

Effects of strategic planning on employees training and academic performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Strategic planning is an indispensable tool that determines the success of every organization. A strategic plan signifies an institution-wide arrangement among staff members and stakeholders regarding what signify success and how it can be achieved. Inadequate strategic planning and staff training has been the bane of low performance among the lecturers in Nigerian Universities. The intent of this paper therefore was to find out the extent of relationship between strategic planning, employees training, and its effect on performance. A survey research design was adopted, and the sample size formulas as propounded by Conchran yielded 179 respondents from the population of 324. The questionnaire was distributed to management and academic staff that cut across three faculties of the institution. The retrieved data were analyzed using regression analysis. The finding showed a considerable connection between strategic planning as well as employees training as it impacts positively on employees' performance and that the link between workers training and academic performance is moderated by strategic planning. It was recommended that strategic plans and employees training should be entrenched to serve as a basis for policymaking, depth of performance, planning, and allocation of resources. It must also be reviewed to incorporate mentoring and counseling of students so as to remain current and pertinent, in shaping the attitude of the students towards academic excellence.

Keywords: Strategy, plan, strategic plan, employees training, academic performance.

1. Introduction

Institutions of higher learning are faced with diverse opportunities and problems in their bid to perform their assignments. Not identifying these opportunities or problems and strategically, map out solutions on time may lead to dysfunctional organization, poor or reduction in staff performance which can collapsed of the system. Strategic planning is an indispensable tool that is used to overcome challenges and identify opportunities for the success of every organization. Moreover, a productive strategic planning process can illuminate organizational ethics as well as describe its responsibility as an institution. According to Ingram, (2015), planning strategically consists of several efforts in apprising the mission of the organization's by strengthening present programs and deciding on the need for new programming. In addition, a strategic plan signifies an institution-wide agreement among staff members and stakeholders regarding what signify success and how it can be achieved. It therefore allows policy makers and managers to approach the strategic plan's activities with self-assurance. In

essence, a strategic plan, the product of strategic planning, entails an institutional approach of defining its direction, control mechanisms for managing its application and taking decisions based on available resources to pursue this strategy.

Yang, Sanders and Bumatay, (2012) argues that, the implementation and results of strategic plan and professional training of employees facilitate faster response to the demand of the organization. Consequently, training theory states that training must be based on the analysis of strategic plan, involving all employees in the learning process for effective and efficient utilization of resources and for the benefits of the organization. This implies that planning strategically for worker's training is indispensable roles of various institutions. Training does not only aid the efficiency of employees, it also assists in boosting employee's self-esteem, which can drive improved performance and decrease labour turnover. The fundamental drive of training programme is to improve organizational performance via human capital development change or improve employees' behaviour so as to stimulate efficiency. Therefore, training programmes are based on strategic plan undertaken to achieve organizational goals and objectives. In essence, to improve academic performance in Nigerian universities, strategic planning efforts should include employee training.

Despite the large number of studies (for example; Mozael, 2015; Athar & Shah, 2015; Charity, 2015; Khan, Abbasi, Waseem, Ayaz & Ijaz, 2016; Morsy, Ahmed & Ali, 2016; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017; Guan & Frenkel, 2019) examining Employees Training and Academic Performance link, several findings remained questionable. Results have showed affirmative, pessimistic, and/or to no connectivity among the variable. In addition, recent researches (that is; Kylaheiko, Puumalainen, Sjögren, Syrjä & Fellnhofer, 2016; Abbar & Echcharqy, 2016; George, Goeminne & Walker, 2017; Fahed-Sreih & El-Kassar, 2017; Werasooriya, 2017; Nyanaro & Bett, 2018) have reported contradictory findings on the link connecting strategic planning and organizational performance. Thus, the intention of this paper is to examine whether strategic planning has any connection with employees' training and academic performance in University of Abuja.

1.1 Purpose of the research

The broad aim of this investigation is to study the moderating role of strategic planning on employees training and academic performance with specific reference to University of Abuja-Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent of correlation between employees training and performance and to
2. Ascertain the degree to which strategic planning moderates the connection between workers training and students' academic performance.

1.2 Research hypotheses

H₀₁: Considerable correlation does not exist between workers training and institutional performance.

H₀₂: Strategic planning has no considerable correlation between workers training and students' academic performance.

2. Literature review

Strategic planning is a managerial action used in setting priorities, focus resources and strength on the set objectives and ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward accomplishment of common establish objectives. *Rumelt, (2011) argue that, the outcome of strategic planning include an analysis of the vicinity as well as the state of affairs, a guiding rule on what the organization wants to achieve on the long run and action plans for achieving the stated policy.*

There are four fundamentals in the creation of competitive approach as identified by Michael Porter in 1980. This are:

1. Firms strength as well as the weakness
2. Individual principles of executors (that is., executive and board of directors);
3. Business opportunities and threats and;
4. Wider public expectations.

The first and second fundamentals are internal factors to the organization whereas the third and the fourth are external factors to the organization. These fundamentals strategic plan are measured all through the planning procedure.

Strategic planning is viewed by scholars as an orderly procedures and thorough examination, to create, put into practice, and manage plan and properly record managerial desires, (Higgins & Vincze, 1993; Mintzberg, 1994; Pearce and Robinson, 1994). It entails what we can visualize and build up needed to achieve desired future result using right channels and procedures. Strategic planning enables us to see ahead and broaden the required procedures and channels to manipulate and attain the desired prospect.

Strategic planning entails several fundamental procedures designed to create a more positive situation firm. Ansoff, (1991) opined that the main purposes for planning strategically is to advance process of adaptive thoughts on how to reach and uphold organization environment arrangement.

On the other hand, workers training are strategically designed to enhance employees' ability, technical skills, and knowledge to carry out task in a much improved method. Training increases the needed skill and helps in overall development and performance of the organization. However, strategic planning and it impact on employees training has been a focus of scholarly discussion for quite some time now. Jeong (1995), Richard (1999) and Richard (2005) argue that the existence of differences involving definite performance and the required standard and output can be reduced via training if not completely eliminated. These changes in behaviour of individuals can be achieved by giving individuals additional training, skill or attitude required to perform adequately well on the job.

Training is viewed as the application of suitable instructive method for efficient learning to enhance employees' productivity (Peter & Bunce, 1995; Anthony & Kwanteng, 1995). Thus, it's the duty of employees after accepting the offer to facilitate achievement of organizational objectives.

For sustainable organizational productivity, training remains a major aspect of personnel development (Vlachos, 2009). Training is a prearranged action targeted at imparting knowledge to attain a required level of skill. Apospori, Nikandrou, Brewster and Papalexandris, (2008) stated that, training to a great extent improve organizational performance.

The purpose of providing training and development sessions at organizational setting is to ensure that the employees' skills, knowledge and abilities improve and the wastage of resources reduce to larger extent (Zehra, 2016; Faridi et al., 2017b). Most of the public organizations include training as integral part of their routine operations and activities (Noor and Nasirun, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a shortage of assessing the distinctive types of training and to the extent it contributes to increase job related performance. Wide range of studies confirmed that knowledge sharing improves training (Noor & Nasirun, 2015).

Training strengthens the aspects of managerial efforts and employee collaboration and for ensuring quality of knowledge sharing. Employees' working efficiency and performance improve due to regular sessions and active participation in the training sessions (Zehra, 2016). Similarly, Faridi et al. (2017a) in their empirical study, found that training program helps the employees to acquire knowledge that contribute to improved bank performance. The process of training is equally significant in achieving desired results related to improved organizational performance and individual working efficiency.

The study of Bibi et al. (2018) found that employees' retention is significantly linked with the supervisory support, strategic planning and training. The study of Bibi et al. (2018) also considered the relationship of work environment to establish the role between aforementioned variables. On the other hand, employees' self-construal is an important moderator in increasing the bond between employees' organizational commitment and perception of employees towards existing training (Yang, et al, 2012).

Azmawani et al. (2013) showed that knowledge management process moderate significantly the ongoing training and organizational effectiveness. Accordingly, the study of Noor and Nasirun (2015) found that training is not a significant moderator among staff alliance, apex executive support and support towards knowledge management. Moreover, neither it alters the strength nor the direction of the predictors and outcomes.

Based on literature, conceptual framework of this study is developed. Among these three construct, strategic planning in employees training has significant effect on students' academic performance. This address the gap in literature where most of the previous studies remain inconclusive and never address the link connecting strategic planning, employees training and students academic performance.

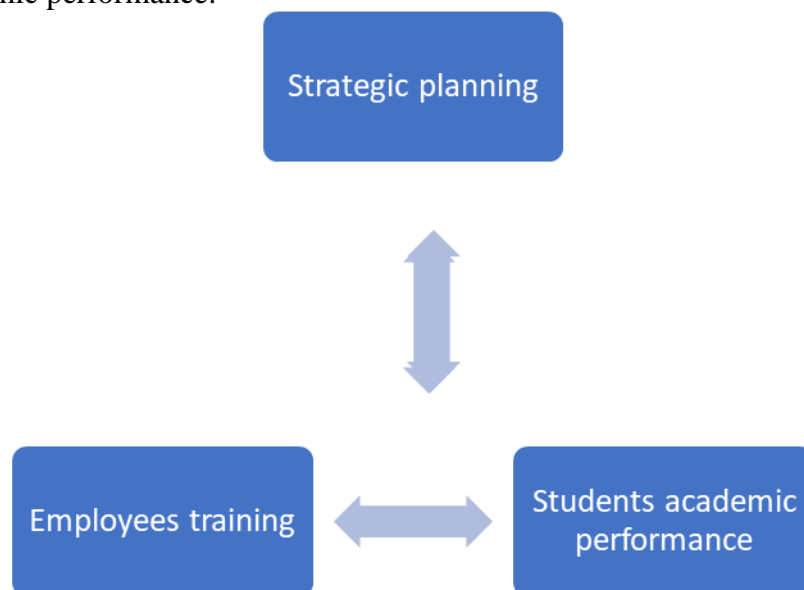


Fig. 1 Conceptual model of strategic planning and training

Source: Researchers conceptualization, 2019.

3. Methodology and model specification

Omale (2016) argue that, a research method a channel or guide for addressing identified predicament such as, research design, tools and techniques. Survey research design was used in investigation as it aid in evaluating views and trends. The total population of academic staff is 324. The sample size formulas as propounded by Conchran (1977) yielded 179 respondents. Questionnaire and interview was the instrument used in data compilation. Opinion poll was based on 5-point Likert Scale that is, agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, in doubt, while interview was designed for key top executive staff. The data was analyzed and interpreted with the aid of hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

4.1 Data presentation

Data presentation is fundamental and requires a good display of encoding and decoding expertise of the respondents. Thus, data assembled for the aim of testing of hypotheses were presented and analyzed, using incidence allotment (fixed percentages) as the major tool of data analysis. A coherent questionnaire was dispersed to the selected employees of the University. Regression analysis is employed in testing the hypotheses. One hundred and seventy-nine (179) copies of questionnaire was primed and dispersed accordingly. However, one hundred and thirty-nine (139) were properly answered and returned. Consequently, the researchers anchor their presentation and analysis on the 139 that was properly filled. The table below depicts how questionnaire was distribution and collected.

Table 1: Opinion poll

Questionnaire distributed	Questionnaire returned	Questionnaire not return
179	139	40
100%	78%	22%

Source: Researchers field, survey, 2019

The demographic variables included sex, age group, marital status and highest academic qualification. Among the 139 respondents, the male has the highest rate of 56.12%, followed by female with the rate of 43.88%. Furthermore, in terms of the age group of the respondents, the range of 31 years and above has the highest rate of 63.31%, followed by range of 20 to 30 years with the rate of 36.69%. Additionally, Singles have the highest rate of 52.52%, followed by married respondents with the rate of 47.48%. Likewise, in terms of the highest academic qualification of the respondents, respondents with Master's Degree has the highest rate of 29.50%, this is followed by respondents with B. SC/HND with the rate of 26.62%, this is followed by respondents with Ph.D with the rate of 17.99%, this is followed by respondents with NCE/ OND with the rate of 17.27% and this is followed by respondents with WASSCE/GCE with the rate of 8.63%.

4.2 Descriptive data, correlations, and reliabilities

Table 2 below depicts the descriptive data and correlations between the three constructs and their reliabilities. As seen, all of the correlation coefficients were relevant; the relationships between employee training, strategic planning and academic performance were significant. Moreover, the variables confirmed sufficient levels of dependability (.78–.86).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities

S N	Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1	Employee Training	3.19	0.930	(0.83)		
2	Strategic Planning	3.18	0.917	0.573	(0.78)	
3	Academic Performance	3.12	0.796	0.593	0.621	(0.86)

Note: Pearson correlations: *p <.01; n = 139.

4.2 Test of hypotheses

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was adopted in testing the hypotheses. Table 3 showings the findings of hierarchical multiple regression of employee training, strategic planning and academic performance.

	Academic Performance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Main Effect			
-Employee Training	0.593*	0.354*	0.389*
-Strategic Planning		0.418*	0.517*
Interaction Effect			
-Employee Training* Strategic Planning			0.019*
F	74.368	60.113	59.821
Adjusted R ²	0.347	0.461	0.558
ΔR^2		0.114	0.097

Note: *P < 0.01.

Step 1, the major consequence of employee training accounted for 35% of the variance in academic performance at a significant level. In step 2, the main consequence of strategic planning account for additional 11% of the inconsistency in academic performance. Lastly, in step 3, the moderating effect of strategic planning on the relationship among staff training and academic performance was examined. Findings indicated that there was a significant moderating role of strategic plan connecting employees training and academic performance of students ($\Delta R^2 = 0.097$). Specifically, increased level of employee training resulted in higher academic success once higher strategic planning is present. The result portrays that strategic planning facilitate critical improvement of academic performance in support of employees that are rigorously trained. Nevertheless, its outcome was just modest (see Figure 2).

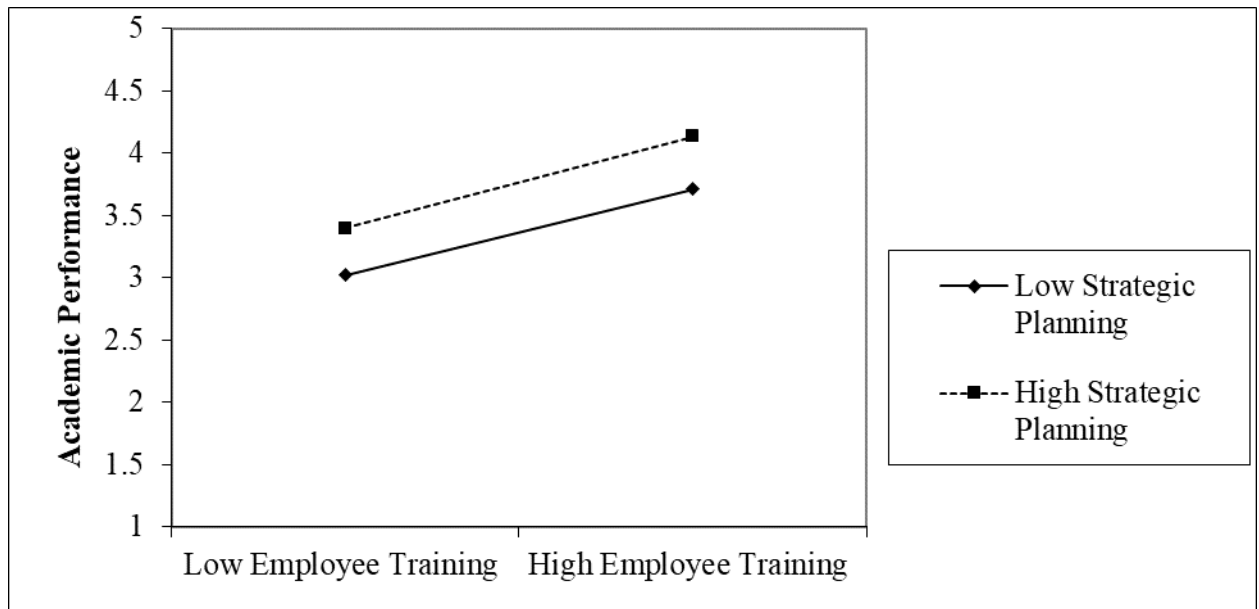


Figure 2. Moderating role of Strategic planning connecting Employee training and academic performance

4. Summary of findings

1. The finding showed a high level of significant connection between workers training and their productivity and performance. Increased level of employees training resulted in higher productivity and performance once a higher level of strategic planning is present.
2. The result also revealed that strategic planning facilitates critical improvement of academic performance. Strategic planning plays a critical role in improving academic performance of students, particularly when employees are rigorously trained.

5.1 Conclusion

Strategic plan and training allows institution to develop skills, enhance quality of service, re-organize the process as well as decrease the organizational burden. The rationale for workers training is to **prepare and position managers and their employees strategically, with the required expertise needed** to complete their tasks competently and efficiently in achieving organizational broad objectives. The implication of this study or research to the society is that, strategic training planning does not only center on excellence performance improvement of employees, but it is also established to make workforce more competitive, resulting in overall performance.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Strategic plans and employees training should be entrenched so as to serve as the basis for policymaking, depth of performance, planning, and allocation of resource. This will enhance commitment and sustainability of staff performance.
2. Secondly, strategic plans must also be thoroughly reviewed and revised to incorporate mentoring and counseling of students so as to remain current and pertinent, in shaping the attitude and mind of the students towards academic excellence based upon your organization's vision and mission and flexible enough to permit for quick change.

Acknowledgements

We want to use this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the reviewers and publisher for the success of this article. We also, thank staff of University of Abuja for the role they played for the success of this paper. May God reward you.

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