

INSTITUTIONAL MANAGERS' STRATEGIC PLANNING EXPERTISE INDICES AND UNIVERSITIES' EFFECTIVENESS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study examined strategic planning expertise of institutional managers and the effectiveness of universities administration in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study population comprised 302 institutional managers with a randomly selected sample of 202 participants. The Strategic Planning Expertise and Institutional Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPEIEQ) was used to collect data. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the test-re test technique which revealed a coefficient of $r = 0.85$. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that there was a significant but weak relationship ($R=0.38$) between strategic planning expertise and institutional effectiveness. Also, strategic planning expertise significantly contributed ($R^2=0.15$; Adj. $R^2=0.105$; $F(10,191) = 3.359$; $p < 0.001$) to institutional effectiveness. However, when applied individually to institutional effectiveness, decision making skills contributed most (19.5%) while communication skills contributed least (0.3%). Based on these findings, it was recommended among other things that institutional managers are periodically assessed and trained with requisite strategic planning skills for on-the-job improvement.

Key words: Strategic planning expertise, institutional managers, universities effectiveness

Introduction

In recent times, focus has been on the effective management of universities to meet the human resource needs of the economy. This is premised on the fact that in an increasingly fast moving and knowledge based century, a set of highly competent, skilled and qualified experts who are capable of transforming the higher education sector and compete favourably at global level are required. The challenge of universities therefore, is to prepare the leaders in governance and industries, entrepreneurs, managers and citizens who can cope with the rapidly changing world and challenging economies. In recent times, university education has been threatened by economic, political and social inconsistencies resulting in mismatch between vision and reality leaving great consequences on the products. Due to these environmental realities, governments are quickly refraining from direct responsibility for the university sector, while increasing accountability forces from internal and external stakeholders have ushered the need for strategic practice in the management of universities in Nigeria.

University management refers to the ability to carefully handle resources required for processing the minds and intellect of people within the system. It is the formal organization of and management of resources and activities to produce persons that are found worthy of both character and learning, and whose services are needed in the public or private enterprise (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2014). According to Ekundayo and Ajayi (2012) university management can be viewed from internal and external perspectives. The internal management of university is done through the Governing Council and Senate with the Vice Chancellor (VC) providing internal leadership for the university. At the external level, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in federal representation is charged with the coordination of university management. Okojie (2007) posits that the NUC activities in improving quality of university education in Nigeria include: accreditation of courses, approval of courses and programmes, maintenance of minimum academic standards, monitoring of universities, giving

guidelines for setting up of private and public universities and prevention of the establishment of illegal campus.

Universities are required to transform their decision-making processes and to radically change part of their operating assumptions (Odiba, 2012). This launched them into strategic planning which focused on strategic quality through the improvement of a variety of administrative and instructional processes whereby emphasis is placed on the creation of vision and mission, strategic decision-making processes and outcomes. Though planning is a major management activity for all organizations, strategic planning was alien to many developing countries. However, in recent times, it has gained prominence among public establishments all over the world, with so much recorded evidence in facilitating organizational effectiveness (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2014).

Strategic planning therefore is a contemporary managerial tool kit not only for dealing with the inevitable uncertainty in the management environment but also, for stimulating organizational performance (Arasa & K'Obonyo, 2012; Mahmood, 2012; & Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2014). Strategic planning involves selecting enterprise goals and department objectives and finding ways of achieving them. These goals and plans guide the general direction and priorities of the universities over an extended time frame. It is the determination of broad goals, that is, how resources will be obtained and allocated to various units and how the universities intends to grapple with the realities and challenges of its internal or external environment (Ejiogu, 2011).

University managers need technical knowledge and expertise of strategic planning to achieve its goals of creating a continuous capacity to produce and reproduce knowledge for national development and global competitiveness. According to Akinyele and Fasogbon (2010), environmental factors such as complexity and change; managerial factors relating to strategic planning expertise, beliefs and performance management as well as organizational factors which have to do with size and structural diversity do influence the intensity of strategic planning. In essence, key management staff must be

able to develop formidable strategies and programmes that will develop quality human resources in terms of qualifications, knowledge, skills, and experience (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2014). Strategic planning is important because it provides all stakeholders a sense of purpose and direction and assists in outlining the goals of the institutions and the activities that are related to its achievement as well as provides direction for stakeholders.

All managers irrespective of the echelon should be able to analyze simple financial and cost records, incidence, market analysis, carry out feasibility analysis and alternatives. Such managers are critical, innovative, creative and constantly thinking (brainstorming). Abiodun-Oyebanji (2014) avers that management staff of universities should be adequately trained with strategic skills that match the current and future needs of this digital and fast evolving economy. Ige (2012) also opined that traditional methods, staunch bureaucracies will impede innovation. Doyle (2018) however noted that strategic planning skills include analytical, collaborative, communicative, decisive, leadership and problem solving skills. Most researchers have common view that strategic planning requires technical, human and conceptual skills.

Researchers are of the view that technical, human and conceptual, critical and analytical skills and expert knowledge of managers influenced optimum implementation of plans and organizational performance (Weihrich, Cannice & Koontz, 2008; Odungo & Owour, 2015; Ajadi, 2016). Northhouse (2010), Ekundayo and Ajayi (2012) as well as Daramola and Amos (2016) who noted that for an organizational performance to be effective, it is the leadership and senior management role to demonstrate clear direction and commitment, to inspire, motivate and ensure accountability of all employees. Anijaobi-Idem, Berezi and Akuegwu (2012) asserted that research culture and ability of university managers is important and a determining factor in bringing about research based strategies for effective university administration. Also, Akpan (2011), Alani

(2015), Akinfolarin (2017) and Omemu (2017) noted the need for managers to be flexible and adaptable to educational policies which changes often.

The studies of Daramola and Amos (2016) highlighted that poor communication strength of university managers is the reason for the failure of change initiatives. This implies the importance of critical skills of institutional managers in providing direction to staff, maintaining cohesion among faculties and ensuring balance among numerous demands related to high personal development, motivation, reduction of staff attrition in organizations. Managers in public universities are therefore encouraged to think like business men and be risk-takers and above all open to new experience, so as to continuously shape and reshape intents, bridge the gap between the current reality and intents for the future, so as to take advantage of alternative strategies that may impact their institutions. Based on the narratives, this study examines the strategic planning expertise of management staff and institutional effectiveness of public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The achievement of the vision and mission of universities is greatly influenced by institutional managers in faculties, colleges, departments, centres/institutes/units. Their ability to formulate, monitor the implementation and evaluate strategic plans in line with national needs will go a long way to put the universities on a good podium for competitive advantage. Observably, the shortage of high quality academic and support staff, equipped laboratory and library facilities, classrooms, hostels and offices, cultism, as well as the frequency of interruptions in academic calendar and strike actions, have over the years questioned the expertise of university managers in strategic planning. Huge investments beget huge expectations in the higher education sector; hence, there is high expectation from institutional managers who are responsible for scanning the

environment, planning and allocating resources, collaborating, and strategically coordinating stakeholders' efforts, motivating staff performance, and utilize available resources to solve problems effectively and efficiently. The reflections of institutional dysfunction in our universities today form the missing link for this study which aims to examine the extent to which the possession of the right strategic planning expertise will enable institutional managers to be involved in university management and contribute to its effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The broad aim of this study is to examine the relationship between strategic planning expertise of institutional managers and institutional effectiveness of public universities in Lagos State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. determine the joint contribution of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness.
2. examine the relative contributions of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant joint contribution of strategic planning expertise indices to institutional effectiveness.
2. There is no significant relative contribution of strategic planning expertise indices to institutional effectiveness

Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design of the survey type. The study population comprised 302 management staff from the from 12 faculties, 26 Centres/Institutes/Units and 160 departments at the University of Lagos, and from 9 faculties, 14 Centres/Institutes/Units and 79 departments at the Lagos State University. The Raosoft sample size calculator with 4% margin of error and 95% confidence level was used to determine the sample size of 202 representing 67% of the population. The study sample is further elaborated in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Study Sample

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Depts.</i>	<i>Faculties</i>	<i>Centres/Institutes / Units</i>	<i>Colleges</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Sample</i>
Unilag	160	26	12	1	199	133
Lasu	79	14	9	1	103	69
Total	239	40	21	2	302	202

Source: Field Work.

A self-developed questionnaire titled ‘Strategic Planning Expertise and Institutional Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPEIEQ)’ was used for data collection. An adjusted Likert type response scale of Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Low Level (LL), Very Low Level (VLL); Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) as well as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a corresponding rating of 4, 3, 2 and 1, were used to measure responses from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Management and Test and Measurement. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was derived using the Test-re-test reliability technique. Data collected were analysed using mean, frequency, percentage and multiple regressions analysis.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the analysis and the subsequent discussions.

Hypotheses Testing

The formulated hypotheses were tested in this section and findings interpreted.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant joint contribution of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness.

Table 2

Joint Contribution of Strategic Planning Expertise to Institutional Effectiveness.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error
1	0.387 ^a	0.15	0.105	0.67856

Predictor: Strategic Planning expertise

Dependent variable: Institutional Effectiveness

The result of data analysis on Table 2 shows that there is a significant but weak relationship ($R = 0.387$) between strategic planning expertise and institutional effectiveness. The Table further shows that strategic planning skills such as analytical, communication, decision making, leadership, problem solving, research, flexibility and adaptability, creative, collaborative and evaluative jointly accounted for 10.5% (0.105) of the total variables of institutional effectiveness.

Table 3

ANOVA results on the effect of strategic planning skills on institutional effectiveness of public universities in Lagos State

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	15.465	10	1.547		
Residual	87.944	191	.460	3.359	.000 ^b
Total	103.410	201			

Result of data analysis on Table 3 shows that strategic planning expertise had high explanatory power on variation in institutional effectiveness. This is as attested through F Statistics which has value $F(10, 191) = 3.359$, $p < .001$ suggesting that the model has high explanatory power. Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant joint contribution of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness of public universities in Lagos State is rejected while alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relative contribution of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness

Table 4

Multiple regressions on the relative contribution of strategic planning skills to institutional effectiveness

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.403	.077		18.283	.000
Analytical skills	.303	1.054	.024	.287	.774
Communication Skills	-.035	1.107	-.003	-.031	.975
Decision Making skills	1.673	.777	.195	2.153	.033
Leadership skills	1.172	.876	.115	1.338	.182
Problem solving skills	-.733	1.077	-.074	-.681	.497
Creative skills	.977	.632	.140	1.547	.123
Collaborative skills	.611	1.171	.055	.522	.603
Research skills	.605	.966	.062	.627	.532
Flexibility and Adaptability skills	-.405	.598	-.057	-.678	.499
Evaluative skills	.582	1.245	.052	.468	.640

Dependent variable: Institutional effectiveness

Result on Table 4 shows that strategic planning skills have a significant relative contribution to institutional effectiveness, though some of the predictors were negative. This is shown by $p < 0.001$ and a contribution rate of 14% to an additional increase of 1 unit; hence, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relative contribution of strategic planning skills to institutional effectiveness is rejected.

On individual contribution, decision making skills were the best predictor, having accounted for 19.5% (0.195) of the variable. This is closely followed by creativity skills, it accounted for 14.0% (0.140) of the variable. This is also closely followed by leadership skills, which accounted for 11.5% (0.115) of the variable. The next best predictor was problem solving skills, having accounted for 7.4% (-0.074) of the variable. This is also closely followed by research skills, having accounted for 6.2% (0.062) of the variable. This is closely followed by flexibility and adaptability skills which accounted for 5.7% (-0.057) of the dependent variable. This is also followed by collaborative skills which accounted for 5.5% (0.55) of the variable. Evaluative skills were the next best predictor, having accounted for 5.2% (0.052) of the variable. This is also followed by analytical skills, which accounted for 2.4% (0.024) of the variable, while communication was the least good predictor, having accounted for 0.3% (-0.003) of the variable.

The finding of this study indicate that there was a significant joint contribution of strategic planning expertise to institutional effectiveness as evidenced by $p < 0.001$. This finding means that strategic planning expertise variables in terms of analytical, communication, decision making, leadership, problem solving, research, flexibility and adaptability, creative, collaborative and evaluative skills contributed to institutional effectiveness when pulled together. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2010) supported this finding with their affirmation that technical knowledge and expertise of strategic planning are needed to achieve developmental goals. This finding concurs with Howarth (2017) who concluded that strategic planning skill are the most sought

executive skills that has the most influence on high performing organizations. This finding is also consistent with Alwiya and Jolly (2016) who noted that it is through strategic planning skills of university administrators that best practices can be utilized. In the same vein, this relates to Ebuara and Mbon (2012) who noted that institutional effectiveness is systematic and open to new and systemized operations that MIS provides. Managers can fully express their strategic quality and expertise when they are fully supported with updated management apparatus and technologies. Also in agreement, Ndegwah (2014), Babalola and Taiwo (2015) noted that strategic planning skills of managers influence the implementation of Strategic Plans, institutional policies, resources allocation as well as rewards and incentives.

The finding from hypothesis two indicates that there was a significant relative contribution of strategic planning skills to institutional effectiveness of public universities in Lagos State. Decision making skills of institutional managers of universities was the best predictor of institutional effectiveness. This means that decision making skills contributed significantly and positively to institutional effectiveness. The findings of Ayeni (2018), Mahmood (2012) as well as Ekundayo and Ajayi (2012) agree that in formal organizations, decision is a daily affair which impacts on the effectiveness of human elements who have been assigned targets. They also noted that the success of any organization such as the educational institution depends largely on the ability of the educational manager to make effective decisions through identification and definition of the problem, developing and evaluating alternative solutions, risk conditions, selecting alternative solution, implementation followed by the evaluation and control of such decisions. The contribution of creativity skills to institutional effectiveness indicates its importance to daily management of human and non-human resources. This finding is supported by Alani (2015) and Howarth (2017) who recalled the unpredictable nature of the education system and suggested the need for the evolvment of new ideas to drive the strategic purpose of the educational system.

According to the findings from this study also, leadership skills were the next best predictors of institutional effectiveness. This finding is largely supported by previous findings of Northhouse (2010), Ekundayo and Ajayi (2012) as well as Daramola and Amos (2016) who noted that for an organizational performance to be effective, it is the leadership and senior management role to demonstrate clear direction and commitment, to inspire, motivate and ensure accountability of all employees. The result further shows that problem solving skills had the next best contribution to institutional effectiveness. This finding concurs with previous findings of Niemann (2002) who opined that problem solving skills is essential for managerial effectiveness at any level of education because of the wide ranging tasks of the manager and myriad challenges continuously calling for his attention.

Research skills of institutional managers closely followed as a contributory factor to institutional effectiveness. This finding strikes the importance of research and research ability of managers of the university system. Research allows the generation of new knowledge and creativity for managerial effectiveness and therefore, a strategic planning skill in bringing about research based strategies for effective management of universities. This finding is consistent with that of Anijaobi-Idem, Berezi and Akuegwu (2012) who concluded that research culture and ability of university managers is important and a determining factor in bringing about research based strategies for effective university administration.

Further findings from the study showed that flexibility and adaptability skills were the next best predictor of institutional effectiveness. In support of this study, Akpan (2011), Alani (2015), Akinfolarin (2017) and Omemu (2017) had noted the need for accurate educational data, sound knowledge of educational policies, excellent time management habits and strategy in adapting to new and challenging situations controversial areas such as discipline, finance and leadership. Furthermore, the result showed that collaborative skills predicted institutional effectiveness. Onyene (2006) and Maina

(2011) supported this finding where they hold similar notions that stakeholders are customers because they have business with the organization and they include teachers, school heads, owners, students/pupils, parents, government. According to Onyene (2006), their inputs through customer care, and other feedback mechanisms provides information needed to improve work performance. Therefore she concluded that collaboration involves interpersonal skills in getting stakeholders involved to bring development and progress to their institutions. According to the results also, analytical skills contributed to insitutional effectiveness. The findings of Seyedeh, Mohammad & Morteza (2014) are in line that of this study. They emphasized the need for managers to be able to conceptualize, assess, hypothesize and make valid judgment and generalizations of issues when decisions are to be taken in the organization.

Finally, the study reveals that communication skills are the least predictors of institutional effectiveness. The reason adduced for the least contributory skill is not far fetched for the lack of data and communication facilities in many universities. In support of this finding, Daramola and Amos (2016) highlighted that poor communication strength of university managers is the reason for the failure of change initiatives. They also noted that poor communication declines staff commitment and support for organizational success.

Conclusion

The need for strategic planning expertise for effective management of university education stems from the fact that the system is responsible for the development and production of high-level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation. Its focus is the teaching of employable skills, community development and research for new and relevant knowledge. It can be seen that the task of management in the university is not a fit-for-all given the environmental complexities of politics, culture, technology, ecology, law and economy, both internally and externally. This study affirms that strategic planning expertise significantly relates to institutional

effectiveness in public universities in Lagos State; hence, the transformation of the Nigerian university system for relevance depends on how these skills are interacted with, synthesized and factored into the management of human and non-human resources. More so, since leadership decision making skills in any organization has been scientifically proven to be the major contributing factor to institutional effectiveness; such leaders do influence the strategic direction of the organizations. Also, universities cannot achieve operational efficiency and general effectiveness when communication is low among staff whose crucial responsibility centres on implementing and promoting sustainable change for the universities.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is recommended that:

1. Strategic planning skills are key factors for building of effective institutions. Institutional managers should therefore be periodically assessed and trained in order to acquire skills needed for on-the-job improvement.
2. There is need for more focus on communication; creative and collaborative skills of institutional managers through the provision of facilities and training opportunities which will enhance strategic planning in institutions.

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