

## EXPLORING THE LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA THROUGH EMERGING TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

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**ABSTRACT:** Several trends have influenced educational leadership in Nigeria. These include the integration of technology in education, emphasis on skills-based learning, and the need for inclusive and equitable educational policies. The trends are difficult to attain because educational leaders encounter multifaceted challenges, such as navigating policy changes, promoting inclusive practices, fostering teacher professional development, and addressing socioeconomic disparities in educational outcomes. This study explored the landscape of educational leadership in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria through emerging trends, challenges and best practices. The study is also aimed at providing a complete overview of the key aspects that relate to educational leadership and the future of Nigerian education, focusing on the current landscape, challenges faced, emerging trends, and best practices because educational leadership plays critical roles in shaping the future of Nigerian education. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while a One-Way analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses at  $< .05$  level of significance. The content and face validation of the instrument used for data gathering were ascertained by three academic staff from three universities outside the research geographic scope. Data were gathered from twelve selected universities in the south-south region. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the instrument. The study found that understanding the trends, challenges, and best practices in this context is essential for fostering positive changes and progress within the educational system. The study concluded that effective leadership strategies are essential for overcoming the challenges and driving positive change within the education sector. Therefore, implementing these best practices is critical for enhancing educational leadership in Nigeria. The study recommended that promoting collaborative decision-making processes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, prioritizing professional development for educators, and advocating for policies that promote inclusivity and diversity within schools is the way to go.

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Future, Education, Trends, Challenges, Best Practices, South-South, Nigeria.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Ololube, N. P., Cheta-Maclean, S., & Mmom, C.P.C. (2024). Exploring the landscape of educational leadership in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria through emerging trends, challenges and best practices. *International Journal of Leadership, Quality Education and African Development*, 1(1), 1-25.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Educational leadership is a critical aspect of ensuring the success of schools and the education system as a whole. It involves the process of inspiring, guiding, and empowering educators, students, and other stakeholders to work together towards common goals. Effective educational leadership is characterized by a visionary and strategic approach, a commitment to continuous improvement, and a focus on student learning and well-being. Educational leaders are supposed to have a clear and compelling vision for the future of their schools or institutions. This vision should be aligned with the needs of students, teachers, and the broader community, and should inspire and motivate everyone to work towards achieving common goals. Effective educational leaders must be able to develop and implement a strategic plan that aligns with the vision and goals of the organization. This plan should be based on a thorough analysis of the current situation and should include specific objectives, timelines, and metrics for measuring progress.

School leadership is all about continuous improvement. They must be committed to the ongoing professional development of teachers and must be willing to experiment with new approaches and strategies to improve student outcomes. They must be able to build and maintain strong relationships with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. This involves effective communication, active listening, and a willingness to collaborate and cooperate with others. Educational leaders must at all-time be committed to student learning and well-being. This involves creating a safe and supportive learning environment, and ensuring that all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed (Ananyi & Ololube, 2023). Unfortunately, these expectations are usually not met in Nigeria's educational sector because of several factors. Nonetheless, educational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the future of education. However, as the country strives to improve its educational system, it faces various trends, challenges, and best practices (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2019).

Nigeria's educational system is governed by various stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Educational leadership in Nigeria encompasses the roles and responsibilities of school administrators, policymakers, and other influential figures that impact the direction and quality of education in the country (Ogona, 2020). At present, educational leadership faces several critical issues around the world. These include inadequate funding for education, disparities in access to quality education across different regions, insufficient infrastructure and resources in schools, as well as governance and policy challenges (Karim et al., 2023). Additionally, the ineffective collaboration between educational leaders at various levels to address these issues and drive positive change has affected the future of Nigerian education. This paper will comprehensively analyze the current state of educational leadership in Nigeria, explore emerging trends, and examine the challenges faced by the education sector, and highlight best practices that can contribute to its improvement.

## **BACKGROUND**

Nigeria has often been described as the giant of Africa. It is the most populous nation in Africa and the entire black race. Nigeria's population accounts for about 20% of Africa's total population and one out of every six persons in the entire black diaspora are Nigerians. Nigeria is a seemingly blessed nation with abundant human and natural/material resources. According to an OPEC report, Nigeria is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest crude oil (petroleum) producing country in the world, with

an estimated population of over 200 million people. The much-said oil and gas resources of Nigeria come from the south-south geopolitical zone. The large population of Nigeria and her resources contributes a lot to her strength and as a result, the country has always been expected to do more by other countries in Africa. Nigeria plays a leadership role on issues that concern the African continent and the entire black race.



Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing boundaries of six geopolitical zones, 36 states and Federal Capital Territory  
Source: <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-018-3225-4/figures/1>.

The magnitude of this assertion/statement reveals the trust, confidence and faith the African countries and indeed the world has for Nigeria. These expectations, assumptions and faith in Nigeria as a nation should manifest and translate into the quality of lives, quality of university education and other levels of the education system in the country, quality of security of lives and property in the country; credible, violent-free, transparent and widely accepted elections; purposeful and transparent leadership, accountable and corrupt less leadership, national development and sustainability, youth employment and job creation, amongst others.

Regrettably, Nigeria despite its prominence, abundant human and material resources and contributions to the world, has failed to bring the needed stability required. As if that is not enough, Nigeria is characterized by violent-packed elections, monumental fraud and corrupt leadership, constant strike actions and cultism in her educational systems, poverty and unemployment at its height, power failures and lack of portable drinking water. Worst still, wealthy Nigerians are sending their children overseas to places like Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, and other African countries for studies. Needless to mention the brain drain that is popularly called the Japa syndrome in Nigeria (professionals moving to work outside the country), and the rich politicians going overseas for foreign medical treatments and attention (Ololube et al., 2016a). The solution to Nigeria's predicament and setbacks in this regard is firstly educational leadership, secondly education leadership and thirdly education leadership. Effective education leadership is the greatest solution to placing Nigeria in her rightful place in the comity of nations.

The South-South represents about 5% of Nigeria's territory but contributes greatly to the Nigerian economy because of its extensive oil and natural gas reserves. In addition to oil and gas, the region contributes other key resources to the national economy. The states are a hub for huge potential investment opportunities in tourism and agriculture. The South-South region of Nigeria comprises six states (Akwa-Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Cross Rivers State, Delta State, Edo State, and Rivers State). These states are strategically located at the point where the Y tail of the river Niger joins the Atlantic Ocean through the Gulf of Guinea. These states occupy a relatively small stretch of land and provide the economic mainstay of the economy of Nigeria. The South-South region has an estimated population of about 26 million people which is around 12% of the total population of the country. The South-South geopolitical zone plays host to six (6) federal and thirteen (13) state-owned universities. They are listed below as approved by the National Universities Commission (NUC):

#### **List of Federal Universities in the South-South of Nigeria**

Federal University of Petroleum Resources  
Federal University Otuoke  
University of Benin  
University of Calabar  
University of Port Harcourt  
University of Uyo

#### **List of State Universities in the South-South of Nigeria**

Akwa Ibom State University of Technology  
Ambrose Alli University  
Cross River State University of Science & Technology  
Delta State University  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education  
Niger Delta University  
Rivers State University  
Bayelsa Medical University  
Delta State University of Science and Technology  
Dennis Osadebay University  
Edo University  
University of Africa  
University of Delta

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The researchers of this study have observed over the years that the educational leadership landscape in Nigeria stands at a critical juncture, marked by a confluence of promising trends and enduring challenges. The emerging trends such as the integration of technology, innovative teaching methodologies, and a shift towards personalized learning models signal a potential transformation in the country's educational framework, which seems not to be taking a toll on the educational leadership of Nigeria. However, the persistent challenges of inadequate funding,

infrastructural deficiencies, disparities in access to quality education, outdated curriculum, limited teacher training, and societal inequities continue to hinder the progress of educational development in Nigeria. At the heart of providing remedies to the multiple challenges, these complexities lay the role of ineffective educational leaders.

Therefore, we are pressed with the need to comprehensively understand how current leadership practices navigate these challenges and leverage emerging trends to drive meaningful changes in the educational system of Nigeria. This research aims to conduct an in-depth exploration of the evolving educational leadership paradigms in Nigeria, by critically assessing the efficacy of existing leadership strategies, identifying gaps, and analyzing their impacts on educational outcomes because searches of the internet show the best knowledge of the researchers that no study has approached from the angle from which this study is exploring it. As such, this study seeks to propose innovative and contextualize relevant solutions. Its ultimate goal is to offer actionable insights and strategic recommendations that empower educational leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to enact impactful and attainable interventions. Through this approach, the researchers endeavour to pave the way for a more resilient, inclusive, and transformative educational leadership strategy that aligns with Nigeria's developmental aspirations and empowers its future generations. This study also aims to explore the emerging trends, ascertain the challenges, assess the effectiveness of current best practices, and propose strategies for leveraging Nigerian educational leadership to overcome the challenges to foster sustainable development in Nigerian education.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to explore the landscape of educational leadership in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria through emerging trends, challenges and best practices. Specifically, the study provides a complete overview of the key aspects relating to educational leadership and the future of Nigerian education. The study's objectives are to:

- Explore the emerging trends in educational leadership and how they can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.
- Ascertain the challenges faced in educational leadership and how they can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.
- Assess the attainable best practices in educational leadership and how they can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

### **Research Questions**

- How do the emerging trends in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?
- How do the challenges faced in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?
- How do the attainable best practices in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?

## Hypotheses

- The emerging trends in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.
- The challenges faced in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.
- The attainable best practices in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

### Trends Shaping the Future of Education in Nigeria

Several trends are shaping the future of education in Nigeria. One significant trend is the increasing adoption of technology in education (Ololube et al., 2016a). With the growing availability of digital resources and e-learning platforms, educators are exploring innovative ways to integrate technology into teaching and learning processes. This trend has the potential to enhance access to quality education and improve learning outcomes across diverse communities in Nigeria (Agbor et al., 2023b). As the global economy evolves, there is a growing recognition of the importance of equipping students with practical skills that align with industry needs, as such, educational leaders are increasingly focusing on curriculum development that emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, and vocational skills training to prepare students for future careers. Furthermore, inclusive education is gaining prominence as a trend in Nigeria (Ololube et al., 2016b). There is a growing awareness of the need to create inclusive learning environments that cater to students with diverse learning needs and backgrounds. Given this scenario, educational leaders are encouraged to work towards implementing inclusive policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility within educational institutions (Agbor et al., 2023a).

Thus, educational leadership is a dynamic field that constantly evolves to meet the changing needs of educational institutions and the students they serve. Ololube (2024) identified several key trends that have emerged in recent years that are shaping the landscape of educational leadership—Adaptive leadership (AL) has gained traction as a response to the complex challenges facing educational institutions. This approach requires leaders to be flexible, innovative, and responsive to change. Adaptive leaders are adept at navigating uncertainty, fostering resilience, and leading their organizations through periods of transition and transformation. This practical leadership framework supports individuals and institutions to adapt and succeed in challenging environments. It focuses greatly on mobilizing employees to tackle emanating and tough challenges to thrive better in complex and changing environments (Podsklan, 2020). This approach when applied in an educational environment emphasizes the importance of identifying the underlying causes of educational problems, encouraging innovation, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

Close to adaptive leadership is collaborative leadership (CL), which has emerged as a significant trend in educational leadership. This approach emphasizes building strong partnerships among educators, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders to collectively address challenges and drive positive change within educational institutions (Wafiq et al., 2021). Collaborative leadership fosters a shared vision for improvement and encourages

collective responsibility for student success. That is to say, effective educational leadership requires a collective effort and shared responsibility among all stakeholders (Shaked, 2023). Data-driven decision-making (DDDM) has become a prevalent trend in educational leadership (Nurzen, 2022). School leaders are utilizing various forms of data, including academic performance metrics, attendance records, and behaviour data, to inform their decision-making processes (Albiladi, 2020). Educational leaders can identify areas for improvement and implementation of targeted interventions to support student academic achievement by analyzing the data trends (Ololube, 2015).

According to Ololube et al. (2016b), one significant trend in educational leadership is the increasing emphasis on equity and inclusion (EI). Educational leaders are recognizing the importance of creating inclusive environments where all students, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality education. This trend involves the implementation of policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within schools and districts (Neves et al., 2023). Educational leaders are increasingly prioritizing social-emotional learning (SEL) as a critical component of student development (Bailey & Weiner, 2022). SEL involves the integration of SEL programs into school curricula, providing professional development for educators on supporting students' social-emotional needs and creating supportive school environments that nurture students' well-being (Ololube et al., 2013). Additionally, professional learning communities (PLCs) have become an influential process in educational leadership. PLCs provide opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative inquiry, share best practices, and engage in continuous professional development (Ololube, 2011). The communities foster a culture of ongoing learning and improvement among educators. PLCs emphasize collective learning, reflective dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving that can enhance teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

Another prominent trend is the integration of technology (IT) in educational leadership. This is not left out because, with the rapid advancement of technology, educational leaders are leveraging digital tools to enhance teaching and learning experiences (Agabi et al., 2015). This includes implementing innovative learning management systems, utilizing data analytics for decision-making, and promoting digital literacy among students and staff (Ololube, 2006a,b). Conversely, despite the efforts by both the federal and state government educational institutions to establish valuable and effective integration of technology programs to help in the preparation of competent graduates, educational institutions at all levels are incapacitated in their development. The inadequacy of the ICT infrastructure available has reduced access to ICT instructional material for faculty and students (Yusuf, 2005a,b.)

### **Challenges Facing Education Leadership in Nigeria**

Despite the promising trends, Nigeria's education sectors face significant challenges that impact its overall effectiveness. One of the primary challenges is inadequate funding for education. The allocation of resources to support infrastructure development, teacher training, curriculum enhancement, and educational initiatives remains insufficient, hindering the sector's ability to deliver quality education (Birabil & Ogeh, 2020). The education sectors in Nigeria are underfunded, and this has resulted in a lack of resources for schools, teachers, and students. The lack of funding has led to a shortage of qualified teachers, outdated textbooks, and inadequate infrastructure (Agbor et al., 2017). The poor infrastructure experienced in Nigeria is a result of poor governance. Many schools in Nigeria lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries,



laboratories, and ICT facilities (Agbor et al., 2023b). This makes it difficult for students to receive a quality education and poor professional development.

A step further shows that there are persistent disparities in access to education across urban and rural areas in Nigeria. Remote communities often lack adequate educational facilities (Agbor et al., 2022) and qualified teachers (Ololube, 2006a), leading to unequal opportunities for students based on their geographical location. Many Nigerian children do not have access to education due to poverty, cultural beliefs, and geographical location. This has led to a high dropout rate and a low literacy rate, particularly in rural areas. Children lack access to primary school education, and this has resulted in their social, cognitive, emotional, and physical skills development (Adeleke & Alabede, 2022).

Critical to the challenges facing educational development in Nigeria is the quality of teacher training and professional development in the country. Prioritizing the continuous training programs for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and classroom management abilities must ensue. Investing in teacher capacity building is essential for improving overall teaching standards and student learning outcomes (Paulley & Buseri, 2029). Nigeria faces a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas (Abioye, 2021). This is due to a lack of training opportunities and a low salary scale, which discourages qualified candidates from pursuing a career in teaching (Shuls & Flores, 2020).

According to Wali and Ololube (2016), teacher professional development is essential for improving the quality of education in Nigeria. However, there is a lack of opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge. Educational leadership and planning and teachers' professional development have evolved as a discipline to guide the allocation and utilization of educational resources both human and material in the school systems. This is done to arrest areas of waste and create room for educational production. The absence of comprehensive internal analysis has complicated the processes of teachers' professional development. The reasons for internal analysis are to identify and determine educational system assets, the skills needed, and the resources that represent its strengths, weaknesses, obstacles and challenges (Barnes et al., 2019). Thus, adequate teachers' professional development on a large scale is a major challenge in Nigeria (Babajide & Smith, 2022).

Furthermore, governance and policy challenges pose significant obstacles to effective educational leadership in Nigeria. Inconsistent implementation of educational policies, bureaucratic hurdles, and regulatory issues can impede progress within the education sector. Educational leaders need to advocate for transparent governance structures and policy frameworks that support sustainable improvements in education. In all sincerity, Nigeria's educational leaders face a myriad of challenges that hinder the development of a quality education system. These challenges are multifaceted and affect all aspects of education, from policy-making to classroom instruction. Some of the most significant challenges facing education leadership in Nigeria are the issues of curriculum reform. The curriculum in Nigeria is outdated and does not prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. There is a need for a curriculum reform that emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and innovation (Vikoo, 2016).

Insecurity is a significant challenge facing education leadership in Nigeria. Many schools have been attacked by terrorists (Ehimate & Enueme, 2023). Terrorism has altered the academic landscape in Nigeria, and this has led to a lack of confidence in the education system. Political instability is another significant challenge facing education leadership in Nigeria. The country has experienced several changes in government, and this has led to a lack of continuity in education policies and programs (Akinditure et al., 2011; Enyiazu, 2022). The insecurity in



Nigeria is also a result of poor governance. Poor governance is major and a significant challenge facing education leadership in Nigeria (Ikegbusi et al., 2016). Corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability are common in many schools and educational institutions (Ololube, 2021). This has led to a lack of trust in the education system and a lack of confidence in the ability of education leaders to provide quality education.

The integration of technology in education is essential for preparing students for the digital age (Ololube et al., 2016a). Educational institutions around the world are presently under increased pressure to use the new information and communication technologies (ICTs), to teach students the knowledge and skills they need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nonetheless, educational institutions in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of preparing a new generation of graduates to effectively use the new learning tools in their academic practices (Barnes et al., 2019). Notwithstanding that ICT has impacted the quality and quantity of teaching, learning, and research in traditional educational institutions (Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005; Ifinedo & Ololube, 2007), the shortage of infrastructure and resources for technology integration in many Nigerian schools is a major challenge (Yusuf, 2005b). The shortages have direct consequences on Nigeria's educational development. Among the shortages are slow access to basic ICT equipment, slow internet connectivity inadequate computers, transparencies, projectors, programed materials, etc., which are the challenges to effective educational development (Ololube, 2006b).

### **Attainable Best Practices for Educational Leadership in Nigeria**

Education in Nigeria is acknowledged as an instrument for excellence and national development. It has offered some multi-dimensional contributions towards a safer, healthier, advanced and prosperous world. Education determines the pace of growth and development all over the world. This makes it critical that education must be given maximum attention to improving standards. Education equally contributes towards the political, social, economic, technological and cultural advancement of Nigeria. Self-development, skills acquisition, knowledge, abilities and competencies that lead to both economic and societal advancement are all acquired through education (Nwanekezie & Ogoni, 2021; Nwanekezie, 2022).

To achieve the best educational practices in Nigeria, various effective options can guide for educational leaders to bring about positive transformation. Building strong partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector entities, and community stakeholders can amplify the impact of educational initiatives. Collaborative efforts can lead to resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions for improving educational outcomes (Agabi et al., 2015). Utilizing data-driven insights to inform policy decisions enables educational leaders to identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of interventions accurately. According to Nurzen (2022), evidence-based decision-making fosters accountability and transparency within the education system. Educational leaders must champion inclusive policies that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility within schools. Creating an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported fosters holistic development and academic success (Ololube et al., 2016b).

Prioritizing continuous professional development for teachers through workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and access to online learning resources can enhance their teaching competencies and motivation. Empowering educators with relevant skills contributes to a more effective learning environment (Ololube, 2011). Educational leaders should advocate for

increased funding for education while ensuring efficient utilization of resources. Strategic allocation of funds towards infrastructure development, teacher training programs, technology integration, and curriculum enhancement can significantly impact the quality of education (Birabil & Ogeh, 2020). Embracing technology as a tool for enhancing teaching methods and expanding learning opportunities can revolutionize education delivery in Nigeria. Educational leaders according to Ololube et al. (2016a) and Agbor et al. (2023b), should encourage the integration of digital resources into curricula while ensuring equitable access across different regions.

## METHODS

### Study Design and Setting

This study is a descriptive research design as much as it is a summative study and is aimed at exploring the landscape of educational leadership in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria through the emerging trends, challenges and best practices of academic staff of six public universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria (see figure 2).

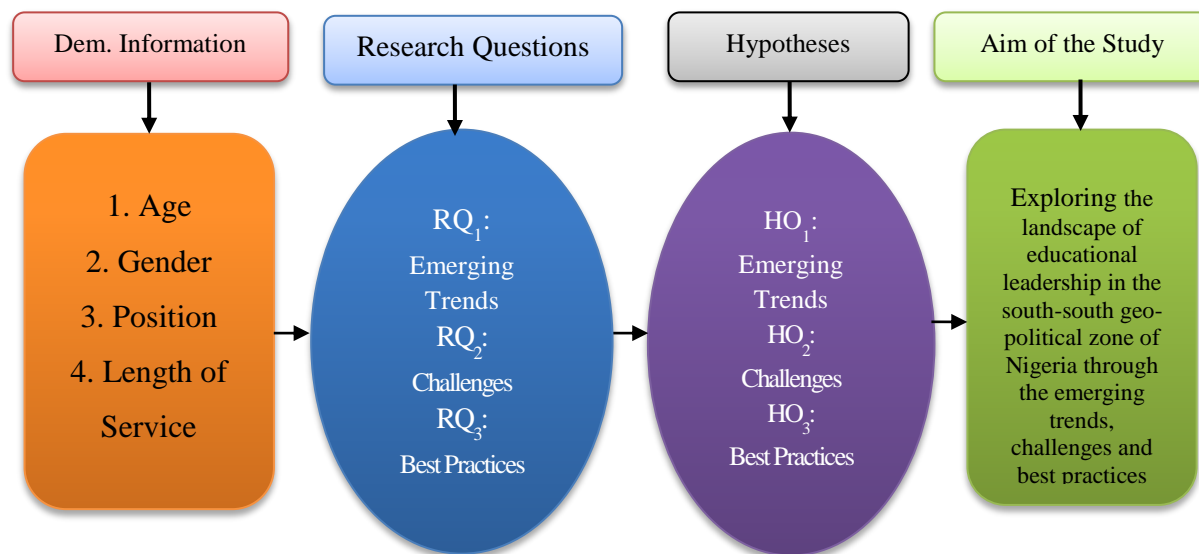


Figure 2: Study Design Summarized

### Target and Accessible Population

The target population of this study were the academic staff of all Nigerian public universities and the accessible population are academic staff of the selected Nigerian public universities in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

### Sampling Technique

A purposeful and purposive sample procedure was carried out. The purposive sampling was based on the academic staff of the selected universities. One university was selected from each of the six states (Akwa-Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Cross Rivers State, Delta State, Edo State, and

Rivers State) in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The selected respondents agreed to participate in the study. Six hundred and fifty (650) questionnaires were distributed, while six hundred (600) were retrieved.

### **Instrument (Questionnaire)**

The data for this study were collected by three research assistants who administered questionnaires personally to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed and validated by experts in the Department of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation of the university. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in their offices. The purpose of the study the importance of carrying out this research and the instructions on how to fill the questionnaires were explicated. The questionnaire comprised seven sections, section 'A' included the respondents' demographic information; section 'B' deals with issues of emerging trends; challenges and attainable best practices. The questionnaire was structured along a 6-Point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 6; Agree (A) = 5; Slightly Agree (SLA) = 4; Slightly Disagree (SLD) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Responses to the items in the questionnaire were tallied along "agree and disagree" to answer this question using mean, and standard deviation.

#### ***Section A: Demographic Information***

This section included respondents' demographic variables such as age, gender, and position/Rank.

#### ***Section B1: Emerging Trends***

This section deals with variables of emerging trends in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development and how these trends can influence Nigeria's education. This section is aimed at investigating academic staff perception of the emerging trends that can influence educational leadership in Nigeria. This section comprised of items 1-7 of the questionnaire. This section's Cronbach alpha reliability analysis is .969.

#### ***Section B2: Challenges***

This section deals with variables of challenges in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development and how these challenges can influence Nigeria's education. This section is aimed at investigating academic staff perceptions of the challenges that can influence educational leadership in Nigeria. This section comprised of items 8-18 of the questionnaire. This section's Cronbach alpha reliability analysis is .662.

#### ***Section B3: Attainable Best Practices***

This section deals with variables of attainable best practices in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development and how these best practices can influence Nigeria's educational development. This section is aimed at investigating academic staff perception of the attainable best practices that can influence educational leadership in Nigeria.

This section comprised of items 19-25 of the questionnaire. This section's Cronbach alpha reliability analysis is .837.

## Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses employed in this study were carried out using SPSS version 26. Data collected for the study was analyzed using Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) statistics to answer the research questions and a criterion mean of 3.50 was used as the cut-off mean. The criterion mean that was used in scoring was 3.50, which was obtained by summing the weighted points and divided by 6, that is,  $\frac{6+5+4+3+2+1}{6} = 3.50$ . Any mean score below 3.50 was considered to be disagreed, while from 3.50 and above was considered to be agreed. One-Way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) set at .05 level of significance was used to determine if emerging trends, challenges and attainable best practices significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development, and Cronbach alpha analysis was used to determine the sectional reliability of the items.

## RESULTS

### Respondents Demographic Information

In this study, the respondents comprised 600 academic staff from the six selected universities. Data on gender revealed that 431(71.8%) were male, while 169(28.2%) were female. The information in the Table 1 further revealed that 117(19.5%) of the respondents were between 30-39 years, 260(43.3%) were between 40-49 years, and 167(27.8%) were between 50-59 years, while 56(9.3%) were between 60-69 years. Information on academic staff position/rank showed that 138(23.0%) were lecturer 11, 184(30.7%) were lecturer 1, 174(29.0%) were senior lecturers, and 80(13.3%) were Associate Professors, while 24(4.0%) were Professors.

Table 1: Details of the respondents' demographic information

Respondents' Demographic Information		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	431	71.8
	Female	169	28.2
	Total	600	100.0
Age	30-39 years	117	19.5
	40-49 Years	260	43.3
	50-59 years	167	27.8
	60-70 years	56	9.3
	Total	600	100.0
	Total	600	100.0
Position/Rank	Lecturer 11	138	23.0
	Lecturer 1	184	30.7
	Senior Lecturers	174	29.0
	Assoc. Professors	80	13.3
	Professors	24	4.0
	Total	600	100.0

## Answer to Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** How do the emerging trends in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis for the emerging trends in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Educational leaders focuses greatly on mobilizing employees to tackle emanating and tough challenges and it thrive better in complex and changing educational environments.	4.1967	.85198	Agree
2.	Educational leaders employ collaborative leadership approach by building strong partnerships among educators, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders to collectively improve and drive positive change within educational institutions.	4.0083	.84427	Agree
3.	Educational leaders utilize various forms of academic performance metrics, attendance records, and behavior data, to inform their decision-making processes in our educational institutions.	3.9883	.78266	Agree
4.	Educational leaders recognize the importance of creating inclusive environments where all students, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality education.	4.0683	.93548	Agree
5.	Educational leaders are increasingly prioritizing social-emotional learning (SEL) as a critical component of student development through providing professional development for educators on supporting students' social-emotional needs.	4.0117	.90345	Agree
6.	Educational leaders use professional learning communities (PLCs) to influence processes by providing opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative inquiry, share best practices, and engage in continuous professional development to foster a culture of on-going learning and improvement among educators	3.9750	.92329	Agree
7.	Educational leaders leverage on digital tools to enhance teaching and learning experiences by implementing innovative learning management systems, utilizing data analytics for decision-making, and promoting digital literacy among students and staff.	3.9717	.86532	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.0314</b>	<b>.87220</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data in Table 2 were analyzed on items bases and the results revealed that respondents agree that educational leaders focuses greatly on mobilizing employees to tackle emanating and tough challenges and it thrive better in complex and changing educational environments ( $M = 4.1967$ ;  $SD = .85198$ ). The respondents also agreed that educational leaders employ collaborative leadership approach by building strong partnerships among educators, administrators, parents, and community stakeholders to collectively improve and drive positive change within educational institutions ( $M = 4.0083$ ;  $SD = .84427$ ), the respondents equally agreed that educational leaders utilize various forms of academic performance metrics, attendance records, and behavior data, to inform their decision-making processes in Nigerian educational institutions ( $M = 3.9883$ ;  $SD = .78266$ ). In addition, the respondents also agreed that Nigerian educational leaders recognize the importance of creating inclusive environments where all students, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to high-quality education ( $M = 4.0683$ ;  $SD = .93548$ ).

The respondents further established that educational leaders are increasingly prioritizing social-emotional learning (SEL) as a critical component of student development through providing professional development for educators on supporting students' social-emotional needs ( $M = 4.0117$ ;  $SD = .90345$ ). Respondents further agreed that educational leaders use professional learning communities (PLCs) to influence processes by providing opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative inquiry, share best practices, and engage in continuous professional development to foster a culture of on-going learning and improvement among educators ( $M = 3.9750$ ;  $SD = .86532$ ), and the additionally agreed that educational leaders leverage on digital tools to enhance teaching and learning experiences by implementing innovative learning management systems, utilizing data analytics for decision-making, and promoting digital literacy among students and staff ( $M = 3.9717$ ;  $SD = .86532$ ). On the whole, the data from the grand mean and standard deviation analysis ( $M = 4.0314$ ;  $SD = .87220$ ) agreed to a large extent that the emerging trends in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

**Research Question 2:** How do the challenges faced in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis for the challenges faced in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
8.	The curriculum in Nigeria is out-dated and does not prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century educational development.	5.1750	1.08305	Agree
9.	The education sector in Nigeria is underfunded, and this has resulted in a lack of resources for schools, teachers, and students.	5.3483	1.05302	Agree
10.	The lack of funding has led to a shortage of qualified teachers, out-dated textbooks, and inadequate infrastructure.	4.1300	.92440	Agree
11.	The insecurity in Nigeria has led to the destruction of school buildings, killing and kidnapping of teachers and students, and has led to lack of confidence in the education system.	4.0067	.77090	Agree
12.	Nigeria faces a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas; this is due to a lack of training opportunities and a low salary scale, which discourages qualified candidates from pursuing a career in teaching.	3.9983	1.21413	Agree
13.	Many Nigerian children do not have access to education due to poverty, cultural beliefs, and geographical location, which has led to a high dropout rate and a low literacy rate, particularly in rural areas.	4.0067	.77090	Agree
14.	Political instability is another significant challenge facing education leadership in Nigeria. This experienced has led to several changes in government, and to a lack of continuity in education policies and programs.	4.1133	1.00938	Agree
15.	Corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability are common in many schools and education institutions. This has led to a lack of trust in the education system and a lack of confidence in the ability of education leaders to provide quality education.	4.3000	1.10847	Agree
16.	Many schools in Nigeria lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and ICT facilities. This makes it difficult for students to receive quality education.	3.9467	.86703	Agree
17.	Teacher professional development is essential for improving the quality of education in Nigeria. However, there is a lack of	4.3400	.98794	Agree

18.	opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge. The integration of technology in education is essential for preparing students for the digital age. However, the lack of infrastructure and resources for technology integration in many Nigerian schools is a major challenge.	4.0950	.90959	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.3145</b>	<b>.97261</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The information in Table 3 was aimed to determine the extent respondents agree or disagree on how the challenges faced by educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development, and the results revealed that the curriculum that is operation in Nigeria is outdated and does not prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century educational development ( $M = 5.1750$ ;  $SD = 1.08305$ ). They in addition agreed that the education sectors in Nigeria are underfunded, and this has resulted in a lack of resources for schools, teachers, and students. This is reflected in the mean and standard deviation scores of 5.3483 and 1.05302 respectively. Furthermore, the respondents were of the view that the lack of funding has led to a shortage of qualified teachers, outdated textbooks, and inadequate infrastructure ( $M = 4.1300$ ;  $SD = .92440$ ). This is followed by the respondents opinion that the insecurity in Nigeria has led to the destruction of school buildings, killing and kidnapping of teachers and students, and has led to lack of confidence in the education system ( $M = 4.0067$ ;  $SD = .77090$ ).

The respondents agreed that Nigeria faces shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas; this is due to a lack of training opportunities and a low salary scale, which discourages qualified candidates from pursuing a career in teaching ( $M = 3.9983$ ;  $SD = 1.21413$ ). Same is true of the respondents' view that many Nigerian children do not have access to education due to poverty, cultural beliefs, and geographical location, which has led to a high dropout rate and a low literacy rate, particularly in rural areas ( $M = 4.0067$ ;  $SD = .77090$ ). In the same vein, the respondents agreed that political instability is another significant challenge facing education leadership in Nigeria. This experienced has led to several changes in government, and to a lack of continuity in education policies and programs ( $M = 4.1133$ ;  $SD = 1.00938$ ).

Equally, the respondents were of the view that corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability are common in many schools and education institutions. This has led to a lack of trust in the education systems and a lack of confidence in the ability of education leaders to provide quality education ( $M = 4.3000$ ;  $SD = 1.10847$ ). They further established that many schools at all levels in Nigeria lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and ICT facilities. This makes it difficult for students to receive quality education ( $M = 3.9467$ ;  $SD = .86703$ ). The respondents to a high extent also agreed that teacher professional development is essential for improving the quality of education in Nigeria. However, there is a lack of opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge ( $M = 4.3400$ ;  $SD = .98794$ ). The respondents did not disagree either that the integration of technology in education is essential for preparing students for the digital age. However, the lack of infrastructure and resources for technology integration in many Nigerian schools is a major challenge ( $M = 4.0950$ ;  $SD = .90959$ ). On the whole, the grand mean (4.3145) and standard deviation (.97261) analysis for the challenges faced in educational leadership influences the landscape of Nigerian educational development.



**Research Question 3:** How do the attainable best practices in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation analysis for the attainable best practices in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
19.	Collaborative partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities can amplify the impact of educational initiatives and can lead to resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions to improve educational outcomes.	4.1983	.80834	Agree
20.	Utilizing data-driven insights to inform policy decisions enables educational leaders to identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of interventions accurately.	4.0150	.97281	Agree
21.	Educational leaders should champion inclusive policies that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility within schools creates an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported fosters holistic development and academic success.	4.2033	1.10334	Agree
22.	Educational leaders should prioritizing continuous professional development for teachers through workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and access to online learning resources to enhance their teaching competencies and motivation.	4.4483	1.05792	Agree
23.	Educational leaders' strategic allocation of funds towards infrastructure development, teacher training programs, technology integration, and curriculum enhancement can significantly impact the quality of education.	4.2050	1.02211	Agree
24.	Educational leaders should promote and encourage the integration of digital resources into curricula while ensuring equitable access across different regions.	4.2667	.83669	Agree
25.	Educational leaders should promote and encourage curriculum reforms by aligning it with the current global standards to meet local needs and ensure relevance and effectiveness.	4.2350	1.10837	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>4.2245</b>	<b>.98708</b>	<b>Agree</b>

To assess the extent to which the attainable best practices in educational leadership can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development, mean and standard deviation analysis was conducted and the data in Table 4 revealed that the respondents agreed to a large extent that collaborative partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities can amplify the impact of educational initiatives and can lead to resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions to improve educational outcomes ( $M = 4.1983$ ;  $SD = .80834$ ). The respondents also agreed to a large extent that the utilizing data-driven insights to inform policy decisions can enable educational leaders to identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of interventions accurately ( $M = 4.0150$ ;  $SD = .97281$ ). Likewise, the respondents agreed to a large extent that educational leaders champion inclusive policies that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility within schools creates an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported fosters holistic development and academic success ( $M = 4.2033$ ;  $SD = 1.10334$ ).

The respondents also agreed to a high extent that educational leaders should prioritizing continuous professional development for teachers through workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and access to online learning resources to enhance their teaching competencies and

motivation ( $M = 4.4483$ ;  $SD = 1.05792$ ). Respondents further conceptualized that educational leaders' strategic allocation of funds towards infrastructure development, teacher training programs, technology integration, and curriculum enhancement can significantly impact the quality of education ( $M = 4.2050$ ;  $SD = 1.02211$ ). Respondents agreed to a large extent that educational leaders should promote and encourage the integration of digital resources into curricula while ensuring equitable access across different regions ( $M = 4.2667$ ;  $SD = .83669$ ). The respondents did not disagree either that educational leaders should promote and encourage curriculum reforms by aligning it with the current global standards to meet local needs and ensure relevance and effectiveness ( $M = 4.2350$ ;  $SD = 1.10837$ ). On the whole, as reflected in the data in grand mean (4.2245) and standard deviation (.98708), the respondents to a high extent agreed that the attainable best practices in educational leadership can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1:** The emerging trends in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

Table 5: ANOVA analysis for the emerging trends in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38.237	1	38.237	36.529	.000
Within Groups	625.961	598	1.047		
Total	664.198	599			

Hypothesis one states that “the emerging trends in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development”. The reason for this null hypothesis was to determine if the response received from the research question also reflected in the hypothesis. The overall ANOVA analysis of all the respondents, irrespective of their gender, age, and position/rank had unwavering support for the emerging trends. The decision reached was because, in the analysis of variance, the observed variability in the sample is divided into two broad parts—variability of the observations within groups Sum of Squares and the variability of observation between groups Sum of Squares; the between-groups variance (38.237) in this analysis is correct only if the null hypothesis is true, but if the null hypothesis is false, the between-groups estimates of variance (625.961) is too large. Thus, the respondents believed that the emerging trends in educational leadership significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected by the F-value of 36.529 and a p-value of .000).

**Hypothesis 2:** The challenges faced in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

Table 6: ANOVA analysis for the challenges faced in educational leadership and the landscape of Nigerian educational development

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.493	1	14.493	18.014	.000
Within Groups	481.092	598	.805		
Total	495.585	599			

Hypothesis two states that “the challenges faced in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development”. The reason for this null hypothesis was to determine if the response received from the research question also reflected in the hypothesis. The overall ANOVA analysis of all the respondents, irrespective of their gender, age, and position/rank observed that the challenges faced by educational leaders negatively influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development. The decision reached was because in the analysis of variance, the observed variability in the sample is divided into two broad parts—variability of the observations within groups Sum of Squares and the variability of observation between groups Sum of Squares; the between-groups variance (14.493) in this analysis is correct only if the null hypothesis is true, but if the null hypothesis is false, the between-groups estimates of variance (481.092) is too large. Thus, the respondents agree to a high extent that the challenges faced by educational leaders significantly and negatively influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected on the F-value of 18.014 and a p-value of .000).

**Hypothesis 3:** The attainable best practices in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

Table 7: ANOVA analysis for the attainable best practices in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.978	1	8.978	12.165	.001
Within Groups	441.316	598	.738		
Total	450.293	599			

Hypothesis three states that “the attainable best practices in educational leadership do not significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development”. The reason for this null hypothesis was to assess if the response received from the research question also reflects in the hypothesis. The overall ANOVA analysis of all the respondents, irrespective of their gender, age, and position/rank had unwavering support for attainable best practices. The decision reached was because the analysis of variance, the observed variability in the sample is divided into two broad parts—variability of the observations within groups Sum of Squares and the variability of observation between groups Sum of Squares; the between-groups variance (8.978) in this analysis is correct only if the null hypothesis is true, but if the null hypothesis is false, the between-groups estimates of variance (441.316) is too large. Thus, the respondents agree to a high extent that attainable best practices in educational leadership significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected on the F-value of 12.165 and a p-value of .001).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Emerging Trends in Educational Leadership and the Landscape of Nigerian Educational Development**

The data from the grand mean and standard deviation analysis as presented by the respondents showed that they agreed to a large extent that the emerging trends in educational leadership influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development, and the respondents were of the opinion that the emerging trends in educational leadership significantly influences the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected on the F-value of 36.529 and a p-value of .000. The findings in this study are in line with the study of Ololube et al. (2016a), when they found that one significant trend is the increasing adoption of technology in education. Same is true with the study of Agbor et al. (2023b), when they noted that the growing availability of digital resources and e-learning platforms, educators are exploring innovative ways to integrate technology into teaching and learning processes. This trend has the potential to enhance access to quality education and improve learning outcomes across diverse communities in Nigeria.

In the same vein, Nurzen (2022) distinguished that data-driven decision making (DDDM) has become a prevalent trend in educational leadership and school leaders are utilizing various forms of data, including academic performance metrics, attendance records, and behavior data, to inform their decision-making processes (cf., Albiladi, 2020). Ololube (cf., 2024) and Podsklan (2020), identified several key trends that have emerged in recent years that is shaping the landscape of educational leadership in south-south, Nigeria to be adaptive leadership (AL). Adaptive leadership has gained traction as a response to the complex challenges facing educational institutions. Institutional leaders are beginning to be flexible, innovative, and responsive to changes. They try as much as possible to navigate uncertainty, fostering resilience, in leading their institutions through periods of transition and transformation.

Likewise, the respondents' agree that professional learning communities (PLCs) are becoming an influential process in educational leadership in Nigeria, because PLCs is providing opportunities for educators to engage in collaborative inquiry, share best practices, and engage in continuous professional development (Ololube, 2011). According to Agabi et al. (2015) and in line with the findings of this study, another prominent trend is the integration of technology (IT) in educational leadership, because with the rapid advancement of technology, educational leaders are leveraging digital tools to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

### **Challenges of Educational Leadership and the Landscape of Nigerian Educational Development**

The results revealed that the challenges faced in educational leadership influences the landscape of Nigerian educational development and the respondents agree to a high extent that the challenges faced by educational leaders significantly and negatively influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected on the F-value of 18.014 and a p-value of .000. The findings are in line with the studies of Birabil and Ogeh (2020), Agbor et al. (2017) and Agbor et al. (2023b), when they exposed to view that one of the primary challenges educational leadership in Nigeria is inadequate funding for education. The allocation of resources to support infrastructure development, teacher training, curriculum enhancement, and educational initiatives remains insufficient, which has hindered the ability to deliver quality education. The

underfunded has resulted in deficiency in resources for schools, teachers, and students. This has also resulted in the shortage of qualified teachers, outdated textbooks, and inadequate infrastructure. The poor infrastructure experienced in Nigeria is as a result of poor governance. Many schools in Nigeria lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and ICT facilities. This makes it difficult for students to receive a quality education and professional development.

In the same way, Adeleke and Alabede, (2022) found that many Nigerian children do not have access to education due to poverty, cultural beliefs, and geographical location, which has led to a high dropout rate and a low literacy rate, particularly in rural areas. Critical to the challenges facing educational development in Nigeria is the quality of teacher training and professional development in the country. Prioritizing the continuous training programs for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and classroom management abilities must ensue. Investing in teacher capacity building is essential for improving overall teaching standards and student learning outcomes (Paulley & Buseri, 2029). Nigeria faces a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas (Abioye, 2021). This is due to a lack of training opportunities and a low salary scale, which discourages qualified candidates from pursuing a career in teaching (Shuls & Flores, 2020).

To Akinditure et al. (2011) and Enyiazu (2022), and in line with the opinion of the respondents, political instability is another significant challenge that has hindered education leadership in Nigeria. The country has experienced several changes in government, and this has led to a lack of continuity in education policies and programs. In addition and in line with the study's finding, Ololube (2021) observed that corruption, inefficiency, and a dearth of accountability are common in many schools and education institutions. This has led to a lack of trust in the education system and a lack of confidence in the ability of education leaders to provide quality education.

Ifinedo and Uwadia (2005), Ifinedo and Ololube (2007) and Barnes et al. (2019) highlighted that the shortage of infrastructure and resources for technology integration in many Nigerian schools is a major challenge. The shortages have direct consequences on the Nigeria's educational development. In the midst of the shortages are slow access to basic ICT equipment, slow internet connectivity and inadequate computers, transparencies, projectors, programed materials, etc., are the challenges to the effective educational development.

### **Attainable Best Practices in Educational leadership and the Landscape of Nigerian Educational Development**

The result from the study revealed that the respondents to a high extent agreed that the attainable best practices in educational leadership can influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development, and the respondents agree to a high extent that attainable best practices in educational leadership significantly influence the landscape of Nigerian educational development as reflected on the F-value of 12.165 and a p-value of .001. The findings are in line with Agabi et al. (2015) who noted that building strong collaborative partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector entities, and community stakeholders can amplify the impact of educational initiatives. Collaborative effort leads to resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions for improving educational outcomes.

In the same stratum, Nurzen (2022) found that utilizing data-driven insights to inform policy decisions enables educational leaders to identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of interventions accurately. Evidence-based decision making fosters accountability and transparency within the education system. Educational leaders must champion inclusive policies that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility within schools. Creating an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported fosters holistic development and academic success (cf., Ololube et al., 2016b).

Ololube (2011) and Birabil and Ogeh (2020) collaborated the findings of this study by noting that prioritizing continuous professional development for teachers through workshops, seminars, mentorship programs, and access to online learning resources can enhance their teaching competencies and motivation. Empowering educators with relevant skills contributes to a more effective learning environment. Educational leaders should advocate for increased funding for education while ensuring efficient utilization of resources. Strategic allocation of funds towards infrastructure development, teacher training programs, technology integration, and curriculum enhancement can significantly impact the quality of education. Educational leaders according to Ololube et al. (2016a) and Agbor et al. (2023b) emphasized that embracing technology as a tool for enhancing teaching methods and expanding learning opportunities can revolutionize education delivery in Nigeria. Therefore educational leaders must encourage the integration of digital resources into curricula while ensuring equitable access across different regions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of education in Nigeria amidst evolving trends and persistent challenges. By embracing best practices such as strategic resource allocation, collaborative partnerships, professional development for educators, inclusive policies, technology integration, and evidence-based decision making; educational leaders can drive positive change within the Nigerian education sector. As Nigeria continues its journey towards enhancing its educational system's effectiveness and inclusivity; strong leadership at all levels will be instrumental in realizing sustainable improvements that benefit students across diverse communities. The trends reflect the evolving nature of educational leadership as it adapts to meet the diverse needs of students and navigate the complexities of modern education. Realizing that education leadership in Nigeria faces a myriad of challenges that hinder the development of a quality education system. Therefore, to proffer some solution to the challenges require targeted interventions from educational leaders to bridge the gap and ensure equitable access to quality education for all Nigerian children. Thus, there is a need for increased funding, improved infrastructure, qualified teachers, good governance, and a curriculum reform.

## **Recommendations**

Following the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Educational leaders in Nigeria should embrace emerging trends in educational leadership, such as technology integration, data-driven decision making, adaptive leadership, and professional learning communities, to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

- Educational leaders and stakeholders should address the challenges facing educational leadership in Nigeria, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, political instability, and corruption, to create a conducive learning environment.
- Educational leaders should implement attainable best practices, such as building collaborative partnerships, utilizing data-driven insights, promoting inclusive policies, prioritizing continuous professional development for teachers, and advocating for increased funding and technology integration, to improve the landscape of Nigerian educational development.

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