Determinants of Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education: A Multidimensional Model of Managerial and Learner-Centered Factors—Evidence from Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Thuy Ninh[*]
Faculty of Korean Language,
Viet Nhat College of Language and Technology, Vietnam

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary landscape of higher education, the imperative for accountability has shifted the discourse from mere compliance to a robust interrogation of value, performance, and sustainability. Institutional Effectiveness (IE), once a peripheral concern of accreditation liaisons, has migrated to the strategic core of university management. This study rigorously investigates the determinants of IE through a comprehensive, multidimensional model that synthesizes two historically distinct domains: Managerial Factors (Strategic Planning, Administrative Leadership, and Resource Allocation Efficiency) and Learner-Centered Factors (Teaching Quality, Student Support Services, and Curriculum Relevance). Grounded in Systems Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV), this research posits that institutional effectiveness is not a monolithic output but a complex emergent property resulting from the interaction of administrative scaffolding and pedagogical delivery.

Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected via a cross-sectional survey of faculty, administrators, and students (N = 588) across a stratified sample of public and private higher education institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess reliability, followed by validation of the latent constructs using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to ensure psychometric soundness. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was subsequently performed to identify the significant predictors of perceived Institutional Effectiveness. The results indicate a nuanced hierarchy of influence: while managerial factors - particularly Strategic Planning - provide the necessary structural stability and directional clarity, learner-centered factors - specifically Teaching Quality and Curriculum Relevance - exert a more proximal and potent influence on effectiveness scores. The findings suggest a synergistic model in which administrative efficiency acts as a mediator of educational outcomes, challenging the traditional bifurcation of administrative and academic performance metrics. This report details the theoretical underpinnings, methodological rigor, empirical findings, and strategic implications of this model, offering a roadmap for leaders navigating the "new normal" of higher education.

Keywords: institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, teaching quality, higher education, Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

The global higher education sector is at a critical juncture, often described as a legitimacy crisis. For decades, universities operated under a tacit social contract in which their value was assumed to be intrinsic and self-evident. However, this assumption has eroded under the weight of escalating tuition costs, shifting demographic patterns, and intensified scrutiny from governments, parents, and the labor market (Carter-Smith, 2010). Today, higher education institutions (HEIs) are no longer judged solely by their inputs - endowments, faculty credentials, or selectivity rates—but by their outputs: retention rates, graduation numbers,

graduate employability, and the demonstrable quality of the student experience (Agasisti, 2017).

In this volatile environment, Institutional Effectiveness (IE) has emerged as the primary mechanism for survival and adaptation. IE is defined not merely as a state of being but as a systematic, ongoing process of collecting, analyzing, and acting on data in line with an institution's mission (Ranger College, 2021). It serves as the bridge between the lofty aspirations of a mission statement and the practical constraints of budget spreadsheets and classroom interactions. The motivation for IE has shifted from external compliance to internal necessity. Institutions that fail to implement integrated IE plans—linking planning, assessment, and resource allocation—face not only accreditation sanctions but existential threats in a competitive market (Schramm, 2023).

Despite the centrality of IE, the literature investigating its determinants often remains fragmented, reflecting the academy's siloed nature. On one side stands the managerialist perspective, grounded in organizational theory and economics. This view emphasizes the "business" of the university: the efficiency of resource allocation, the clarity of strategic planning, and the competence of administrative leadership (Agasisti, 2017). Researchers in this vein use tools such as Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to treat the university as a production function, calculating technical efficiency scores based on inputs and outputs (Qin & Jiang, 2024). For these scholars, effectiveness is measured by how well the institution minimizes waste and maximizes operational throughput (Sums Consulting).

On the other side is the learner-centered or pedagogical perspective, rooted in educational psychology and student affairs research. This viewpoint argues that a university's accurate measure is the transformation of its students. Here, the determinants of effectiveness are found in the classroom and the campus community: the quality of teaching, student engagement, the relevance of the curriculum, and the robustness of support services (Li & Xue, 2023). Scholars in this tradition warn against the "black box" approach of efficiency studies, arguing that focusing on administrative variables without accounting for the nuances of the learning process misses the very soul of the enterprise (Agasisti, 2017). They emphasize that student satisfaction, retention, and engagement are the ultimate proxies for institutional health (Gruber et al., 2010).

The separation of these two perspectives creates a blind spot in our understanding of what truly drives effectiveness. A university can be efficiently managed yet educationally bankrupt, just as it can be educationally vibrant yet fiscally insolvent. Actual institutional effectiveness requires the successful integration of both domains. The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm suggests that unique combinations of resources—tangible (financial) and intangible (reputation, culture)—create competitive advantage (Serrano et al., 2025). In the context of higher education, this implies that managerial resources (leadership, planning) must be actively deployed to enhance academic resources (teaching, curriculum) to achieve superior performance.

This study proposes a Multidimensional Model of Institutional Effectiveness that explicitly tests the interrelationships between these disparate factors. By placing managerial and learner-centered variables in a single simultaneous equation, we can determine their relative weights and interaction effects. For instance, does excellent strategic planning directly influence perceived effectiveness, or does it operate indirectly by improving resource allocation to student support services? Does teaching quality matter if the curriculum itself is viewed as irrelevant by the labor market? Addressing these questions is critical for leaders who must decide where to invest scarce resources to generate the greatest return on institutional health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopts Systems Theory as its foundational framework, specifically viewing the Higher Education Institution (HEI) as a Complex Adaptive System (CAS) (Schramm, 2023). A CAS is characterized by a large number of interacting components (departments, faculty, students) that adapt or learn from their environment. In this model, the institution is not a linear machine but a dynamic organism.

Inputs: The system ingests resources—financial capital, human talent, and regulatory mandates. This corresponds to the Managerial Factors in our model, specifically Resource Efficiency and Administrative Leadership, which govern the intake and distribution of inputs (Agasisti, 2017).

Throughputs (Transformation Process): The system's core activity is transforming students through education. This corresponds to the Learner-Centered Factors: Teaching Quality, Curriculum Relevance, and Student Support Services. It is here that the institution's "value add" is generated (Volkwein, 2010).

Outputs: The result is the educated graduate, research production, and societal impact.

Feedback Loops: The Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness assessment serves as the feedback mechanism, allowing the system to monitor its outputs and adjust its inputs and throughput accordingly (SUNY Cobleskill).

By framing the university as a CAS, we acknowledge that effectiveness is an emergent property. It cannot be mandated from the top down (solely via leadership) nor bubbled up entirely from the bottom (solely via teaching). It arises from the alignment and coherence of the entire system.

Managerial Determinants: The Architecture of Effectiveness

Strategic planning in higher education has evolved from a periodic, static exercise into a dynamic tool for navigating uncertainty. It provides the "Clarity," "Agility," and "Alignment" necessary for institutions to thrive (Credo Higher Ed). Clarity involves ensuring that stakeholders—faculty, staff, students, and boards—understand the institution's direction and priorities. Without this shared understanding, departments retreat into silos, pursuing divergent goals that dilute overall effectiveness (SUNY Cobleskill). Agility refers to the institution's ability to "move strategically and quickly" in response to environmental shifts, such as changes in enrollment demographics or funding models (Credo Higher Ed).

Research indicates that accreditation failures are frequently linked to the inability to implement integrated effectiveness plans (Schramm, 2023). Successful planning is not just about the document produced but the process of creating a "community of interest" (SUNY Cobleskill). It connects the mission to the budget, ensuring that resources follow priorities rather than historical precedent. In our model, Strategic Planning is hypothesized to be a primary driver of effectiveness because it sets the boundary conditions for all other activities.

H1: Strategic Planning is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Administrative leadership in HEIs differs from corporate management due to the unique governance structures of shared governance and academic freedom. Effective academic leaders (Deans, Provosts, Presidents) function as "thermostats," regulating the organizational climate (Aggarwal et al., 2021). They do not merely execute tasks; they interpret external realities for internal stakeholders and facilitate the consensus necessary for change. The literature identifies critical competencies for these leaders, including "Vision and Goal Setting," "Management of the Unit," and "Interpersonal Relationships" (Rahman et al., 2025).

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) framework suggests that transformational leadership - which inspires and motivates - is particularly effective in the academic context, where faculty autonomy is high (Garcia, 2020). Furthermore, management

support has been identified as the strongest predictor of the effectiveness of Quality Assurance Systems (QAS) (Serrano et al., 2025). If leadership fails to demonstrate commitment to quality and effectiveness, the legitimacy of these initiatives collapses, leading to cynicism and disengagement among faculty and staff. We formulate the following hypotheses regarding the relationship between administrative leadership and institutional effectiveness in higher education:

H2: Administrative Leadership is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Resource allocation is the tangible expression of an institution's values. In an era of performance-based funding and austerity, the efficiency with which resources are deployed is a critical determinant of institutional health (Carter-Smith, 2010). Efficiency is often defined as the optimal transformation of inputs (funding, facilities) into outputs (graduates, research). Tools such as Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) measure technical efficiency (Qin & Jiang, 2024). However, perceived efficiency is equally vital. Stakeholders must believe that the institution is a responsible steward of tuition and tax dollars.

Inefficiency manifests as bureaucratic bloat, redundant processes, or the misallocation of funds to non-strategic areas (Childress, 2015). Conversely, effective resource allocation is characterized by transparency, data-driven decision-making, and the explicit linkage of budgets to strategic goals. When faculty perceive that resources are allocated fairly and efficiently to support the core mission, organizational trust increases, thereby enhancing overall effectiveness (Credo Higher Ed). In summary, we posit that resource efficiency can have a positive correlation with institutional effectiveness in higher education, as delineated below:

H3: Resource Efficiency is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Learner-Centered Determinants: The Core Business

Teaching quality is arguably the most proximal determinant of student success and, by extension, institutional effectiveness. It encompasses the instructor's pedagogical skills, the fairness of assessment, the clarity of learning outcomes, and the creation of an inclusive learning environment (SmartSurvey). High-quality instruction leads to "deep learning," increased retention, and higher student satisfaction.

The assessment of teaching quality has moved beyond simple student ratings of instruction (SRI) to include peer review, portfolio analysis, and the measurement of learning gains (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013). However, from the student's perspective—which dominates perception-based measures of IE—factors such as instructor enthusiasm, organization, and availability remain paramount (University of Pittsburgh). The "Black Box" of higher education production is essentially the classroom interaction; failure here renders all upstream managerial efforts moot (Agasisti, 2017). Therefore, we posit that teaching quality can be positively linked to institutional effectiveness in higher education, as detailed in the following hypothesis:

H4: Teaching Quality is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

As higher education democratizes, the student body has become increasingly diverse, including more first-generation, low-income, and non-traditional students. For these populations, academic ability alone is often insufficient for success; they require a robust ecosystem of support. Student Support Services (SS) include academic advising, financial aid counseling, mental health services, career centers, and library resources.

Effective support services are "intertwined" with the academic mission rather than existing in isolation (SUNY Cobleskill). Research shows that satisfaction with these services is a strong predictor of student retention and loyalty (Folsom Lake College). When students

feel "valued" and "supported" by the institution—embodied in the responsiveness of support staff—their engagement and academic performance improve. Thus, SS acts as a critical enabler of academic success.

H5: Student Support Services is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Curriculum relevance refers to the alignment of educational content with current and future societal and labor-market needs. In a climate where the ROI of a degree is constantly questioned, students and parents increasingly demand that curricula be "relevant" to career goals (SurveyMonkey). This does not necessarily imply a purely vocational focus, but rather the integration of "employability qualities" such as critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy into disciplinary content (Schotter, 2022).

A relevant curriculum is dynamic; it evolves in response to external changes (e.g., the digital economy) (Cheung et al., 1996). Institutions that maintain static, outdated curricula risk becoming obsolete. Perceived relevance is a key driver of student motivation; students who believe what they are learning is important for their future are more engaged and perform better (Fedesco et al., 2017). Therefore, CR is a direct measure of the institution's responsiveness to its environment.

H6: Curriculum Relevance is positively related to Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Building on insights from existing literature, this paper proposes a research model outlining the factors affecting institutional effectiveness in higher education in Hanoi, Vietnam (Figure 1).
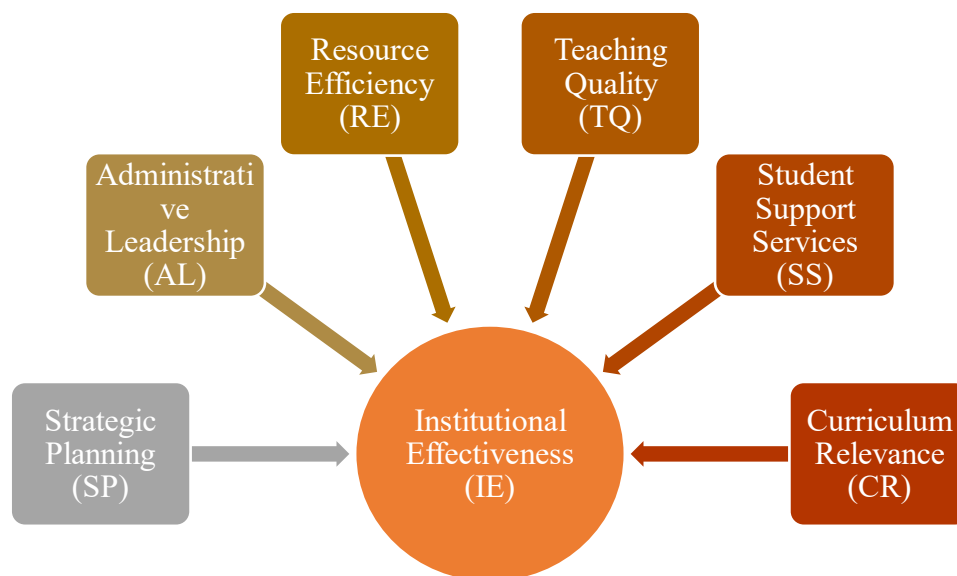
Figure 1

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. This approach was selected as it allows for the examination of relationships between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable at a single point in time, enabling the identification of predictive patterns across a large sample. The design is appropriate for testing the magnitude and direction of associations within the proposed multidimensional model.

The target population included stakeholders within higher education institutions in Hanoi, Vietnam: specifically, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, and

administrators/staff. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to ensure representation from both public and private institutions. The stratification also accounted for the different roles (Student vs. Employee) to capture the diverse perspectives inherent in the IE construct.

The final sample consisted of N = 588 valid responses. The demographic breakdown is presented in Table 1. The sample was predominantly composed of students (55.1%), reflecting their status as the largest stakeholder group, followed by faculty (29.9%) and administrators (15.0%). The gender distribution was relatively balanced, and the institutional split favored public universities (59.9%), consistent with broader population enrollment patterns.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 588)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Role	Students (Undergrad/Grad)	324	55.1%
	Faculty (Tenure/Adjunct)	176	29.9%
	Administrators/Staff	88	15.0%
Gender	Female	312	53.1%
	Male	270	45.9%
	Non-binary/Prefer not to say	6	1.0%
Institutional Type	Public University	412	70.1%
	Private College	176	29.9%
Age Group	18-24	295	50.2%
	25-40	180	30.6%
	41+	113	19.2%

Source: Survey data, 2025

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure the seven constructs (6 independent and one dependent). The instrument was compiled by adapting validated items from existing scales found in the literature to ensure content validity. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

Strategic Planning (SP): 4 items. This scale measured the perceived clarity of institutional priorities, the agility of decision-making, and the degree of alignment between goals and actions. Items were adapted from the "20 Questions for Strategic Planning Readiness" (Credo Higher Ed).

Administrative Leadership (AL): 7 items. This scale assessed perceptions of leadership vision, responsiveness, and effectiveness in managing units. It drew concepts from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and research on dean effectiveness (Rahman et al., 2025).

Resource Efficiency (RE): 4 items. This scale focused on the transparency of budgeting and the perceived efficient use of physical and financial assets. Items were based on resource allocation literature and efficiency studies (Qin & Jiang, 2024).

Teaching Quality (TQ): 5 items. This scale measured students' (and faculty's) perceptions of instructor pedagogical skill, enthusiasm, and assessment fairness. It was adapted from standard student satisfaction and course evaluation instruments (SmartSurvey).

Student Support Services (SS): 5 items. This scale assessed staff members' accessibility, helpfulness, and knowledge in non-academic support units (e.g., advising, financial aid). Items were derived from support service satisfaction surveys conducted at Folsom Lake College.

Curriculum Relevance (CR): 4 items. This scale measured the perceived alignment of the curriculum with career goals and current industry standards. It was adapted from the curriculum review and employability scales (SurveyMonkey).

Institutional Effectiveness (IE): 3 items. This composite scale measured the institution's overall perception of its success in achieving its mission, its reputation, and its overall performance. It synthesized concepts from the Institutional Performance Questionnaire (IPQ) and general effectiveness frameworks (SUNY Cobleskill).

The survey was distributed online via institutional email lists and learning management systems. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Data cleaning involved removing incomplete responses and checking for outliers.

The analytical workflow proceeded in three stages using SPSS software:

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each of the six factors and the dependent variable to assess internal consistency. A threshold of Alpha > 0.70 was set for acceptability (Hair, 2009).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was conducted to verify the construct validity of the 30 independent variable items. This step ensured that the items empirically loaded onto the six hypothesized factors (SPSS Analysis).

Multiple Regression Analysis: An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model was constructed to test the predictive power of the six independent variables on Institutional Effectiveness. The assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals were checked and met.

RESULTS

The high Cronbach's Alpha values (ranging from 0.785 to 0.918) confirm that the scales are reliable measures of these constructs. The high alpha for Institutional Effectiveness (α = 0.785) confirms the scale's robustness.

To empirically validate the dimensionality of the proposed model, an EFA was performed on the 29 items measuring the independent variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.87, well above the recommended 0.60 threshold, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant (chi^2 = 8843.759, df = 406, p <.001), confirming that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. (SPSS Tutorials)

The analysis utilized Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization. The extraction criteria were set to eigenvalues > 1.0. The solution converged after five iterations and yielded six distinct factors, which together explained 69.487% of the total variance. All items loaded significantly (> 0.8) onto their respective theoretical constructs, with no significant cross-loadings, indicating strong discriminant validity.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics, Factor Loadings, and Variance Explained

Factor	Latent Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Eigenvalue	% Variance Explained
1	Administrative Leadership (AL)	7	0.918	4.795	16.534%
2	Student Support Services (SS)	5	0.898	3.675	12.672%
3	Teaching Quality (TQ)	5	0.891	3.552	12.250%
4	Resource Efficiency (RE)	4	0.863	2.895	9.984%
5	Strategic Planning (SP)	4	0.850	2.713	9.355%
6	Curriculum Relevance (CR)	4	0.848	2.521	8.692%
Total		29	-	-	69.487%

To test the full multidimensional model, an OLS regression was conducted with Institutional Effectiveness as the dependent variable and the six factors as predictors. The regression equation is expressed as:

$$IE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SP + \beta_2 AL + \beta_3 RE + \beta_4 TQ + \beta_5 SS + \beta_6 CR + \varepsilon$$

The overall model was statistically significant, $F(6, 581) = 136.167$, $p < .001$. The model explained 58.4% of the variance in perceived Institutional Effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.584$, Adjusted $R2 = 0.580$), indicating a robust fit. This suggests that the six selected factors capture the majority of the variance in how effectiveness is perceived, though 41.6% of the variance remains explained by other unmeasured factors (e.g., campus facilities, social life, external prestige).

Table 5 details the coefficients. Five of the six predictors were statistically significant.

Table 3: OLS Regression Results Predicting Institutional Effectiveness

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	-0.132	0.152	-	-.868	0.386
Strategic Planning (SP)	0.374	0.021	0.475	17.682	<0.001
Teaching Quality (TQ)	0.306	0.020	0.404	14.999	<0.001
Curriculum Relevance (CR)	0.224	0.021	0.292	10.819	<0.001
Admin. Leadership (AL)	0.211	0.020	0.276	10.275	<0.001
Student Support Services (SS)	0.159	0.020	0.217	8.103	<0.001
Resource Efficiency (RE)	0.014	0.020	0.018	0.685	0.493

Note: Dependent Variable: Institutional Effectiveness Perception.

DISCUSSION

The most striking finding of this study is the dual dominance of Strategic Planning ($\beta = 0.475$) and Teaching Quality ($\beta = 0.404$). This result empirically validates the proposed integrated model, demonstrating that effectiveness is perceived through a bifocal lens.

Strategic Planning emerged as the strongest single predictor. This underscores that stakeholders view "Clarity" and "Alignment" as the bedrock of effectiveness (Credo Higher Ed). In the complex, often chaotic environment of higher education, a clear, communicated plan provides a sense of order and purpose. It suggests that even if day-to-day operations are imperfect, confidence in the institution's long-term direction (the "roadmap") buffers perceptions of effectiveness. This aligns with findings that accredited institutions often fail not because of resources but because of the integration of their planning efforts (Schramm, 2023).

Simultaneously, Teaching Quality remains the essential "throughput." Despite the administrative superstructure, the core transaction – learning weighs heavily on effectiveness. This supports the learner-centered literature, which argues that for the student (and the faculty member who serves them), the classroom experience is the institution (Gruber et al., 2010). The high beta coefficient confirms that administrative excellence cannot compensate for pedagogical failure.

Curriculum Relevance ($\beta = 0.292$) was the third most powerful predictor, reinforcing the "employability" turn in higher education. As students increasingly bear the cost of their education, they scrutinize the curriculum for return on investment (Jackson, 2013). The significance of this variable indicates that institutions are judged not just on *how* they teach (quality) but *what* they teach (relevance). A curriculum that is perceived as stagnant or disconnected from the "real world" drags down effectiveness scores, regardless of how efficiently the university is run (Cheung et al., 1996).

Administrative Leadership ($\beta = 0.276$) was significant but less dominant than planning. This supports the "Thermostat" theory (Aggarwal et al., 2021): leadership sets the temperature. It creates the conditions for planning and teaching to succeed, but those more tangible outputs partially mediate its direct impact on perceived effectiveness. Leaders are effective when they enable planning and quality, rather than when they act as charismatic figures in isolation.

Student Support Services ($\beta = 0.217$) showed a minor but significant effect. This likely reflects a "hygiene factor" dynamic: excellent support services are expected and facilitate retention, but they are viewed as supplementary to the core academic mission (Folsom Lake College). However, their significance confirms that the "holistic" student experience is a necessary component of the effectiveness equation.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding is the non-significance of Resource Efficiency ($\beta = 0.018$, $p = 0.493$) in the regression model, despite its theoretical importance in higher education economics. From a financial perspective, efficiency is critical for sustainability; however, its limited predictive power for perceived effectiveness in this study may be attributed to information asymmetry stemming from the sample's demographics. With students comprising the majority of respondents (55.1%), the "backend" operations of financial allocation and cost minimization are largely invisible to them. Students perceive the outcomes of resource deployment (e.g., Teaching Quality and Student Support Services) rather than the efficiency of the allocation process itself. In this context, Resource Efficiency acts as a distal variable - necessary for operational health but not directly observable by the primary stakeholders. In contrast, "frontend" factors like Teaching Quality are proximal variables that directly shape perceptions. Consequently, while Resource Efficiency may technically enable the institution to operate, it does not directly translate into perceived effectiveness unless it manifests as tangible improvements in the learning environment.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For Senior Administration: The Narrative of Alignment

The dominance of Strategic Planning implies that leaders must prioritize communicating strategy as much as the strategy itself. It is not enough to have a plan; the campus community must understand it. Leaders should focus on "Agility" and "Transparency" (Credo Higher Ed), ensuring that every stakeholder sees how their role connects to the broader mission. The lack of significance of efficiency suggests that austerity narratives are less motivating than strategic narratives.

For Academic Deans and Faculty: The Curriculum Audit

The substantial impact of Curriculum Relevance and Teaching Quality demands a continuous, rigorous audit of academic programs. Curriculum review should not be a bureaucratic exercise but a strategic one, involving external scanning of industry trends and labor market data (SurveyMonkey). Faculty development should focus not just on pedagogy but also on "translating" the curriculum's relevance to students, making the connection between coursework and career explicit (Schotter, 2022).

For Institutional Research and Effectiveness Offices

IE professionals should move beyond compliance reporting. The data suggests that measuring "effectiveness" requires a balanced scorecard approach that weights student learning and curriculum metrics alongside financial and planning indicators. Surveys and assessment tools should explicitly measure "Curriculum Relevance" and "Strategic Clarity," as these are leading indicators of institutional health.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a robust, empirically validated model of Institutional Effectiveness in higher education. By integrating managerial and learner-centered factors, it reveals that the most effective institutions are those that successfully bridge the gap between the boardroom and the classroom. They are characterized by Strategic Planning that provides a clear vision and Teaching Quality that delivers on that promise.

The findings challenge the reductionist view that effectiveness is merely about fiscal efficiency or test scores. Instead, effectiveness is a reputational and operational construct built on the twin pillars of Alignment (Managerial) and Relevance (Learner-Centered). As higher education faces an uncertain future, this model offers a blueprint for resilience: invest in the clarity of the plan, the quality of the instruction, and the relevance of the curriculum. In doing so, institutions can reclaim their legitimacy and demonstrate their enduring value to society.

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