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PLANNING TOOLS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN REACHING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS: A STUDY OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13798804>

Abstract: The study examined the relationship between planning and achievement of organizational goal. This correlational study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey. The population size of this study is one hundred (3,000) staff members of three (3) functional and service delivery government owned institutions in South-South, Nigeria. The study therefore shows that there is a significant relationship between effective planning and achievement of organizational objective. It was concluded that planning is necessary for the survival of an organization. This study however, recommends that organizations should accord priority to planning, set realistic goals, establishment of long term objective, this has to be measurable and specific, the development of strategic plans and its implementation, making adequate environmental analysis, suitable organizational structure and a host of other measures for effective strategic planning kin to organizations

Keywords: Strategic, Planning, Organization, Objective, Achievement.

Background of the Study

Planning aids management in anticipating future situations and their anticipated repercussions. Although the future cannot be predicted with precision, organizations function in a dynamic environment. A number of variables are necessary for the global business community to consider in order to operate huge corporate enterprises in a meaningful and efficient manner. Planning is necessary for the corporate organization to achieve its aims. As such, it is impossible to overstate how important planning is. The effective performance of individual working together in group, a manager most essential task is to see that everyone understands the group purpose and objectives and its method of attaining them. Planning provides also a strongly implies management innovation. Planning bridges the gap from where we are to where we want to go. It makes it possible for things to occur which could not otherwise happen. Planning can be used to predict the exact future and factors beyond our central may interfere with the best laid down plans, unless we plan, we are leaving events to chances. Planning is a cerebrally taxing procedure that necessitates deliberate knowledge determination and careful estimation. Planning is necessary for a manager to understand the type of organization relationship and qualities required, the path that subordinates should take, the type of control that should be used, and so on. Additionally, for all

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management tasks to be successful, they must be planned. It is evident now that planning is a critical component of every successful organization, regardless of whether it is a public or private one.

Statement of the Problem

This project is carried out to examine the effect of planning in relation to the achievement of organizational objectives. Despite the emphasis being laid on effective and efficient planning, organizations still face some problems in planning and on the premise of these problems; they fail in achieving their objectives, that will in turn hinder both the organizations and workers' productivity. Managers are faced with the problem of selecting from among alternative courses of action for the future, setting out sequence to follow, establishing standards against which to compare or measure performance of activities of subordinates and taking corrective actions where necessary in the course of their day-to-day activities. Some managers lack commitments, foresight and experience which possess bigger problems to them and the organizations they manage.

This research intends to reveal how planning will be an effective tool to achieving organizational objectives in some selected government owned institutions in South-South Nigeria and the selected institutions are; Bonny Utility Company Bonny, Rivers State, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.

Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between planning and organizational in selected government institutions in South- South Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of the study is:

- i. Examine the effect of Strategic planning on service delivery in in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.
- ii. Examine the effect of strategic planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency. **Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses were formulated.

- i. Strategic planning does not have any relationship with Service delivery in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between Strategic planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.

Review of related literature

The great interest in planning that all types of industry, including business, government, educational institutions, and others, have shown during the past forty years has been cited as a key component of the management revolution. Many years ago, it was emphasized how important planning is in sectors like manufacturing operations. Manufacturing managers, for example, learned early on that if they didn't prepare, their errors would become apparent within days, as a mismatched part or a missing component would force the manufacturing line to stop.

The idea of organization planning, had been conceptualized as far back as the 1940's by Goetz (1949), who stressed that planning is fundamentally choosing and planning problems arise only when an alternative course of action is discovered. As such, Goetz saw planning as being inextricable linked with decision- making. But Koontz et al (1980) conceives planning to be much more than essentially decision-making. According to them, planning

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presupposed the existence of alternatives, and that there are very few decisions for which some kind of alternative does not exist. They state further that planning is deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and who is to do it. As the most basic of all managerial functions, planning involves selecting from among alternatives, future courses of action for the enterprise as a whole and for every departmental goals and determining ways of achieving them. The authors argue that planning must involve an open-system approach to managing. This is because planning cannot be taken in a vacuum. Rather, it must consider the nature of the future environment in which planning decisions and actions are intended to operate.

Stoner (1982) offers that planning is a process that does not end when a plan is agreed upon rather, it must be implemented. Also, at any time during the implantation and control process, plans may require modification to avoid becoming useless or even damaging. Stoner's argument therefore, implies that decisions must be made at many points in the planning process. For instance, managers must decide which predictions in such areas as the economy, and the actions of competitors are likely to be most accurate. They must also analyze organizational resources and decide how to allocate them to achieve their goals most effectively. Again, Koontz et al (1980) introduces an issue known as the nature of planning which can be highlighted by four aspects of planning. These aspects are contributions to purpose and objectives, primacy of planning, pervasiveness of planning and efficiency of plans. These aspects are discussed briefly in turn.

Contribution to purpose and objectives- Drawing mainly from work of Goetz (1949), Koontz and his colleagues assert that the purpose of every plan and all derivative plan is to facilitate the accomplishment of enterprise purpose and objectives. Primacy of planning, pervasiveness of planning and efficiency of plans are discussed briefly in turn. This principle derives from the nature of organized enterprise, which exists for the accomplishment of group purpose through deliberate accomplishment of group through cooperation.

Organizational objectives – These are short-term and medium-term goals that an organization seeks to accomplish so it might reach its overall strategic goals. Objectives will usually play a part in the setting of an organization's policies and allocation of resources. These objectives allow an organization to evaluate its performance, develop business strategy, and productivity levels. Organizational objectives might include the acts, policies, and decisions that are key to implementing a company's aim.

Strategic planning

According to William et al (2002) Planning is the process of determining the major goals of the organization and strategies for obtaining and using resources to achieve those goals. In the definition, policies are broad guide to action, and strategies determine the best way to use resources. It is organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/result and adjust the organization direction in response to a changing environment.

Primary of planning- It is argued that since managerial operations is organizing, staffing, treating and controlling are designed to support the accomplishment of enterprise objectives, then planning should logically precede the execution of all other managerial functions. Although all the managerial functions are interlinked in practice as a system of action, planning is unique, in that it establishes the objective necessary for all group effort. Besides, it is argued that plans must be made to accomplish these objectives before the manager knows what kind

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of organization relationships and personal qualifications are needed, along which course subordinates are to be directed and led, what control is to be applied. Most important, all the other managerial functions must be planned if they are to be effective.

Pervasiveness of planning- This implies that planning is a function of all managers, although the character and breadth of planning will vary with the nature of policies and plans authorized by their superiors. However, one manager because of his authority or position in the organization may do more planning or more important planning or another, or the planning of one may be more basic and applicable to a large portion of enterprises than that of another.

Efficiency of plans- This concept stresses that a plan is efficient when it contributes to purpose and objectives as offset by the cost and other unsought consequences required to formulate and operate such plans. As such a plan too high attracts unnecessarily high costs.

Also, even though the concepts of efficiency imply the normal ratio of input to output in terms of money, labor hours or units of production to include such values as individual and group satisfaction.

Three Important Parts of Planning

He further explains that planning horizon is an important part of any plan in the planning horizon, the length of time the plan specifies for activities to be carried out. Three planning horizons can be identified: long range, intermediate and short range.

Long-range planning- Involves identifying those activities to be performed over an extended period of time. Long range plan may extend for several decades. Long range planning is different from strategic planning, which is primarily concerned with how the organization will position itself among competing firms in a market. Long-range planning identifies the activities to be performed that will lead to the accomplishment of official goals. One important feature, a long-range plan is necessarily different from shorter planning horizons in a plan covering 20 years.

Intermediate Planning- Identifies activities to be carried out over a period of five years at the middle levels of the organization. Intermediate planning is critical in most cases to the success. Intermediate planning is focused more on the activities that have to be carried out with a planning horizon that contains fewer uncertainties.

Short-range Planning: Developing plans for implementation within a planning horizon of less than one year is often referred to as short-range planning. Short-range plans may specify activities to be carried out that will achieve certain production levels each week. While short-range plans are necessary for most organizations, they can have drawbacks. Often managers become so focused on short-range plans. Ultimately, this can lead to failure in the accomplishment of organizational goals.

Below are steps in planning process used by large, diversified organizations and they are:

Step 1 Define your objective, identify desired outcome or results in any specific ways, know where you want to go, be specific enough that you will know you have arrived when you get there or know how far off the mark you are at various points along the way.

Step 2 Determine where you start vis-à-vis objectives. Evaluate current accomplishments to the desired results, know what strengths work in your favour and weakness may hold you back.

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Step 3 Develop premises regarding future conditions. Try to anticipate future events, generate alternative “scenarios” for what may happen for each scenario, things that may help towards your objectives.

Step 4 Analyze possible action alternatives, choose the best among them and decide how to implement. List and carefully evaluate the possible actions that may be taken, chosen the alternative most likely to accomplish your objectives.

Step 5 Implement the plan and evaluate results. Take action and carefully measure your progress toward objectives.

Methodology

The descriptive approach was adopted in analyzing and interpreting the set of data. The population of this study is three thousand (3000) workers in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.

To obtain their thoughts on the nexus between Human resource management practices and organizational sustainability, the data was gathered utilizing a standardized questionnaire that was personally delivered over a two-week period. These respondents were chosen base on their vast knowledge, experience and duration in the respective organization. Random sampling was used in the investigation. The study sample was determined by using Taro Yamane formula: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.05)^2}$ which was arrived at 353.

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to analyze data using Pearson product correlation moment in bivariate analysis to test the relationship between the variables as stated in the hypothesis above.

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Analysis and Results

Hypothesis 1: Strategic planning does not have any relationship with Service delivery in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.

Table 1.1: Relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective

Correlations		Strategic planning	Decision Service delivery	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.161	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	
	N	353	353	
Strategic planning				
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.161	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		

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N 353 353

*S= Significant p<0.05

As shown in Table 1.1, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency. The test was statistically significant: $r(353) = .161, p < 0.05$. Hence, there is significant relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency. Thus, the null hypothesis one was rejected

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency.

Table 1.2: Relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective

Correlations				
		Planning	Organizational Objective	Decision
Planning	Pearson Correlation	1	.100	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.085	
	N	353	353	
Organizational Objective		.100	1	
	Pearson Correlation	.085		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	353	353	

**S= Not Significant p<0.05

As indicated in Table 1.2, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to evaluate the relationship planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency. The test was not statistically significant: $r(353) = .100, p > 0.05$. Hence, there is no significant relationship between planning and achievement of organizational objective in Bonny Utility Company, Cross River State Water Board and Rivers State Waste Management Agency. Thus, the null hypothesis two was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study has revealed that strategic planning has important implications in organizations. First, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between planning and the achievement of organizational objective. Strategic Planning is a critical instrument to guiding the future of organizations. By following the best practices and guidelines provided in the literature, it was possible to create a solid plan that meets all possible requirements and

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parts. In addition, it is clear that Strategic Planning is dynamic and requires flexibility. The business environment is constantly evolving, and the ability to adapt and revise the strategic plan will be critical to continued success. As for the initial objective of this study, it can be said that it was achieved, and future research is suggested to deepen the results obtained after the application of this tool. At the end of the study, some areas that deserve future studies are identified. One of them is an effective implementation of Strategic Planning. It is crucial to investigate how organizations can execute their strategies efficiently and monitor progress over time. In summary, this study provided a valuable insight into the development of strategic planning and its importance for the organization. As progress progressed, the use of the plan served as a fundamental guide to achieve the objectives.

Conclusion

The most pressing challenge for organizational managers is enhancing productivity, which is critical for both survival and maintaining profit margins. Productivity is a measure of how well resources are pooled and exploited to produce specified desirable results, including the ability to describe and methodically pursue its objectives. It goes without saying that the success or failure of every company is determined by the efficacy of its strategies. Plans must be made to accomplish organizational objectives before the manager knows what kind of organization relationships and personal qualifications are needed, along which course subordinates are to be directed and led, what control is to be applied. Most important, all the other managerial functions must be planned if they are to be effective.

Recommendations

This study however, recommends that public owned organizations should accord priority to planning, set realistic goals, establishment of long term objective, this has to be measurable and specific, the development of strategic plans and its implementation, making adequate environmental analysis, suitable organizational structure and a host of other measures for effective strategic planning kin to organizations.

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