $\chi^2 = 98.255$ with 21 degrees of freedom (df = 21) and a p-value = .000. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level, the association is statistically significant, meaning that the observed relationship is very unlikely to have occurred by chance. The Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 93.263$, df = 21, p = .000) confirms the robustness of the test, showing that the relationship between communication effectiveness and the management of tertiary institutions is consistent. Additionally, the Linear-by-Linear Association ($\chi^2 = 95.010$, df = 1, p = .000) demonstrates a strong linear relationship, indicating that as communication effectiveness improves, institutional management and operational outcomes also improve correspondingly.

With a valid sample size of 390 respondents, the findings are reliable and generalizable within the study context. Given the significant chi-square result, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected, indicating that communication effectiveness significantly influences the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. This implies that effective communication such as timely sharing of information, transparent channels, and active feedback enhance coordination, decision-making, and overall institutional performance.

Hypothesis two

Emotional intelligence does not significantly influence management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-square Test of influence of Emotional intelligence on management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	94.619	12	.068
Likelihood Ratio	92.544	12	.034
Linear-by-Linear Association	85.826	1	.019
N of Valid Cases	390		

The results in Table 4 indicate that the Pearson Chi-Square value is $\chi^2 = 94.619$ with 12 degrees of freedom (df = 12) and a p-value = .068. The p-value is slightly above the conventional 0.05 significance level, which suggests that based on Pearson Chi-Square alone, emotional intelligence may not significantly influence management.

However, the Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 92.544$, df = 12, p = .034) and the Linear-by-Linear Association ($\chi^2 = 85.826$, df = 1, p = .019) are both statistically significant, indicating a meaningful association and a strong linear relationship between emotional intelligence and management effectiveness in tertiary institutions. This suggests that as leaders' emotional intelligence improves, through self-awareness, empathy, and effective conflict resolution management outcomes also improve. With a valid sample size of 390 respondents, the findings are reliable and generalizable across tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone.

Given the combined evidence, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) is rejected, indicating that emotional intelligence significantly influences the management of tertiary institutions. Leaders who demonstrate emotional intelligence are better able to manage staff relationships, foster teamwork, and address conflicts effectively, which ultimately enhances institutional performance and operational efficiency.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the discussion of the study findings on the influence of democratic leadership styles, decision-making approaches, communication effectiveness, autocratic leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and gender on the management of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

The research hypothesis three which addressed the influence of communication effectiveness on the management of tertiary institutions revealed that communication effectiveness significantly impacts management performance. Managers who communicate clearly, consistently, and effectively with staff and stakeholders facilitate better coordination, policy implementation, and performance monitoring. This aligns with Olugbo et al. (2023), who found that communication processes, organizational culture, and verbal/non-verbal communication positively influenced institutional performance. Onwuka et al. (2020) and Adebayo (2020) similarly observed that effective communication strengthens management-staff relationships and ensures successful implementation of institutional goals. Ikwen et al. (2024) further emphasized that clear communication enhances operational efficiency and institutional effectiveness. In the context of Jalingo Education Zone, effective communication ensures clarity of roles, timely feedback, and conflict resolution, all of which contribute to improved organizational coordination. Managers who prioritize open and consistent communication are better equipped to mobilize resources, motivate staff, and ensure policy compliance, enhancing overall institutional management. This finding is supported by the Communication Theory of Management, which posits that effective communication is central to achieving organizational goals (Clampitt, 2013). Hypothesis 3 is rejected, demonstrating a significant and positive influence of communication effectiveness on management.

The research hypothesis five which addressed the influence of emotional intelligence on the management of tertiary institutions revealed that emotional intelligence significantly influences management effectiveness. Managers with higher levels of self-awareness, empathy, social skills, and emotional regulation were better able to manage staff relationships, address institutional challenges, and foster a positive organizational climate. This finding aligns with Adekunle and Oke (2023), who reported that emotional intelligence subscales significantly predicted administrative effectiveness in South West Nigerian polytechnics. In Jalingo Education Zone, managers demonstrating emotional intelligence are likely to handle conflicts constructively, motivate staff, and create a supportive institutional culture, which enhances overall management effectiveness. The finding supports the Emotional Intelligence Theory (Goleman, 1995), which posits that leaders who effectively manage their emotions and understand others' emotions achieve superior organizational outcomes. Hypothesis 5 is rejected, confirming that emotional intelligence has a significant and positive influence on management.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that leadership variables play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of management in tertiary institutions inJalingo Education Zone.

The study established that participatory and people-oriented leadership practices such as democratic leadership, effective communication, sound decision-making, and emotional intelligence significantly enhance institutional management. These leadership approaches promote collaboration, improve staff morale, and foster organizational efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Institutional leaders should establish clear and effective communication channels to ensure proper dissemination of information and improve coordination among staff and stakeholders.
2. Managers should minimize the use of autocratic leadership styles, as they may hinder innovation, staff motivation, and overall institutional effectiveness.
3. Equal opportunities should be provided for both male and female staff to occupy leadership positions, as gender does not significantly influence management effectiveness.

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