

Planning and Operational Efficiency in the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board, 2010-2023

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Abstract

Planning is the key instrument to achieving pre-determined objectives whether at the individual level, organizational level or even at the societal level. This paper examined planning and operational efficiency in the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board, 2010-2023. The paper was anchored on the scientific management theory as posited by Fredrick W. Taylor. The design of the paper was the survey research design. The population of the study was four hundred (400) persons constituting the staff strength of the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB) as sourced from office of the permanent secretary Rivers State Ministry of Education. The sample size of the study was two hundred (200), determined via the use of the Taro Yamane formula. Data was sourced mainly via the use of questionnaire administered and retrieved from the respondents. While other, information from textual materials such as textbooks, journal articles complimented needed information for the study. Generated data was analyzed using the percentage method of data analysis, while hypothesis was tested via the instrumentality of the chi-square. The study concluded that mismanagement, greed, corruption and politics are some of the key factors affecting planning in the RSUBEB particularly between 2010-2023. As part of its findings, the paper revealed that; there is a significant relationship between planning and effective control and coordination of activities of the RSUBEB. Accordingly, the paper recommends that; the RSUBEB should organize periodic workshops and seminars on planning. This will help to equip staff of the RSUBEB with the important knowledge and skills of effective planning.

Keywords: Education, planning, efficiency, organization.

Introduction

Strategic decision makers embark on strategic planning principally to ensure the effectiveness and their viability of the organizations through optimal utilization of available human and material resource. Other reasons include; self-promotional feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. As managers and planners work together to articulate strategy and implements plans, they develop self-assurance in their capacity to comprehend and manage their situation. This tends to be very gratifying and satisfying. It ensures receptive approval to both environment and policy change in the organization, the effective coordination of effort among divisions, functions and individuals is best assured and finally, to recognize the solution when an organization is not performing well etc. Ihunda (2005), posited that strategic planning of committee is instituted and it includes the firm's top managers, selected members of the Board of Directors and others, who use of particular skills or expertise, are engaged in the strategic planning process. Sometimes, a particular unit or department referred to as "Strategic planning and information unit or department" formulates the mission and objectives, which the firm will seek to achieve. They also determine the way and manner the chosen objectives will be pursued. However, with strategic planning organizations manage their affairs in such a way that they grow to depend less on consultants and sourcing of funds externally. Therefore there is every need for strategic planning efforts in every organization, whether private or public.

Ihunda (2005) also, posited that the external milieu here in Nigeria offers both opportunities and threat in constantly changing manner. The strategy maker must therefore watch carefully to avoid environmental threats while utilizing the opportunities. The firm's internal strengths and weakness define the rate at which opportunities can utilized or threats neutralized or avoided. The failure of a management to make use of such opportunities or information as provided by business environment will only mean gross inefficiency and low co-operate performance. Against this backdrop, this research sought to examine the impact of planning on organizational effectiveness with particular reference to the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB).

The public sector, including, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria have performed poorly due to poor planning. A myriad of problems facing the public organizations include corruption, nepotism, and mismanagement (Njiru, 2008). They face a variety of management-based issues that hinder productivity and performance of their employees and the organization as a whole. These issues include; undefined goals and strategies, fraudulent transactions by highly placed officials, conflict of interest, lack of good leadership qualities and techniques. Other management-based issues include lack of commitment, poor management styles, unaccountability, poor interaction and communication among employees, incompetency, ambiguity in action plans, slow and poor judgment that impacts resource allocation.

According to Munive-Hernandez, Dewhurst, Pritchard and Barber (2004), planning involves the plan or pattern of act that adds company main goals, policies and action systems are unified into a whole. Aldehayyat and Khattab (2011) noted that planning methods empower managers to convert data into valued decisions and appropriate actions. Sorel and Pennequin (2008), advocates for planning to involve developing objectives or the organizational strategic plans and looking for resources that would best be suited in achieving the organizational goals as outlined

in strategic plans. Each goal should have financial and human resource projections associated with its completion so that it becomes successful. The planning process also creates timelines for when the plans should be achieved. According to Ballou (2007), planning also involves developing the tracking and assessment method that will be used to monitor the project process. Planning is normally where the direction of the business is made through a multiplicity of activities comprising the making of goals. As such, the planning function of management symbolizes numerous points of decision making (Schraeder et al, 2015). Daft and Marcic (2016) also identified the third effect of planning on operational efficiency as its pervasiveness. It is in this direction that this paper is instituted. The paper seeks to examine planning and operational efficiency in the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board between 2010-2023. The second part of the paper covers the analytical framework and brief discourse of relevant concepts. The third part explains the method adopted to generate and analyze data, while the fourth and fifth parts deals with the crux of the paper and conclusion/recommendations respectively.

Analytical Framework

The scientific management theory propounded by Fredrick W. Taylor has the dominant idea that notwithstanding the nature of the organization, there are certain universal principles that should be followed to obtain successful performance. Taylor attempted to bring out or apply scientific rational principles for handling men, machines, materials and money. According to Taylor the essence of scientific management was (a) to increase the output of the average employee (b) improve the efficiency of management. Taylor's scientific management forms the theoretical foundation of this paper because of the fact that its main preoccupation is what to do in order to bring about an increase in productivity or performance and an improvement in the efficiency of an operation. The paper accepts this idea because the Nigerian public service is bedevilled with the problems of inefficiency and low performance among the workers. It is believed that the greatest and most efficient production and performance occurs when a worker is given definite task to perform, trained and also motivated. All these are made possible by effective planning. Therefore, the use of effective planning is the sure way out from the cases of inefficient performance in any organization including the Rivers state Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB). Realizing the attendant consequences of poor performance to the public service in general, the paper considered this theory ideal for this study because of its provision of what could be done to enhance workers performance, and operational efficiency.

Concept of Planning

Planning is an old form of mental process of setting objectives and determining the means of achieving those objectives. According to the Bible accounts on creation, man was created after the world when other things have been created. Man was more or less the last thing God created, which is to the world went through a planning process. Planning is the first and one of the most important functions of management (Oti, 1996). Planning in every organization is imperative because of the limitedness of resource. Organizations must now be conversant with the more elaborate management and surprise or catastrophe management (Gupta, 1995). The scope and rigour of planning have definitely increased. The turbulent nature of the environment and technological change couple with the fact that certainty of the future is unknown, the need for planning becomes imperative.

Looking at the number of years planning has existed in the world; definition varies from time to time. Some definitions are very simplistic, such as the one by Ewing (1973) “planning is to a large extent the Job or making things and that would not otherwise occur). Planning is a very fundamental and primary managerial function for any specific organizational operation or the task. Planning function is required even in the formulation or design of an organization, as well as the executive activities. Planning then is considered to be the foundation. For corporate performance, manager need to plan you be able to carry out operation towards clear objective, which themselves are the outcome of planning.

To Payne, (1963), planning is the selecting and relation of facts, the making and using of assumptions regarding the future in the visualization and formulation of proposed activities believed necessary to achieve desired result. Is the determining in advance what to be done and how it is to be done.

Managers have the onerous responsibility to plan all scare human and materials, resources to able to assign task. To plan, direct, organized and control effective and efficiently organizational performance. Chapman (1997) postulated that organizational planning help, to reduce that risk of uncertainties and to initiate and coordinate effort within the organization for the purpose of organizational success. The function of performances rest on the decision- making which includes establishing the organization objectives and formulating strategy programmes, policies, standard which are needed to accomplish the set objectives. Robbins (1988) considered planning as encompassing “fining the organization objective goal, establishing an overall strategy for achieving these goals, and developing a comprehensive hierarchy of plans to integrate and co-ordinate activities

Drucker (1974) sees planning as a continuous process of making entrepreneurial (risk taking) decisions methodically and with the possible knowledge of their future, organizing systematically the effort needed to carry these decisions and measuring the result of these against the expectations through organized, systematic feedback. The above concept of planning agree with the view of Dior (1963) who defined planning “as the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future directed at achieving goals by optional means”.

From the above definitions, it shows that planning is a continuous process, which involved risk-taking decisions with the best likely knowledge of the future. According to Ottih (1996), planning is the process of deciding ahead of time, what future objectives an organization wishes to achieve and how it intends to achieve them. According to Baldwin, (1999), planning is the selecting of facts and the making and using of assumptions regarding the future is the visualization and formulation of proposed activities believed necessary to achieve desired results. It is determining in advance what to be done.

Mintzberg (1994) sees planning as tools to communicate, control and coordinate to ensure that everyone in the organization pulls in the same direction. Plan is a form of programmes – schedules, while budgets and so on can be the prime media to communicate strategic intentions and to control the individual of them, in so far as common direction is considered to be more essential than individual direction.

Kontz defined planning as “an intellectually demanding process, which requires the conscious determination of course of action and the basing of decision on purpose, knowledge and considered estimate” (Koontz *et al* 1985). In an attempt to identify the fundamental facts concerning planning, Scott, (1965: p11) defined planning as:

An analytical process which incorporates an evaluation of the future and the determination of preferred objectives in the context of the future the development of alternative course of action to achieve such objectives/and the selection of course of action to accomplish such objectives, and the selection of course of action from among alternatives

Scott’s definition of planning identified three important attributes of planning. These are

- a. The end towards which the planning efforts are directed
- b. The ability of alternatives path of action
- c. The inevitability of making a choice among these alternatives

Levels of planning

Planning is a critical component that is carried out in three distinct levels namely functional, business and corporate levels. Shelett (2002) indicates that many organizations formulate strategies in either one or both of the mentioned levels, but ensure that the plans they set for each level are aligned to ensure that the efforts to achieve them are done in maximum unity. She adds that ineffective corporate strategies and cross-purposed functions are attributes of lack of alignment of departments in an organization. While all the three levels of planning are unique both in terms of their applications and objectives, it is worth noting that some organizational managements do fail to create their differences. Each of the three levels is discussed below.

Corporate Level

An organization’s overall strategic direction is normally planned at the corporate level. Planning at the corporate level as Kuye and Oghojafor (2011) point out is carried out by a senior leadership within an organization.

This explains why this level of planning is usually referred to as a grand strategy bearing in mind that it constitutes that level of decision making which dictates the activities of all the other levels. A leader in this case provides a mission and a vision which is duly needed in the organization towards accomplishing the set goals and objectives.

Besides, Sharma, Boo and Sharma (2008) argue that at the corporate level, planning involves identification and a robust analysis of a myriad of strategic options and core competencies which focuses on a future operating environment. This implies that the corporate level of planning is indeed necessary and may not be ignored at all during the entire lifetime of an organization.

Business level

At business level, Anderson and Joglekar (2005) posit that all businesses enterprises can be categorized under specific organizations that work within specific industries. These businesses develop strategies which work at their level and that which reflect their current position and the amount of resources they have or need in respect to the competitive environment they are operating.

As a matter of fact, competition at this level can either be price competition or a unique selling point. Through this level, Gustavson (2008) indicates that a business can demonstrate its uniqueness through product or service provision which it can also use to command higher margins.

Characteristics of Planning

According to Adnan (2020), planning has the following characteristics:

1. **Managerial function:** Planning is a first and foremost managerial function provides the base for other functions of the management, i.e. organizing, staffing, directing and controlling, as they are performed within the periphery of the plans made.
2. **Goal oriented:** It focuses on defining the goals of the organization, identifying alternative courses of action and deciding the appropriate action plan, which is to be undertaken for reaching the goals.
3. **Pervasive:** It is pervasive in the sense that it is present in all the segments and is required at all the levels of the organization. Although the scope of planning varies at different levels and departments.
4. **Continuous Process:** Plans are made for a specific term, say for a month, quarter, year and so on. Once that period is over, new plans are drawn, considering the organization's present and future requirements and conditions. Therefore, it is an ongoing process, as the plans are framed, executed and followed by another plan.
5. **Intellectual Process:** It is a mental exercise as it involves the application of mind, to think, forecast, imagine intelligently and innovate etc.
6. **Futuristic:** In the process of planning we take a sneak peek of the future. It encompasses looking into the future, to analyze and predict it so that the organization can face future challenges effectively.
7. **Decision making:** Decisions are made regarding the choice of alternative courses of action that can be undertaken to reach the goal. The alternative chosen should be best among all, with the least number of the negative and highest number of positive outcomes.

Concept of Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness can be defined as the efficiency with which an association is able to meet its objectives. This means an organization that produces a desired effect or an organization that is productive without waste. Organizational effectiveness is about each individual doing everything they know how to do and doing it well; in other words organizational efficiency is the capacity of an organization to produce the desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, money, and human and material resources. The desired effect will depend on the goals of the organization, which could be, for example, making a profit by producing and selling a product. An organization, if it operates efficiently, will produce a product without waste. If the organization has both organizational effectiveness and efficiency, it will achieve its goal of making a profit by producing and selling a product without waste. In economics and the business world, this may be referred to as maximizing profits (Kuye and Oghojafor 2011)

The main measure of organizational effectiveness for a business will generally be expressed in terms of how well its net profitability compares with its target profitability. Additional measures might include growth data and the results of customer satisfaction surveys (Rama, 2014).

Highly effective organizations exhibit strengths across five areas: leadership, decision making and

structure, people, work processes and systems, and culture. For an organization to achieve and sustain success, it needs to adapt to its dynamic environment. Evaluating and improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency is one strategy used to help insure the continued growth and development of an organization. Organizational effectiveness examines how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes (i.e., the possible result of a business experiment or trials) the organization intend to produce (Etzioni, 1964). Organizational effectiveness is commonly referred to as the degree to which predetermined goals are achieved (Rama, 2014). Organizational effectiveness in practice is different from organizational efficiency. Organizational efficiency defines the economic manner in which goal-oriented operations are carried out (i.e., input/output ratio). Efficiency in this respect explain the capacity of an organization to produce the desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, money, and human and material resources (Pedraza, 2019).

Measuring organizational effectiveness can be an inexact science, since each individual entity will have a different list of criteria and priorities to weight and consider through self-assessment. Understanding a company's level of organizational effectiveness is important for several reasons: it serves as a check-in to see how well internal procedures are meeting an initial vision, it provides investors, donors, or employees with an idea of the company's strengths, and it highlights areas of ineffectiveness that can be the focus of improvements. In many cases, a business' success or failure cannot be measured by financial performance as well. Even a company that is currently making a profit may be ineffective if it is failing to meet the core values of its mission statement, attract and retain talented workers, and plan for the next generation of projects. Organizational effectiveness measures the big-picture performance of a business, across a broad range of criteria. Financial performance, long-term planning, internal structure, and adherence to core values may all be critical components in understanding organizational effectiveness.

To get a clear idea of an organization's effectiveness, it is important to create a clear list of criteria to assess. No two organizations will have the same list of criteria, which is why many for-profit and non-profit groups measure effectiveness through self-assessment. Employees and company personnel are often in the best position to intimately understand the needs, goals, and performance of their company. Self-assessment of effectiveness can also help company personnel reconnect with the initial mission of an organization. By working creatively to invent new business strategies for areas of ineffectiveness, workers may develop a stronger sense of loyalty, purpose, and dedication to the job (Vishal, 2014)

Since organizational effectiveness is difficult to express in a concrete formula, a company may choose to state the results of an assessment through specific goals achieved or desired. Turning up areas of ineffectiveness can also be tremendously beneficial to an organization. Areas that need improvement give a company a concrete strategy for the future, and allow workers, shareholders, donors, or customers to get excited about the improvements coming down the pipeline. Treating current weaknesses as a road map for future changes is a great way to increase effectiveness (Alan, 2003).

Organizational effectiveness is important because there is a competition among organizations to

be effective in order to have an upper hand over others. For any organization to succeed, at accomplishing its aims, it must be able to create according to Alan (2003) the following:

- a. Create the right plan needed to accomplish those aims.
- b. Pull together the resources needed to implement those plans and
- c. Use resources such as cash and labour in the actual implementation of those plans.

Other key factors that influence organization's effectiveness according to Alan (2003) include:

- a. Quality of Management (most influential factor)
- b. Quality of Organizational labour in terms of education

Management chooses how to implement strategic plans including selecting what methods and resources to use, and leading employees in order to make the most of their labour.

Method

The paper adopted the survey research design to explore the impact of planning on organizational effectiveness in Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board.

The population of the study is the employees of nine (9) different departments of the Board. The population of the Board is four hundred (400), which is the entire staff of the Board as at the time of this study. (Source: Office of the Permanent Secretary Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2023).

The paper used the Taro Yamene's formula to get the sample size. The formula is stated below as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Degree of error

1 = Constant

$$n = \frac{400}{1 + 400(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{400}{2}$$
$$n = 200$$

The paper generated relevant data via both the primary sources of data collection and secondary sources of data collection.

Primary Sources of Data Collection: The primary source of data collection used in this paper is the questionnaires.

Secondary Sources of Data Collection: This is another essential source of data collection technique used in this paper. Secondary sources include: text books, seminar papers, conference papers, RSUBEB periodicals.

The Questionnaire is the major instrument for collection of data for the study. The method for the collection of data included the administration and retrieval of questionnaire from respondents and extracting relevant information from text books, journal articles, periodicals and other textual materials.

The percentage method of data analysis was used because it makes for easy comprehension of the answer or responses given by the respondents. Additionally, the percentage method and average techniques of data analysis makes it easy for both professionals and non-professionals in the area

of the study to understand. The simplicity of the percentage method for data analysis was found suitable, as they made it easier for understanding and assessment of data collected. The hypothesis was tested with the use of chi-square.

Data Presentation

Out of 200 questionnaires administered to the 200 determined respondents representing the sample size. 175 were successfully retrieved and was used for analysis.

Bio-Data of Respondents

Table 1: Respondents based on age range in RSUBEB

S/N	Age Range (in years)	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	25 – 30	15	8.57
2	31 – 35	55	31.43
3	35 – 40	80	45.71
4	40 – Above	25	14.29
	TOTAL	175	100

Source: Field work, 2023

From this table, greatest percentage of staff falls within 35-40 years (45.71%) followed by the age bracket of 31-35years (31.43%). Youngest staff members of ages 25-30 (31.43) was next in the staff strength. The older staff members are within the ages of 40 years and above (14.29%).

Table 2: Respondents based on sex in RSUBEB

S/N	SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE(%)
1	Male	101	57.71
2	Female	74	42.29
	Total	175	100

Source: Field work, 2023

From table 2, male staff members are 57.71% while female 42.29%.

Table 3: Respondents based on Educational Experience in RSUBEB

S/N	Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	FSLC	30	17.14
2	SSCE	60	34.29
3	HND/BSC	70	40.00
4	MSC/PhD	10	5.71
5	NON	5	2.86
	Total	175	100

Source: Field work, 2023

From table 3, FSLC holders are 17.14%, SSCS holders 34.29%, HND/BSc HOLDERS 40%, MSc/PhD 5.71% while only 2.86% did not go to school.

Table 4: Respondents based on the Level in RSUBEB

S/N	Position in UBEB	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Senior level	50	28.57
2	Intermediate level	90	51.43

3	Junior level	35	20.00
	Total	175	100

Source: Field work, 2023.

From table 4, greatest percentage of staff 51.43% are moderately experienced while the highly experienced are 28.56%. Only a small 20% have low experience. The views of the staff members in the different demographics were considered and tabulated as shown below.

Data Analysis

Table 5: Respondents views on the Awareness of Planning in RSUBEB

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	140	80.00
2	No	35	20.00
	Total	175	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

Whether the staff is aware of planning mechanism in the Board; One hundred and forty respondents (140), representing 80% said “yes”, while thirty- five (35) respondents representing 20% said “no”. It is strongly believed that the majority of the staff of the Board are aware of the operation of planning in the Board.

Table 6: Respondent’s Views on whether Planning Leads to Operational Efficiency.

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentages (%)
1	Yes	110	62.86
2	No	50	28.57
3	Don’t Know	15	8.57
	Total	175	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

The respondents were asked whether planning leads to operational efficiency, one hundred and ten (110) respondents, representing 62.86% said “yes”. Fifty (50) representing 28.57% said “no”, while fifteen respondents (15) representing 8.57% said that they” don’t know”.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between planning and the operational efficiency of the Rivers state Universal Basic Education Board.

Hypothesis

There is significant relationship between planning and operational efficiency at Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board

S/N	Observed value	Expected value	O – E	(O – E) ²	$\frac{\sum(O - E)^2}{E}$
1	110	58.3	51.7	2672.89	144.2348
2	50	58.3	-8.3	68.89	1.1816
3	15	58.3	-43.3	1874.89	32.1593
					$X^2= 177.5756$

Discussion

Hence the calculated value of $X^2 = 177.5756$

From the table at @ 5% level of confidence $df(n-1) = (3-1) = 2$

$X^2_{(0.05, 2)} = 5.99$

Since the chi-square value calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated we accept the alternative hypothesis. It therefore means that there is significant and positive relationship between planning and operational efficiency at Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board.

Furthermore, the study showed that planning boosts attainment of organizational goals at the Rivers state Universal Basic Education Board (RSUBEB). This is in tandem with the views of Glaister and Faishaw (1999) to the effect that corporate planning leads to good performance. It also agrees with the findings of Hussey (1977) and Hill (2019) which states that, setting and attaining goals that challenge everyone in the organization to strive for better performance is one of the key aspects of the planning process. Goals must be aggressive, but realistic. Organizations cannot allow themselves to become too satisfied with how they are currently doing – or they are likely to lose ground to competitors.

Again, the study also showed a significant positive relationship between planning and effective control and coordination of activities of the RSUBEB. This agrees with Hill (2019) who opines that, a major benefit of the planning process is encouraging all members of an organization to work in harmony toward common objectives. Goals are set for all levels of the organization and communicated to all employees. Everyone knows what they are responsible for and what the highest priorities are.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study highlighted some of the factors hindering effective planning at the board as corruption, mismanagement, politics and greed. Again, data from the study (table 10) showed that one hundred and ten (110) respondents, representing 62.86% agreed that planning leads to operational efficiency at RSUBEB. Fifty (50) representing 28.57% disagreed, while fifteen respondents (15) representing 8.57% were undecided. Thus, it can be safely concluded that planning leads to operational efficiency.

Accordingly, the paper recommends that; the board should organize period, workshops and seminars on planning. This is important as it helps to equip the workers with the knowledge and skills of effective planning. This would enable them to meet organizational objectives and goals, timely.

Lack of planning leads to mistakes and delays, which could hamper the operations of the board. Thus, management should put in place effective planning mechanisms so that the operations of the board can go on in a smooth and seamless manner. To achieve this, planning officers should be well motivated to put in their best in their work.

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