

Managing Administrative Agility for Institutional Resilience in Public Universities in Rivers State

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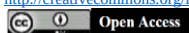
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ABSTRACT

Public universities exist inside environments that no longer hold still long enough for a fixed administrative routine to serve them well. Funding arrives late and in reduced amounts, industrial disputes interrupt the academic calendar without notice, student numbers and programme demands shift from one admission cycle to the next, and digital expectations move faster than the committees convened to approve them. This paper argues that the resilience of a public university in Rivers State, understood as its capacity to absorb these shocks and keep functioning, is produced less by the resources it commands than by the agility with which its administration senses change, decides on a response, reallocates what it has, and keeps its people informed while doing so. Four dimensions of administrative agility are examined as the practical levers available to university management: sensing and anticipatory agility, structural and decisional agility, resource reconfiguration agility, and workforce and communication agility. Working from Dynamic Capabilities Theory, the paper treats agility not as a personality trait of any vice-chancellor or registrar but as an organisational capability that can be built, measured and improved, and it contends that the rigid, multi-layered approval structures inherited from an earlier and calmer period of university administration are now a primary source of the very instability they were designed to prevent. The paper draws on documented experience of funding shortfalls, industrial action and bureaucratic delay in Nigerian public universities generally and in Rivers State's own institutions in particular, and it concludes that resilience is built in the ordinary conduct of administration long before any single crisis arrives, and is lost in the same way. Suggestions are offered for university management, governing councils, the Rivers State Government and its supervisory agencies, and for the academic and non-academic unions whose cooperation any agile response requires.

Introduction

The public university occupies a significant position within the Nigerian tertiary education system and carries responsibilities that extend beyond classroom instruction. It is expected to contribute to the development of a skilled workforce, generate research that responds to societal and local needs, and serve as an important expression of government investment in the future of its citizens. However, these expectations are increasingly being placed on institutions operating under conditions in which available resources often do not correspond with the scale and complexity of their responsibilities. The ability of a public university to fulfil its mandate therefore depends not only on the resources available to it but also on the capacity of its administration to respond effectively to changes and disruptions within its operating environment. In this regard, an institution that is able to maintain its core academic and administrative functions despite disruptions demonstrates an administrative capacity that is important to its continued effectiveness and resilience.

Public universities in Nigeria operate within an environment characterised by a range of recurring challenges. These include delays in government subventions, industrial disputes between university staff unions and government, changes in policies and regulatory requirements, increasing student enrolment, infrastructure limitations and growing demands for improved digital and administrative services. Such conditions require university administrations to respond to emerging circumstances without allowing disruptions to undermine the continuity and quality of institutional operations. The experience of public universities in Rivers State reflects these broader challenges. Rivers State University's five-year strategic development plan, launched in 2026, identified funding constraints, infrastructure deficits, limited research collaboration and service-delivery inefficiencies among the major challenges confronting the institution. The plan, which included a substantial funding target, demonstrates the scale of the institutional challenges that university management must anticipate and address in seeking to sustain the effectiveness and competitiveness of the university (Businessday NG, 2026).

In this sense, administrative agility becomes an important consideration in understanding how public universities respond to changing conditions. Administrative agility refers to the capacity of a university's management structure to identify changes in its operating environment at an early stage, make appropriate decisions without unnecessary delays, reallocate available resources in response to emerging priorities, and communicate effectively with staff, students and other stakeholders. An agile administration is therefore not simply one that makes decisions quickly; rather, it is one that can combine timely decision-making with appropriate judgement, accountability, coordination and responsiveness. Sule (2024) observed that Nigerian university administrative structures are frequently affected by lengthy approval procedures, whereby even routine activities such as student registration and transcript processing may experience considerable delays. Such bureaucratic practices can restrict institutional responsiveness and discourage innovation, particularly when universities are confronted with circumstances that require timely administrative action.

The importance of administrative agility becomes even clearer when considered in relation to institutional resilience. Institutional resilience refers to the capacity of a university to maintain its essential academic and administrative functions during periods of disruption and to recover from such disruptions without sustaining lasting damage to its operations, staff relationships, academic quality or institutional reputation. Nigerian public universities have repeatedly experienced disruptions associated with industrial disputes, funding difficulties and governance-related disagreements. The long-standing disputes between the Academic Staff Union of Universities and government over issues including funding, remuneration, university autonomy and the implementation of agreements have contributed to repeated interruptions in university operations. This challenge has also affected public universities in Rivers State. In 2026, chapters of the Academic Staff Union of Universities at Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education continued to press the state government over the implementation of outstanding aspects of a 2025 agreement concerning university autonomy, governance and administrative due process (Champion Newspapers, 2026). Such disputes illustrate how unresolved administrative and governance issues can become sources of institutional instability when appropriate responses are not developed and implemented in a timely manner.

The recurrence of these challenges suggests that institutional resilience cannot be understood exclusively as a consequence of the amount of financial or material resources available to a university. Although inadequate funding constitutes a major constraint on the Nigerian public university system, the manner in which available resources are anticipated, allocated and managed can influence the extent to which an institution is able to absorb disruption. A university whose management can identify a likely funding shortfall sufficiently early and adjust its expenditure priorities may be better positioned to protect essential activities than an institution that responds only after financial difficulties have already

affected salaries or other critical obligations. Similarly, a university that maintains regular and transparent communication with staff unions may be better positioned to identify and address emerging grievances before they develop into prolonged industrial disputes. Administrative agility therefore provides an important organisational mechanism through which existing resources, structures and relationships can be mobilised to support institutional continuity and recovery.

The present paper consequently focuses on the relationship between administrative agility and institutional resilience in public universities in Rivers State. It considers administrative agility as a multidimensional organisational capability expressed through sensing and anticipatory agility, structural and decisional agility, resource reconfiguration agility, and workforce and communication agility. Sensing and anticipatory agility concerns the ability of university management to identify emerging threats and changes before they develop into major disruptions. Structural and decisional agility concerns the ability of the institution to move efficiently from recognition of a problem to an appropriate decision and its implementation. Resource reconfiguration agility relates to the capacity to redeploy available financial, human, physical and other institutional resources when circumstances change, while workforce and communication agility concerns the ability to maintain effective engagement, information flow and cooperation among staff, students, government and other stakeholders.

The argument of the paper is that these dimensions of administrative agility constitute important organisational mechanisms through which public universities can strengthen their capacity to withstand and recover from disruption. Administrative agility does not imply the abandonment of established procedures, institutional accountability or due process. Rather, it involves designing administrative structures in ways that allow decisions requiring immediate attention to be addressed promptly while preserving appropriate oversight for decisions that require broader institutional consideration. The central concern is therefore not simply whether university management makes decisions rapidly, but whether its structures and processes enable it to sense emerging challenges, make appropriate decisions, mobilise available resources and maintain effective communication before, during and after periods of disruption. In this sense, institutional resilience is not created only when a crisis occurs; it is developed through the ordinary administrative practices and organisational capabilities established before the crisis emerges.

Theoretical Review

Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997)

Dynamic Capabilities Theory was set out by David Teece, Gary Pisano and Amy Shuen in their widely cited 1997 article in the *Strategic Management Journal*, where they described the dynamic capability of a firm as its ability to purposefully adapt, integrate and reconfigure its internal and external skills, resources and competences to match the requirements of a changing environment (Teece et al., 1997). The theory was developed to explain why some organisations facing the same turbulent environment as their competitors nonetheless manage to renew themselves and remain effective, while others, despite holding comparable or superior resources, become progressively less able to respond to change. Teece (2007) later refined the framework into three clusters of capability that any resilient organisation must be able to exercise: sensing, which is the capacity to identify and assess emerging opportunities and threats in the environment before they mature into crises; seizing, which is the capacity to mobilise resources and commit to a course of action once an opportunity or threat has been identified; and transforming, which is the capacity to reconfigure the organisation's tangible and intangible assets when the competitive or operating environment has genuinely shifted.

The relevance of this framework to public university administration lies in its insistence that adaptive capacity is a property of the organisation's routines and structures rather than of any single leader's improvisation under pressure. A university's sensing capability shows up in whether its

management routinely scans the policy environment, the funding pipeline and the mood of its staff for early signals of trouble, or waits for those signals to become undeniable. Its seizing capability shows up in whether a decision, once needed, can move from recognition to action without being trapped in a sequence of committees each waiting for the one before it. Its transforming capability shows up in whether the university can permanently adjust its structures, such as its resource allocation formula or its communication channels, once a recurring pattern of disruption has revealed that the old arrangement no longer fits the environment it was built for.

Applied to institutional resilience, Dynamic Capabilities Theory supplies the reasoning behind treating administrative agility not as a single skill but as a bundle of related capabilities that a university must build deliberately, in the same way that the four dimensions of agility examined later in this paper, namely sensing and anticipatory agility, structural and decisional agility, resource reconfiguration agility, and workforce and communication agility, each correspond to a recognisable part of the sensing, seizing and transforming sequence. The theory also carries a limitation worth acknowledging, in that it was developed principally to explain competitive advantage among firms operating in markets, and a public university does not compete for customers in the same sense that a firm competes for market share; its resource base is shaped as much by government subvention and legislative decision as by its own strategic choices. This limitation means that a university's capacity to seize an opportunity or reconfigure a resource is often bounded by decisions taken outside the institution altogether, a constraint that must be kept in view whenever the framework is applied to a public rather than a private organisation.

Conceptual Clarifications

Administrative Agility in University Organisations

Administrative agility, as applied to a university, describes the responsiveness of its management processes rather than the content of its academic mission. It is expressed in the speed and appropriateness with which decisions travel from recognition of a problem to a working response, in the willingness of the institution to alter a standing procedure once that procedure has been shown to no longer serve its purpose, and in the readiness of administrative units to cooperate across boundaries that a rigid organogram would otherwise keep separate. Sule (2024) documented that many Nigerian universities suffer from poor coordination between academic and administrative units, a condition that slows the institution's response to problems that cut across both sides of that boundary, such as a sudden need to reschedule an academic calendar disrupted by industrial action. Danjuma Bot et al.(2022), examining the University of Jos, traced comparable bureaucratic bottlenecks to the size of the institution's workforce and the complexity of its managerial procedures, and concluded that these features slow the speed with which decisions are reached and executed even in a university with no unusual crisis at hand.

Agility should not be mistaken for haste or for the abandonment of due process, since a university that changes its rules unpredictably or bypasses accountability in the name of speed creates a different kind of instability from the one it is trying to avoid. The distinguishing feature of an agile administration is that it has already worked out, in advance of any particular crisis, which decisions genuinely require the full weight of committee deliberation and which can be delegated to a lower level of authority or a smaller emergency group without any loss of legitimate oversight. Kivindo et al.(2024), studying Kenyan public universities, found organisational agility to be closely linked to the restructuring choices those institutions made, including how far decision-making authority was pushed down from the top management team toward the units actually facing the problem, and Litsulitsa et al. (2024) similarly found that a public university's demonstrated readiness to change was a significant contributor to its overall performance.

Institutional Resilience

Institutional resilience refers to a university's capacity to keep its core academic and administrative functions running through a period of disruption, and, where a disruption cannot be avoided, to recover from it without lasting damage to its academic calendar, its staff relations or its standing with the public it serves. Duchek (2020) offered a capability-based account of organisational resilience in general that has direct relevance here, conceptualising resilience as a meta-capability composed of three sequential capabilities: anticipation, which is the ability to detect critical developments within the organisation or its environment and adapt proactively before they escalate; coping, which is the ability to develop and implement a solution once a disruptive event has actually occurred, requiring both the discipline of clear formal responsibility and the freedom for creative, flexible action; and adaptation, which is the ability to reflect on the experience of a crisis and translate what was learned into a permanently improved routine or structure.

This three-stage account maps closely onto the sensing, seizing and transforming sequence of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and the correspondence is not accidental, since Duchek (2020) explicitly situates resilience within the wider literature on organisational and dynamic capabilities. For a Rivers State public university, resilience understood in this way is visible in concrete indicators: whether the academic calendar for a session is completed within its planned duration despite disruptions along the way, whether staff who might otherwise resign or seek transfer choose to remain because they see the institution handling its difficulties competently, and whether a crisis that affects one part of the university, such as a delayed subvention affecting the bursary, is prevented from cascading into an unrelated part, such as the library or the examinations unit, through poor internal coordination. A university that merely survives a crisis by shutting down until it passes has not demonstrated resilience in this sense; resilience is demonstrated by the institution that keeps functioning, however reduced, and comes out of the disruption having learned something that makes the next one easier to manage.

Sensing and Anticipatory Agility and Institutional Resilience

Sensing and anticipatory agility is the dimension of administrative agility concerned with early detection: the capacity of university management to notice, ahead of a crisis becoming visible to everyone, the signals that a funding shortfall, a labour dispute, a regulatory change or an enrolment shift is approaching. In practice this requires a routine flow of information from the units closest to a potential problem, such as the bursary tracking the pace of subvention releases against the approved budget, the registry tracking the mood of ongoing union negotiations, and academic departments tracking early signs of student dissatisfaction, up to a management team that is actually positioned to act on what it is told rather than treating such reports as routine paperwork. Duchek's (2020) description of anticipation as requiring both cognitive scanning of the environment and behavioural preparation for what is found is directly applicable here: a university's finance committee that merely records that a subvention is late, without adjusting its spending plan in light of that delay, has performed the cognitive half of anticipation without its behavioural counterpart, and the value of the exercise is lost.

The contribution of sensing agility to institutional resilience lies chiefly in the additional time it buys the institution. A university that identifies a funding shortfall three months before salaries are due can renegotiate contracts, defer non-essential capital spending, and communicate honestly with staff about what to expect, all of which are options that disappear the moment the shortfall becomes an unpaid salary. Rivers State University's own recent strategic planning exercise, which named funding constraints and infrastructure deficits among its central challenges after what its Council described as an extensive and inclusive consultative process (Businessday NG, 2026), illustrates the kind of forward-looking exercise that sensing agility requires, since a university that had waited for those constraints to fully materialise before naming them would have had far less room to plan around them.

The dimension nevertheless depends on conditions that are not automatically present in a large public bureaucracy. It requires that lower-level units be willing to report bad news upward honestly, which in turn requires a management culture that does not punish the bearer of unwelcome information, and it requires that whoever receives such signals at the top of the institution has both the authority and the inclination to act on them promptly rather than filing them for a future meeting. A university whose sensing mechanisms exist only on paper, in the form of committees that meet but do not feed their findings into an actual decision process, gains none of the resilience benefit that the capability is meant to provide, and the resources spent maintaining the appearance of anticipatory capacity are in that case wasted.

Structural and Decisional Agility and Institutional Resilience

Structural and decisional agility concerns the speed and appropriateness with which a university, once a problem has been recognised, can actually decide what to do about it and set that decision in motion. It is the dimension most directly implicated in the bureaucratic bottlenecks that recur throughout the literature on Nigerian university administration. Sule (2024) reported that multiple layers of approval in Nigerian universities routinely turn simple administrative requests into matters of weeks, and linked this pattern to a broader culture of hierarchical decision-making that discourages the responsiveness the sector increasingly needs. Danjuma Bot et al.(2022) reached a similar conclusion in their study of the University of Jos, attributing much of the delay they documented to the sheer size of the university's workforce interacting with managerial procedures that had not been redesigned to match that scale.

The strategy through which this dimension of agility is built is not the wholesale removal of oversight but its deliberate calibration: identifying in advance which categories of decision, such as the emergency reallocation of a small operating budget to cover an unforeseen utility shortfall, can be delegated to a named officer or a small standing committee with authority to act immediately, while reserving the fuller committee process for decisions whose scale or irreversibility genuinely warrants it. Kivindo et al.(2024) found organisational agility among Kenyan public universities to be closely tied to governance restructuring of exactly this kind, in which the redesign of the top management team's decision authority was undertaken specifically to improve the institution's effectiveness, and Litsulitsa et al. (2024) found that a university's demonstrated readiness to change, itself a product of how its decision structures were arranged, contributed measurably to its overall performance.

The contribution of decisional agility to institutional resilience is most visible in exactly the kind of disputes that have repeatedly disrupted Rivers State's public universities. A dispute between a staff union and university management over an unimplemented agreement, of the kind that persisted between the Academic Staff Union of Universities and both Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education into 2026 (Champion Newspapers, 2026), is far more likely to escalate into a strike where the university's own internal decision process cannot move fast enough to bring a credible response to the negotiating table before positions harden. A university whose management can convene the right people, with the right authority, within days rather than weeks of a grievance being raised preserves options that a slower institution has already lost by the time it responds. The risk on the other side of this dimension is a structural agility pursued without corresponding accountability, in which decisions are taken quickly but by people who lack either the information or the legitimacy to take them well, and a university pursuing this dimension of agility must therefore pair any delegation of authority with clear reporting lines back to the full governance structure.

Resource Reconfiguration Agility and Institutional Resilience

Resource reconfiguration agility is the capacity of a university to move money, staff, space and equipment to where a changing situation has newly made them most needed, rather than leaving them fixed in the allocation set at the start of a budget cycle regardless of what has happened since. This

dimension corresponds most directly to the seizing and transforming clusters of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, in which an organisation's value lies not in the resources it happens to hold but in its ability to redeploy them as circumstances change (Teece, 2007). For a Rivers State public university operating under the funding pressures that its own strategic plan acknowledges (Businessday NG, 2026), this capability determines whether a shortfall in one revenue line can be partly absorbed by reallocating savings from elsewhere in the institution, or whether the shortfall simply becomes an unpaid obligation because no mechanism exists for moving resources across the boundaries that separate one budget line, faculty or campus from another.

Underfunding is a structural condition of the Nigerian public university system that no single institution's administrative skill can fully offset, and it would be a mistake to present resource reconfiguration agility as a substitute for adequate government funding. The recurring disputes between the Academic Staff Union of Universities and government over the implementation of funding and revitalisation agreements illustrate a grievance whose remedy lies substantially outside any individual university's control. What resource reconfiguration agility can do, within that constraint, is determine how far the resources a university does receive are used to best effect and how quickly the institution can adjust when the resources it expected fail to arrive on schedule. A university with a habit of building modest reserves during better periods, of reviewing its capital commitments against its actual cash position rather than its approved budget, and of empowering its bursary and planning units to recommend in-year reallocation rather than waiting for the next full budget cycle, is in a materially stronger position to absorb a funding shock than one that treats its annual budget as a fixed and unchangeable document once approved.

The dimension also extends to the redeployment of staff and space in response to shifting academic demand, such as a sudden rise in enrolment in one programme against a decline in another, a pattern increasingly common as students respond to changing labour-market signals. A university whose staffing and space allocation processes are agile enough to respond to this shift within an academic session, rather than only at the multi-year intervals typical of establishment reviews, protects both the quality of instruction in the growing programme and the productive use of capacity in the shrinking one, and in doing so protects the institutional reputation that both students and government use to judge whether the university deserves continued investment.

Workforce and Communication Agility and Institutional Resilience

Workforce and communication agility is the dimension through which a university keeps its staff, students and external stakeholders informed and engaged as conditions change, and it is the dimension whose absence most directly converts a manageable disagreement into an open dispute. Nwaokugha et al.(2026), studying media liaison practice across Rivers State's public universities, found that university information units, although formally structured, tend to interact with journalists and the wider public reactively, largely during events or crises that have already occurred, and that this reactive posture is compounded by internal bureaucratic delay that slows even routine information sharing. A university that communicates only when a decision has already been finalised, and only through the most formal available channel, denies its own staff the opportunity to raise concerns while a decision is still open to adjustment, and in doing so manufactures exactly the sense of being unheard that has repeatedly preceded industrial action in the Nigerian university sector.

The contribution of this dimension to institutional resilience operates on two levels. Internally, staff who understand why an unwelcome decision, such as a delayed allowance or a changed teaching load, has been taken are considerably less likely to escalate their grievance than staff left to construct their own explanation from silence, and a university with functioning consultative structures, whether through union liaison committees, town-hall style meetings, or a genuine grievance channel that

produces a visible response, converts what would otherwise be a source of resentment into a manageable administrative task. Externally, a university whose communication with government, host communities and the wider public is proactive rather than reactive is better placed to explain its funding needs, defend its record when challenged, and mobilise support during a dispute such as the one that persisted into 2026 between the Academic Staff Union of Universities and Rivers State's public universities over the implementation of prior agreements (Champion Newspapers, 2026).

Building this dimension requires more than issuing more memoranda; it requires giving the university's information and communication functions the operational autonomy, staffing and digital tools that Nwaokugha et al.(2026) found were often lacking, and it requires management to treat consultation as a genuine input into decision-making rather than a formality performed after a decision has already been made. A university that consults its unions and its own staff visibly and consistently, rather than only when a dispute has already become public, converts a potential source of instability into one of its most reliable early-warning systems, since staff who trust that raising a concern will be heard are also the staff most likely to raise it early, before it has grown into something the institution can no longer manage quietly.

Challenges of Administrative Agility in Public Universities in Rivers State

The four dimensions of agility examined above are not unfamiliar in principle to Nigerian university administrators, and their limited practice is better explained by persistent structural obstacles than by any lack of awareness of what effective administration requires. The inherited scale and complexity of university bureaucracy stands foremost among these obstacles, since Danjuma Bot et al.(2022) found that the size of a Nigerian university's workforce interacting with layered managerial procedure was itself a source of the bureaucratic bottlenecks they documented, a condition that no amount of individual administrator goodwill can fully overcome without structural reform of the procedures themselves.

The dependence of public universities on government funding decisions taken outside the institution constitutes a second obstacle, and it limits every one of the four dimensions of agility in a different way. Sensing agility can detect a funding shortfall coming, but cannot prevent it; decisional agility can speed up how a university responds to a shortfall, but cannot conjure the missing funds; and resource reconfiguration agility can redeploy what a university has, but only within a resource envelope that government, not the university, ultimately determines. Jacob (2020) identified problems of this structural kind, including funding and governance constraints originating outside the university itself, among the persistent difficulties facing the administration of Nigerian public universities generally, and the recurring disputes between the Academic Staff Union of Universities and government over agreements affecting Rivers State's own institutions illustrate how much of the resilience challenge facing a university administrator originates in a relationship the administrator does not fully control (Champion Newspapers, 2026).

A third obstacle lies in the absence, in many Nigerian universities, of an information and communication function equipped to support genuine two-way engagement rather than one-directional announcement, a gap that Nwaokugha et al.(2026) traced in Rivers State's own universities to insufficient funding, limited operational autonomy and internal bureaucratic delay affecting the university units responsible for public and staff communication. Where this function is under-resourced, workforce and communication agility remains aspirational regardless of how well the other three dimensions are developed, since even a university that senses trouble early and decides on a response quickly will struggle to carry its own staff and the wider public along if it lacks the machinery to explain what it is doing and why.

A fourth obstacle is more cultural than structural, and concerns the tendency, documented broadly across Nigerian public sector reform efforts, for organisations to treat reform of decision structures as a one-time project rather than a sustained discipline. Usman (2026) found that public sector reforms in Nigeria more broadly have often failed to outlast the political or administrative leadership that initiated them, undermined by weak monitoring frameworks and the return of entrenched habits once the initial reforming energy has passed, a pattern to which universities, with their long institutional memories and frequent changes of vice-chancellor, are not immune.

Suggestions

1. University management in Rivers State's public universities should establish a standing early-warning mechanism, drawing routinely on reports from the bursary, registry and academic departments, whose findings are reviewed by a body with the authority to act on them rather than only to note them.
2. Governing councils should undertake a deliberate review of existing approval processes to identify categories of decision that can be safely delegated to named officers or small standing committees, reserving the fuller committee process for decisions whose scale genuinely warrants it, with clear reporting lines preserved for accountability.
3. University bursary and planning units should be empowered to recommend in-year budget reallocation in response to changing circumstances, rather than treating the annual approved budget as fixed once passed, so that a shortfall in one area can be partly absorbed by savings identified elsewhere.
4. University information and communication units should be given the staffing, funding and operational autonomy needed to engage proactively with staff, students and the public, rather than reactively during crises alone, and should be integrated into decision-making processes early enough to communicate the reasoning behind a decision, not only its outcome.
5. Management should establish regular, scheduled engagement with academic and non-academic staff unions on matters of shared concern, so that grievances over funding, allowances or working conditions can be raised and addressed before they harden into the kind of dispute that has repeatedly disrupted Rivers State's public universities.
6. The Rivers State Government and its supervisory agencies should work toward timely and predictable release of approved subventions and the full implementation of agreements already reached with staff unions, since no administrative agility at the institutional level can fully substitute for reliability in the funding relationship between government and university.
7. Each university should maintain a documented record of the disruptions it has experienced and the responses applied, so that lessons from one crisis inform preparation for the next and are not lost with a change of administration, consistent with the adaptation stage that resilience scholarship identifies as necessary for an organisation to convert a difficult experience into lasting improvement.
8. Succession into senior administrative office should include a structured handover of unresolved matters and standing agreements, so that institutional memory of prior negotiations and commitments survives the turnover of vice-chancellors, registrars and bursars.

Conclusion

The position taken in this paper is that the resilience of public universities in Rivers State depends substantially on the agility of their administrative processes, and that the disruptions these institutions continue to experience, whether from funding shortfalls, industrial disputes or the ordinary friction of decision-making, reflect gaps in administrative capability at least as much as they reflect the acknowledged scarcity of resources in the sector. A university cannot eliminate the turbulence of its

operating environment, since government funding decisions, national union negotiations and shifting student demand all originate substantially beyond any single institution's control, but it can determine how well it senses that turbulence coming, how quickly it can decide and act once a problem has surfaced, how flexibly it redeploys the resources it holds, and how honestly and consistently it communicates with the people whose cooperation any response requires. The four dimensions of agility examined in this paper, namely sensing and anticipatory agility, structural and decisional agility, resource reconfiguration agility, and workforce and communication agility, are each capable of being built deliberately through the ordinary conduct of administration, and a university that invests in them before a crisis arrives is in a materially stronger position than one that must improvise its response after the crisis has already begun.

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