



Effect of leadership styles on strategic plan implementation in the federal universities of Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of leadership styles on the implementation of strategic plan in the federal universities in Northern Nigeria. Contrasted Group Design was employed in the study. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research question of the study while Kruskal Wallis Analysis of Variance by rank was used in the study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 in determining the extent to which leadership styles of the organization affect the implementation of strategic plan implementation in the federal universities in northern Nigeria. The result revealed that authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles of the Universities to a large extent affect the implementation of strategic plans. Thus, the study recommends among others that universities should give priority on having a democratic leadership in an organisation because lack of that affects strategic plan implementation. At the management level university authorities should focus on consulting other units in the university before embarking on new changes in the universities.

Keywords: Federal universities, leadership styles, strategic plan implementation

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, all universities regardless of their generations required to embark on strategic plan formulation as well as its implementation for effective running of activities without much hindrances. Therefore, in this respect the federal government of Nigeria has stressed on the need to encourage the effective use of strategic planning among others to advance the quality of education provision and service capacity in the universities. In view of this, the Nigerian education segment like other public sectors had already begun to recognize the importance and necessity of strategic planning in upholding their responsiveness to the speedily changing environment (Chukwumah & Ezeugbor, 2015). In addition, after the conduct of a study by the Association of African Universities (AAU) in the early 1990's, the Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) demanded all Nigerian universities to

embark on strategic planning (Abdulkareem, Akinnubi & Oyenikan, 2012).

Strategic planning has been defined as a sensible process by which an institution measures its current state and the likely future situation of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then grows organized strategies, policies, and processes for selecting and getting to one or more of them (Hayward & Ncayiyana 2003). The essential purpose of strategic planning in the Universities is to deliver an ongoing process of scrutiny and evaluation of an institution's strengths, weaknesses, objectives, resource requirements and future forecasts, and to set out a coherent plan to respond to the findings and shape a stronger, more effective institution. According to Atkinson (2006), strategic plan implementation is the

vision taken by the organization which develops its organization arrangement towards the strategic planning that leads towards the reasonable advantage and to be at the sound and best performance. Mintzberg (1973) as cited in Nyakeriga (2015) states that, “Strategic Plan Implementation is the process that follows immediately after strategic plan formulation and entails the action point of strategic management process.

Thus, the tendency in the usage of strategic planning in Nigerian universities have become prevalent as a result of the point that many institutions have observed themselves in situation where old methods of planning and management are no longer effective in assuring a steady future (Abdulkareem et al., 2012). Some institutions of learning in Nigeria have embraced strategic planning; among them are Bayero University Kano, University of Jos and University of Ibadan to mention a few among others (Anonymous, 2015). In this regard, University of Jos was the first university in the country that made an institutional strategic plan and since then, universities such as Bayero University Kano, University of Lagos, Ibadan and others have followed in making their own plans (Anonymous, 2015). It is against this background that this paper sought to examine the effect of leadership styles on such strategic plan implementation in Nigerian universities.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Leadership style denotes to how leaders in an organization conduct the events of the organization, how they make decision. It is maintained that there are many organizations which have various strategies but due to lack of requirements of the policy makers and lack of strategic leadership style usually generate unprofitable result (Rose & Fred, 2014). They further asserted that the letdowns of strategic plans are absence of concern and efficient leadership in implementing the strategies. Similarly,

Zartbaf & Hamid (2008) stressed that the growth prospects of an organization is dependent on effective leadership of its strategic planners. In fact, effective leadership adds to the growth of inner proficiencies and as well promoting entrepreneurship. Kivasu (2015).

Thus, strategic plan is faced with some factors that hinder the process of implementation. These obstacles are yet to be determined empirically. According to Jooste and Forie (2009) as cited in Mbaka and Mugambi (2014), there are many organizations which have numerous strategic plans but due to lack of commitments of the policy makers and deficiency of strategic leadership style on the side of the managers, usually generate unfruitful results of the implementation of the strategic planning. Similarly, Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) asserted that, the failures of strategic plans could be due to lack of concern and efficient leadership in implementing the strategic plan. In addition, Zaribaf and Hamid (2008) stressed that the growth chances of an organization dependent on active leadership of its strategic planners. In fact, effective leadership contributes to the growth of inner competencies and as well as promoting entrepreneurship. Therefore, the study is to specifically determine the extent to which leadership styles affect the implementation of strategic plan in Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a instrument for shaping the present on the basis of the projection of the desired future. That is, a strategic plan is a road map to lead an organization from where it is now to where it would like to be in five or ten years (Anonymous, 2010). The importance of planning in all the situations that compose a society or a country has been rising strongly in the last twenty years (Martins & Alves, 2011). They further proclaim that, strategic

planning supports leaders to make decisions, especially in order to expect or to predict change or organize for the change. The emphasis on implementing programs and projects has increased in the last twenty years (Martins & Alves, 2011).

The effectiveness of any instrument lies in its real usage and so is the case with strategic plan. Strategic plan is defined as the tool through which an organization tries to exploit opportunities available in the organization or institution environment. The performance of an organization is a function of how effective it is in adjusting a plan into action and affecting it. This implementation is the key performance that gives appropriate strategic plan (Nyakeriga, 2015).

Strategic Plan Implementation

Strategic plan implementation is the initiative taken by the organization which develops its organization arrangement towards the strategic planning that led toward the competitive advantage and to be at the better and best performance. (Atkinson, 2006). In addition, Nyakeriga (2015) postulate that strategic plan implementation is the process that follows straightaway after strategic plan formulation and entails the action point of strategic management process. It involves all the stakeholders of an organization and should be well controlled because it is the actualization point without which strategic plans are wanting of their value addition aspect.

A strategic plan is of little significance to an organization without a means of putting it in to place. In fact, implementation is a vital part of the strategic planning process, and organizations that develop strategic plans must think to include a process for applying the plan in to action (Nyakeriga, 2015). The precise implementation process can vary from organization to organization, depending chiefly on the details of the actual strategic plan, but some rudimentary steps can assist in the process and ensure

that implementation is successful and the strategic plan is effective (Nyakeriga, 2015). Furthermore, strategic plan implementation involves turning strategic plans and opinions into organizational action. It involves the change from “planning the work” to working the plan. Implementation is defined as a process through which the organization’s strategic plan and actions are developed (Wheelan & Hunger as cited in Gachua & Orwa, 2015).

Leadership Style

Leadership style entails to how leaders in an organization conduct the actions of the organization, how they make decision. It is maintained that there are many organizations which have various strategic plans but due to absence of commitments of the policy architects and lack of strategic leadership style usually generate unproductive result (Rose & Fred, 2014). They further asserted that the letdowns of strategic plans are lack of interest and efficient leadership in implementing the strategies. Similarly, Zartbaf & Hamid (2008) stressed that the growth opportunities of an organization is dependent on effective leadership of its strategic planners. In fact, effective leadership contributes to the growth of inner capabilities and as well promoting entrepreneurship. Kivasu (2015) conducted a research on leadership styles and implementation of strategy among non-governmental organization in Nairobi city country in Kenya. The study found that NGO’s in Nairobi City County in Kenya largely used transactional, servant, situational and transformational leadership styles.

The study further finds that leadership styles influence strategy implementation by persuading the way employees go about their day-to-day job. The study also established that leadership styles are important in strategic plan implementation henceforth the need for organizations to

include various leadership styles. The study established that leadership styles had an influence on strategy implementation as the indication clearly showed that the organizational factors which were the NGO's strategy implementation indicators had been significantly influenced by its leadership styles and poor leadership styles of managers and lack of understanding of strategy implementation were the major weaknesses of strategy implementation. In their studies, Mapere, Mavhiki, Nyamwanza, Sikomewe & Mhonde C (2012) which is titled Strategic role of leadership in strategy implementation in zimbabwe's state owned enterprises. In their findings they discover that most state-owned enterprise' top leadership failed to craft and articulate a valuable vision for chosen strategies and their succeeding implementation processes.

It was also found in the findings that most state-owned enterprises leaders failed to role model that ideal behaviour to lead and sustain strategy implementation. Equally, the findings in their research revealed that most strategies implemented were to backed by well-crafted visions to implementation .it was also established in the study that most strategies failed due to inability of leaders to make use of their various skills to create the awareness and show the strategy implementation roadmap as most of the strategy implementers were not aware of leadership potentials.

A strategic plan is of minute use to an organization without a means of placing it into place. In fact, implementation is a vital part of the strategic planning process, and organizations that develop strategic plans must presume to include a process for applying the plan. The specific implementation process can differ from organization to organization, depending mostly on the details of the actual strategic plan, but some basic stages can assist in the process and ensure that implementation is fruitful and the strategic plan is effective

(Nyakeriga, 2015). In addition, Implementation could not be successful if it is separated from Planning; good implementation must begin in the actual planning of the policy. Policy makers tend to distant themselves from the actual implementation of their policy and as such they misestimate the amount of time and detail that is necessary to be successful. (Press man & Wildavesky 1984 as cited in Nyakeriga, 2015).

Gachua and Orwa (2015) disclosed that strategy implementation comprises turning strategic plans and views into organizational action. It involves the change from planning the effort to working the plan. On the other hand, implementation is defined as a process through which the organization's strategies and actions are developed. It is the transformation of the strategic plans into actions. Strategic plan implementation is more important for the organization than the strategy formulation because if the strategy is not successfully implemented by the staff and management, its cost and damages raise more than the strategy formulation (Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014). However, Herbianic (2006) as cited in Gachua and Orwa (2015) said that, formulating a consistent strategy is a hard task as implementing the strategy and making it work prove more difficult for any management team. Koseoglu, Barca and Karayarmuk (2009) in their studies mentioned that, failure in the implementation process could be as a result of the weak application of the strategic plans.

3. Methodology

This chapter discusses under the following subheadings: the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, validity, reliability, method of data collection, method of data analysis and decision rule

Research Design

Contrasted Group Designs which deal with causal references as postulated by Nachmias and Chava (1981) was used for this study. According to the authors, the least elaborated design for contrasted group is that in which individuals or other units of analysis are regarded as members of categorical groups. According to them, categorical group members share some attributes that assigned them to an identifiable category, such as males, democrats, cohorts and so on. Therefore, this study used different categories of the respondents that ranges from admin assistants, admin officers, admin registrars, senior admin registrars and principal admin registrars. The research further used the different categories of the universities based on their generations; as first generation, second, third and fourth generation universities.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In Nigeria Universities are categorized into generations therefore, this study used stratified random sampling in categorizing the universities in to their generations. While simple random sampling was used with the aid of raffle draw to select each university from its generation in order to have equal representation. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was selected automatically in the first generation because it is the only kind in the region, University of Jos was selected in the second generation, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi was selected as the third generation and Federal University of Kashere was selected as the fourth-generation university.

Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used in determining the number of respondents in each of the four Universities based on the human resource capacity and age of the university. It is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling which is a non-probability sampling in which a

researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in a study (Black, 2010). Therefore 100 respondents were selected from the population. 30 copies of questionnaire were distributed to ABU Zaria and the returned number was 21, then 25 questionnaires were distributed to University of Jos and 18 were returned while another 25 copies of questionnaire were distributed to ATBU Bauchi and 19 were returned and 20 copies of questionnaire were distributed to Federal University of Kashere and 15 were returned which gave the total of 73.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study relied on primary data. A structured questionnaire which is called "Strategic Plan Implementation Questionnaire" (SPIQ) was used to collect the data. It is a modified adapted questionnaire from (Nyakeriga, 2015) & (Kosar 2015). The data collected includes; socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, opinion on how institutional policy organizational resources, organizational culture and how leadership styles of the organization affect strategic plan implementation in the Universities.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered 100 copies of questionnaire based on purposive sampling of the respondents in the four universities. But the number of the returned questionnaire was 73. The number of questionnaires administered at ABU Zaria was 30 but 21 was returned, 25 number of questionnaires was administered at University of JOs but 18 was returned, likewise another 25 was administered at ATBU Bauchi but 19 was returned and finally 20 questionnaires were administered at Federal University Kashere and 15 were returned which gave the total number of 73 returned copies of questionnaire out of the 100 that were administered to the four Universities. The instrument was

administered to the staff of the registry office in the sampled Universities in Northern Nigeria who were Admin assistants, Admin officers, Senior Admin officers, Assistant Registrars and Principal Assistant Registrars, with the view to collate the responses on the subject matter for drawing conclusions and recommendations for the study. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which those variables affect the implementation of strategic plan in the federal Universities in Northern Nigeria based on a modified five-point Likert scale as follows 1= VLE = Very large extent, LE = Large extent, ME = Moderately extent, SM= Small extent, VSE = Very small extent for objective one to four. The presentation of the results was done on the tables using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS) software version 21 to perform the required analysis

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics which describe the responses given in the study to achieve the four objectives. In addition, Kruskal-Wallis Statistics was used to test the hypothesis of the study. Therefore, the Kruskal Wallis Test as described by Block 1981 which is non-parametric which is concerned with selecting samples from different groups which is the case of this study, is seen as appropriate, because all the sampled values of the study were combined, the combined values were ordered from low to high or high to low which is used in the analysis of the study and finally the ordered values were replaced by ranks starting with one for the smallest value and ends with the last figure for the highest value as the situation may warrant (Kothari, 2014). The distribution of the sample H statistics is very close to the chi-square distribution with K-1 degree of freedom. Thus, chi-square table at 0.05 level of significance was used in formulating the decision rule.

Table 1: Decision Rule

Scale	Scale point	Lower limit	Upper limit
Very small extent	1	0.50	1.49
Small extent	2	1.50	2.49
Moderate extent	3	2.50	3.49
Large extent	4	3.50	4.49
Very large extent	5	4.50	5.00

Interpretation of Decision Rule Table

The decision rule table as indicated in table 4 depicts that 0.50 – 1.49 is regarded as very small extent, small extent starts from 1.50 – 2.49, 2.50 – 3.49 is regarded as moderate extent, then large extent begins from 3.50 – 4.49 and lastly, 4.50 – 5.00 is termed as very large extent.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents analyses and interpretation of the data collected via the instrument of the study (Questionnaire); as

the analysis used literature review in the course of the research work; the review of the related literature was possible for the research to identify twenty-eight factors affecting the implementation of strategic plan in the Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

From the result of the analysis, it was found that out of 73 Staff of the registry only 12 were Admin Assistants which account for 16.4% of the total respondents. 1. In the

case of Admin officers 24 out of 73 filled the questionnaire which accounted for 32.9% while the number of Assistant Registrars that responded to the questionnaire were 14 which accounted for 19.2%. Senior Assistant Registrars that responded to the questionnaire were 13 which accounted for 17.8% and lastly, 10 Principal Assistant Registrars responded to the distributed questionnaire which indicated 13.7% out of 73 which indicated that the majority of the respondents were Admin officers and Assistant Registrars and this indicated that most senior officers did not respond much to the questionnaire.

Research question 1

To what extent does leadership style of the organization affect the implementation of strategic plans in the Universities?

The table presents the mean and remark of the research question on leadership style of the organization. The table indicates that the respondents showed the extent of the statement that talks on the issue that decisions are made through consultation and suggestions of various group members, where the respondents indicated that it is a welcome idea to have decisions through consultation and suggestions of various group members with the mean value of 3.73 which is the highest mean value and also is a large extent based on the decision rule. Similarly, the respondents gave their view on the statement which states that most employees need direction so as to avoid mistakes in their assignments in the organization as appropriate based on the following mean value of 3.59 which is large extent. However, on the issue of having a democratic type of leadership as the most preferable in the organization, the respondents concluded that such leadership is indeed required in an organization based on the mean value 3.50 which indicates large extent according to the decision rule. The statement which states that the leader provides very little guidance when dealing

with group issues in the organization, has the mean value of 2.53 which is a moderate extent. The table indicates the view of the respondents on the issue that group members work problems out and make their decisions without much guidance from the leader as not favorable in the organization with the mean value of 2.25 which is also a moderate extent based on the decision rule of the study.

Furthermore, the table also indicates that the respondents viewed that having the leader in the organization as the chief judge who has the final say on an issue without the collective views and ideas of the other members in the organization as in appropriate with the means value of 2.04 which indicates small extent. The table also shows that the statement which states that the leader mostly solves issues and make decision for the organization has the mean of 2.03 which indicates small extent, so that means it is not only the leader that mostly solves issues and make decision in the university but rather it is a collective responsibility.

Authoritarian leadership in regard to the implementation of strategic plan in the university has the mean value of 1.99 which signifies small extent according the decision rule, therefore authoritarian leadership is not the best type of leadership style that is needed in the universities. The table equally indicates that the respondents viewed the laissez-faire type of leadership as not appropriate with the following mean of 1.88 which is a small extent, so it is less required in an organization because it is not the best style of leadership that will yield better performance in the university.



Table 2: leadership styles and strategic plan implementation in Nigerian universities

S/N	Factors	Admin. Asst.		Admin Officer		Asst. Registrar		Senior Asst. Registrar		Principal Asst. Registrar		Total Mean	Remark
		N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean		
1	Decisions are made through consultation and suggestions of the various group members	12	3.30	2 4	3.32	1 4	3.96	1 3	3.80	10	4.27	3.73	LE
2	Most employees need direction so as to avoid mistakes in their assignment	12	3.25	2 4	3.27	1 4	3.33	1 3	4.15	10	3.96	3.59	LE
3	Democratic leadership is more preferable in the org.	12	3.79	2 4	3.30	1 4	2.91	1 3	3.02	10	4.44	3.50	LE
4	The leader provides very little guidance when dealing with group issues in the organization	12	1.91	2 4	2.68	1 4	4.05	1 3	1.66	10	2.35	2.53	ME
5	Group members work problems out and make their decisions without much guidance by the leader	12	1.89	2 4	2.71	1 4	1.55	1 3	1.73	10	3.38	2.25	ME
6	The leader is the chief judge of the achievements of the members of the organization	12	1.47	2 4	0.94	1 4	1.53	1 3	4.09	10	2.19	2.04	ME
7	The leader mostly solves issues and make decision for the organization	12	1.84	2 4	0.90	1 4	3.74	1 3	1.49	10	2.21	2.03	SE
8	Authoritarian leadership is the most suitable type in an organization	12	1.84	2 4	0.78	1 4	1.72	1 3	1.80	10	3.85	1.99	SE
9	Laissez-faire leadership should be the best type in an organization	12	3.52	2 4	0.76	1 4	1.67	1 3	1.33	10	2.16	1.88	SE
Total			2.35		1.88		1.93		2.13		2.89	2.361	ME

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study depict that making decisions through consultations and suggestions of various group members aids in having a successful implementation of strategic plan in the universities. The findings further showed that giving direction to employees in order to avoid mistakes also enhances a successful implementation of strategic plan in the universities. Having a democratic type of leadership in the University is another factor that leads to effective implementation of strategic plans in the Universities. The findings further indicate that leaders in the organizations provide meaningful guidance to the success of the universities, and employees on their part at times pave way for themselves in difficult situation in order to tackle unscheduled problems in the organization which also enhances effective implementation of strategic plans. The findings indicate that the leader to serve as the chief judge in the organization do not help matters in the implementation of strategic plans in the Universities. Authoritarian leadership and laissez-faire types of leadership are seen as inappropriate in terms of having a meaningful implementation of strategic plans in the Universities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Therefore, this result signifies that democratic type of leadership is more required in an organization for better administration most especially in regard to executing strategic plan implementation smoothly and judiciously. This was found to correspond with the previous studies of (Nyakeriaga, 2015) who established that organizational leadership affect strategic plan implementation, therefore a democratic type of leadership is the best type for running the organization with minor obstacles. According to Kivasu (2015), organizational leadership comprises all kind of barriers, such as conflicting leadership should be employed

in order to have full success in the organization. Things don't always work out as planned.

The Universities should ensure that decisions are made through consultations and suggestions from various groups within the university in order to have a fair-play in terms of leadership style which is democratic in nature and in turn aids in successful implementation of strategic plan in the universities. Therefore, one man decision should be avoided in terms of policy implementation in an organisation.

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