

Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Imo State University, Owerri.

¹Okoroafor George I. Ph.D., ²Nwabuzor, Hope Chibututu, and ³Okoro, Justice N.

¹Public Administration Department, Imo State Polytechnic, Omuma,

²Political Science Department, Imo State University, Owerri.

³Department of Social Sciences, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State.

Corresponding Author's email: georgeokoroafor@gmail.com,

Abstract

Organization sustainability is the drive of every public institution. Without it, the organizational objective will be difficult to realize. The paper looked at the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance, using Imo State University Owerri as a case study. It utilized management by objective theory of Peter Drucker and adopted survey research design. The study benefitted from both primary and secondary sources of data. Data were analyzed using simple percentage and mean score based on a four-point likert scale. The findings revealed that strategic planning enhances organizational performance and objective attainment. The study also uncovered that the challenges of strategic planning in Imo State University, Owerri include lack of workers commitment and participation, poor communication and information system, inadequate implementation, paucity of data and research and conservative management style. The study recommended efficient and sustainable strategic planning that will encourage workers' commitment and participation, efficient communication and information management system, sufficient and accurate data, dynamic and flexible management style.

Keywords: Strategic planning, Public Organizations, Objective attainment, Organizational performance

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Introduction

Sustaining high performance is the priority of every organization. Organizational performance largely bothers on the attainment of results and accomplishment of objectives (Sophia & Owuor, 2015). Hence it is not achieved by ad-hoc thoughts and trial and error approaches in the organizational management. This underscores the relevance of strategic planning. The application of strategic planning in the organizations such as Imo State University, Owerri goes beyond thinking and planning. It emphasizes the management of change within the organizations for high performance. This is probably because the forces that operate within the organization are usually complex and unstable (Oguonu & Ikeanyibe, 2010).

Arguably, strategic planning is not new in most organizations, but many employees and organizational managers appear to have little or no knowledge of it. Thus, strategic planning shows the direction of the organization, what the organization intends to achieve and its implementation as well as the management strategy which are often designed for optimal performance (Whellen & Hunger, 2012).

From the foregoing, the performance of an organization is largely dependent on strategic planning, and without efficient strategic planning, an organization will hardly thrive. However, poor strategic planning arguably is responsible for poor performance and attainment of objectives in most organizations and institutions in Nigeria especially the universities. Recently, as Fehnel (2000) made us believe that many vice chancellors in the Nigerian universities without exception of Imo State University, Owerri are beginning to appreciate and show willingness in the use of strategic planning as an important tool to determine how best to revitalize and modernize their institutions as well as to achieve great performance. Hence, properly structured strategic plan enables the management to comprehend the need to prioritize performance enhancement for the continuity and survival of the organization.

Despite the relevance of strategic planning towards the attainment of optimal performance in the organization, poor workers' commitment and participation, poor communication and information management system, inadequate implementation, lack of sufficient data and conservative organizational management style have continued to constitute bottlenecks in Imo state University, Owerri..

Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to show the impact of strategic planning on organizational sustainability with reference to Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. The specific objectives are;

- i. To determine if strategic planning has improved performance of Imo State University, Owerri.
- ii. To ascertain if strategic planning has enhanced attainment of objective in Imo State University, Owerri.
- iii. To identify the challenges of strategic planning towards the realization of enhanced performance.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

- i. Has strategic planning significantly improved performance in Imo state University, Owerri?
- ii. Has strategic planning increased the attainment of objective in Imo State University, Owerri?
- iii. What are the challenges of strategic planning toward the realization of enhanced performance in Imo State University, Owerri?

Research Methodology

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The research utilized survey design. It benefitted from both primary and secondary sources of data. It employed survey design which made it possible to administer questionnaire to a selected staff of Imo State University, Owerri. The study used 120 as the sample size out of over 2,050 population of the staff of Imo State University, Owerri. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages and mean score based on a four-point Likert scale. However, the study used 2.5 as a benchmark for decision rule.

The Concept of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is a concept that is wide in meaning. Different scholars have defined in various ways. For instance, Jahanger (2006) defines it as a set of employee behaviours that contribute to organizational goal accomplishment and organizational sustainability. Similarly, Armstrong (2007) views organizational performance as steps taken towards the achievement of organizational goals and stability.

It is implied from the definitions above that organizational stability comprises activities that facilitates the achievement of results, survivability and continuity of the organization.

According to Rajagopd (2010), organizational performance is the level of employee commitment in performing their functions in their organization. In this direction, employee commitment to work is paramount in the organizational performance. Hence, when workers are committed to their job there will be high level of goals achievement in the organization.

In the same vein, Holzer and Seok-Hwan (2004) maintain that performance in the organization means improved productivity and high results accomplishment. Although the issues of performance is very old in the organizational administration, scholars and practitioners have worked for decades to identify what makes public organizations and institutions effective. In fact, the use of the concept of performance has been intermingled with the concept of productivity (Jackson, 1999). Researchers have identified factors that determine organizational performance and productivity as workers commitment, goals achievement, workers active movement in the organization, reward structures, employee training, performance measurement system (Holer and Seok-Hwan, 2004). Based on the above, Ugwu (2013) adds that employee effectiveness and efficiency are variables which

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could be used to measure performance. For him, when employees are effectively, focused and determined in the achievement of set goals, there is therefore employee performance.

From the foregoing, it is clear that organizational performance focuses on:

- (I) Goal accomplishment
- (II) Organizational stability and sustainability
- (III) results achievement
- (IV) workers commitment
- (V) effectiveness and efficiency

Strategic Planning Defined

Strategic planning bothers on the long term planning and strategies, the scope of the organizational activities, building resources, and management of changes, decision making and implementation for the achievement of organizational objectives (Johnson & Scholes, 1997). It deals with making choices and taking decisions that provide focus and direction for the employees in order to add value to the organization and ensure objective attainment (Pearce, 2009). Corroborating to the above definition, Clive (2015, cited in Nyagah, 2015) sees strategic planning as systematically setting out organizational programmes, decisions and actions to be implemented to achieve organizational objectives.

From the foregoing definitions, strategic planning is a set of organized activities undertaken by an organization to accomplish its mission, vision and goals. It focuses on problems identification and providing measures to address them. Strategic planning bothers on looking at the challenges and prospects in the organization, formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions. Accordingly, Mulwa (2010) posits that strategic planning concerns organizational vision, mission, goals, and values it pursues and the resources needed to accomplish them. Strategic planning should require employment of intuitive, critical, creative and systematic approaches particularly in decision making, implementation and evaluation process in the organization (Aja, 2017)

Essentially, the purpose for strategic planning in the organizations were put forward by Corral (2000, p.2) as:

- i. Clarification of purpose and objectives

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- ii. Determination of direction and properties
- iii. Encouraging a broader based longer term view
- iv. Identification of critical issues and constraints
- v. Provision of a framework for policy and decision making and implementation
- vi. Building resources and allocation

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on management by objective theory. The theory is attributed to Peter Drucker's "the Practice of Management (Sapru, 2013). Prior to the introduction of management by objective, administrative actions were focused on nuclear setout policies where officials of diverse categories were seen as performing their duties in a manner leading to waste of administrative policy needed to equip the workers (Drucker, 1954). As noted in the Udoji Public Service Review Commission's report, management by objective involves identifying goals and objectives, defining management responsibility in terms of expected results and measuring performance and achievement against these goals (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1974). Given the above scenario, management by objective (MBO) is driven by achieving optimal performance for the survival of an organization.

The common features of management by objective include: Goal specificity, participative decision making, explicit time period and performance feedback (Sapru, 2013):

- i. Goal/Specificity is focused on goal realization which is the driving force of organization. It is goal that determines the operations of the organization. However, organizational goal should be properly defined and structured for easy realization.
- ii. Participative decision making is a means of getting things done through and with people (O'Donell, 1972). It is the process by which workers contribute ideas toward the solution of problems affecting the organization and their job (Beach, 1975, Ogunna, 1999). The point to be noted is that management by objective gives

opportunity to the workers to contribute ideas, knowledge and suggestions in the running of the organization

- iii. Management by objective is time conscious for goal attainment. Sapru (2013) posits that it is not enough to have a goal setting, time frame should be designed for the accomplishment of the organizational goals.
- iv. Performance feedback is one important element of management by objective. The feedback deals with performance communication. This helps organizational managers to ensure that employees have full understanding, support and corrective actions where necessary.

Management by objective is considerably important in this study because of its emphasis on high performance through goals achievement, participative management, timely and systematic implementation of decisions in the organization which can be achieved through strategic planning. To this extent, there is a strong nexus between strategic planning and organizational performance and management by objective.

Empirical Review

Ambetsa, Kadina & Miroga (2022) researched on strategic planning and service delivery in the water department of Kakamega, Kenya. The paper was aimed to examine the effect of strategic planning practice on service delivery in water Department in the country Government of Kakamega, Kenya. The study employed dynamic capabilities and resources dependency theories. It used descriptive and inferential statistics and utilized structural regression to test the relationships between the variables as ANOVA was employed to determine the effects of variables in the study. The findings of the study indicated that strategic planning practices had an influence on service delivery in the water department of the country government of Kakamega, Kenya. The paper recommended encouragement of the use of strategic planning practices for improved service delivery. This study focused on strategic planning and service delivery without regard to organisational performance in educational institutions like Imo State University.

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The study carried out by Njoku (2020) was concerned with the challenges of strategic planning in the public organization's goals attainment in Nigeria with special reference to Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. The study argued that strategic planning is desired by organizations for good attainment, but this is hindered by incompetent personnel, inadequate and inaccurate data, over reliance on administrative approach, inefficient implementation and evaluation of outcomes and poor utilization of resources. The paper was quantitative in approach and utilized both primary and secondary data. It adopted simple percentage and mean model in data analysis and concluded by recommending recruitment of competent personnel, access to adequate and accurate information, use of management technique, effective implementation, among others.

Kabeyi (2019) looked at organizational strategic planning, implementation and evaluation with emphasis on it's challenges and benefits for profit and non- profit organizations. The paper was quantitative in nature and depended on secondary sources of data. The author argued that strategic planning promotes competitiveness. He further posits that strategic planning implementation is undermined by political interference, limited resources and global economic situations. Based on this, organizations should monitor the internal and external environment and make changes or adjustments. Investment in market research and forecasting, adequate budgeting as well as recruitment, training and motivation of qualified personnel. This paper emphasizes the need for proper implementation and evaluation of strategic planning in business enterprise which has no link with organizational performance.

Adetowubo-King (2018) studied the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance with focus on Unilever Nigeria Plc and May & Baker Nigeria Plc in Lagos. The paper adopted survey method and employed simple percentage and tables for a detailed presentation of data. Correlation and regression were utilized to show the relationship between variables. The findings established that there is a positive relationship between the use of strategic planning and organizational performance in the corporate environment. The study recommended activeness of the organization in the strategic planning process and paying close attention to the organizational environment for efficient and effective

formulation and implementation of strategic plans. This study demonstrates the importance of strategic planning in business organization without focus on its impact on the performance of educational institutions like Imo State University, Owerri.

Okoro&Nwosu(2017) were concerned with the effects of strategic planning on organizational performance with Nigerian Bottling Company Enugu. The analysis was anchored in a four point likert scale, the mean and standard deviation. The study discovered existence of relationship between effective strategic planning and organizational performance. It was equally uncovered that lack of accountability, lack of commitment and lack of understanding of the role in the execution process are the key challenges in the implementation of strategic planning. The paper recommended strong commitment to strategic planning. This study is relevant for unveiling the effects of strategic planning on the performance of business organization, i.e, Nigerian Bottling Company, Enugu, unlike the study which focuses on educational institution.

Odonga and Owuor (2015) were involved in studying the effects of strategic planning on organizational growth using Kenya Medical Research Institute Kemri, Kenya as a case study. With the major aim of determining the effects of strategic planning activities on organizational growth, the paper used descriptive survey research design as data were analyzed by the use of SPSS. The findings showed that effective management of strategic planning leads to organizational growth. It was also revealed that strategic planning is necessary for business evaluation in relation to goals, objectives, monitoring of performance and allocation of resources. The paper recommended among others, team work and performance review process. This Study covers issues on strategic planning effects on organization outside Nigeria.

Khawaldah (2014) focused on the relationship between strategic planning and human resources and it's impact on the quality of services provided by customers in Jordanian banking sector with particular emphasis on Jordan Kuwait Bank. The paper posited that strategic planning of human resources could be measured by the extent of it's integration in human resource planning process. The paper was based on a survey design which gathered

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data through questionnaire. It utilized multiple regression analysis of variance in the analysis of data. The findings uncovered that the existence of statistical significant effect of the strategic planning of human resources in the foundations of the selection and appointment with the quality of services provided to customers. This shows the nexus between strategic planning and human resources in Jordan. This study fails to take account of strategic planning and it's sustainability in educational institution.

Giraudou & Mclarney (2014) researched on the benefits and challenges of strategic planning in public institutions. The paper argued that public institutions are meant to improve the lives of the citizens, and achievement of this calls for transparency and accountability which requires the use of strategic planning. The paper was descriptive in design and analysis. It concluded that there is need to focus more on research and collection of data on strategic planning initiatives worldwide as it will create a greater basin of tools for public institutions and avoid costly mistakes. This paper bothers on the benefits and challenges of strategic planning in public institutions without considering it's impact on organizational sustainability.

In another study, Owokabi and Makinde (2012) examined the effects of strategic planning on corporate performance in university education using Babcock university as a reference point. The paper was aimed to show how strategic planning has impacted on the management efficiency and effectiveness. It employed survey design and utilized descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as the results showed that there is a significant positive correlation between strategic planning and corporate performance. It was the conclusion of the paper that strategic planning is beneficial to organizations in achieving set goals. The study recommended commitment to strategic planning for enhanced corporate performance. This paper looked at the effect of strategic planning in a private university in the Western Nigeria without regard to strategic planning in the government owned universities.

Taiwo & Idunnu (2007) were concerned with the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance and survival. The objective of the paper was to re-evaluate the planning performance relationship in organization and determine the extent to which strategic

planning affects performance in First Bank of Nigeria Plc. The study adopted survey design. Data analysis was done using the statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). T-Test and chi-square statistical methods were employed in the test of hypotheses. The study discovered that strategic planning enhances better organizational performance and survival. The study equally established that environmental factors affect strategic planning intensity. The study recommended prioritization of elements of strategic planning on the performance and survival of strategic planning in the banking sector rather than in a university.

Gap in Literature

Most of the literature reviewed in this study focused on strategic planning and service delivery, organizational performance, human resources and organizational survival. Many of them bothered on the effects and challenges of strategic planning as well as the implementation of strategic planning in the organization. Some of these works emphasized strategic planning in both private and public organizations. However, only a few focused on the practice of strategic planning with government owned educational institutions. None of these works considered the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance as it concerns owned institutions like Imo State University, Owerri. This therefore constitutes the gap in literature.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table One: Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Score	Mean	Decision
1	Strategic planning increases workers' active involvement towards optimal performance in the organization	23 (92)	43 (129)	16 (32)	7 (7)	89 (260)	2.9	Accepted

2	The use of strategic planning enhances workers' commitment for high performance.	21 (84)	38 (114)	20 (40)	10 (10)	89 (248)	2.8	Accepted
3	Through strategic planning, significant goals are accomplished in the organization belonging towards enhanced performance.	28 (112)	30 (90)	21 (42)	10 (10)	89 (254)	2.9	Accepted
4	Organizations that adopt strategic planning record high efficiency and effectiveness..	23 (92)	53 (159)	7 (14)	6 (6)	89 (271)	3	Accepted
	TOTAL/GRAND MEAN	95 (380)	164 (492)	64 (128)	33 (33)	356 (1033)	2.9	

It is clear from the figures above that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 have the ratio of 2.9;2.8; 2.9 and 3 respectively. The grand mean is 2.9 which is above the benchmark of 2.5. This implies that strategic planning significantly improves organizational performance in Imo State University, Owerri.

Table Two: Strategic Planning and Organizational Objective

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Score	Mean	Decision
5	Strategic planning facilitates timely accomplishment of optimal results in organization.	47 (188)	25 (75)	12 (24)	5 (5)	89 (292)	3.3	Accepted
6	Strategic planning boost the realization of mission and	39 (156)	23 (69)	19 (38)	8 (8)	89 (271)	3.0	Accepted

	vision in the organization							
7	Strategic planning enhances organizational values.	26 (104)	46 (138)	10 (20)	7 (7)	89 (269)	3.0	Accepted
8	Strategic planning improves organizational stability and sustainability.	30 (120)	26 (78)	21 (42)	12 (12)	89 (252)	2.8	Accepted
	TOTAL/GRAND MEAN	142 (268)	120 (369)	62 (124)	32 (32)	356 (1084)	3.0	

The data above established that items 5, 6, 7 and 8 have the mean scores of 3.3; 3.0; 2.8 and 2.8 respectively. On the other hand, the grand mean is 3.0. The implication of the above figures is that strategic planning facilitates organizational objective attainment.

Table Three: The challenges of Strategic Planning

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Score	Mean	Decision
9	Lack of workers commitment and participation undermines the effectiveness of strategic planning for high performance in Imo state University, Owerri.	40 (160)	29 (87)	12 (24)	8 (8)	89 (279)	3.1	Accepted
10	Poor Communication and information management system constitutes bottleneck to strategic planning towards optimal performance in Imo State University, Owerri.	39 (156)	30 (90)	14 (28)	6 (6)	89 (280)	3.1	Accepted
11	Inadequate implementation is the bane of strategic planning towards enhanced performance	35 (140)	33 (99)	15 (30)	6 (6)	89 (275)	3.1	Accepted

	in Imo State University, Owerri.							
12	Paucity of data and research is a major challenge of strategic planning which accounts for low performance in Imo State University, Owerri.	34 (136)	32 (96)	12 (24)	11 (11)	89 (267)	3	Accepted
13	Conservative management hinders the effectiveness of strategic planning for high performance in Imo State University, Owerri	21 (84)	43 (129)	13 (26)	12 (12)	89 (251)	2.8	Accepted
	TOTAL/GRAND MEAN	169 (676)	167 (501)	66 (132)	43 (43)	445 (1352)	3.1	

It is observed from the figures above that items 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 respectively have mean scores of 3.1; 3.1; 3.1; and 2.8. The responses were all in the positive and are above the benchmark of 2.5 for the decision rule. This suggests that the whole factors mentioned are accepted as constituting challenges to the effectiveness of strategic planning in Imo State University, Owerri.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study revealed that strategic planning enhances organizational performance. This corroborates the conclusion of Taiwo and Idunnu (2007) which states that strategic planning enhances better organizational performance as well as ensures organizational survival. The work of Owulabi and Makinde (2012) also confirmed that a significant positive correlation exist between strategic planning and performance especially in a corporate environment. This position received a nod from George, Monster and Walker (2019) who established that positive relationship exist between strategic planning and organizational performance. For them also, strategic planning has a positive, moderate and significant impact on organizational performance in both private and public sectors as well as boost efficiency and effectiveness.

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It was uncovered by the study that strategic planning facilitates attainment of organizational objectives. This position in-tandem with the findings of Owolobi and Makinde (2012) which demonstrated that strategic planning is most appropriate and suitable for accomplishment of goals and objectives. This was confirmed by Sophie and Owuor (2015) who concluded that strategic planning is helpful for identification and achievement of goals and objectives as well as monitoring and enhancement of performance.

Lastly, the study indicated that lack of workers commitment and participation, poor communication and information management system, inadequate implementation, paucity of data and research and conservative management style are factors drawing back the use of strategic planning towards high organizational performance in organizations like Imo State University.

Conclusion

It is the position of the paper that strategic planning is central for organizational performance. It bothers on systematic process of selecting programmes, policies and procedures for achieving high performance and meeting the organizational objectives. It is relevant in setting up goals, devising the best strategies and options and systematically implementing them for optimal results. Essentially, strategic planning calls for critical and creative thinking, and requires sufficient intellectual and material resources. It is, therefore, our findings that strategic planning increases performances for organizational stability and sustainability, increases performance in the organization as well as facilitates objective attainment in organizations like Imo State University, Owerri. Finally, the major challenges of strategic planning in Imo State University as the study uncovered are lack of workers commitment and participation, poor communication and information management system, inadequate implementation of policies, paucity of data and research, and conservative management style.

On the basis of the above, the study recommended efficient strategic planning system that will take into consideration workers commitment and participation. This will help workers to contribute their ideas & knowledge in the organizational activities. The study also called for efficient communication and information system. This will help to ensure that plans and

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outcomes of implementations of policies are regularly documented and reported to the employees.

Sufficient and accurate data are required for efficient strategic planning in Imo State University, Owerri. This demands regular and consistent information on the organization itself, changes, personnel, external relations and programmes. This will make for easy planning and attainment of high performance.

Lastly, the paper recommended flexible management approach that accommodates ingenuity and creativity, knowledge and research. In other words, the rigid and traditional practices should be de-emphasized.

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