IMPACT OF ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES ON PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This work investigated the nexus between administrative structures and performance of selected public universities in Nigeria. The work evaluates the influence of organic and mechanistic structures on tasks accomplishment in Nigerian public universities and as well investigates the effect of leadership styles on staff morale in Nigeria's public universities. The study adopted survey design with data collection from staff of four purposively selected public universities in eastern Nigeria, which are University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State; Federal University of Technology, Owerri; and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A self-administered closed-end questionnaire was utilized to generate responses from a sample of 445 respondents who were staff of the four selected public universities. The findings show that organic and mechanistic structures both significantly influenced tasks accomplishment in public universities. The study also found out that leadership styles affected staff morale in the Nigerian public universities. The study therefore concluded that the administrative structures adopted by Nigerian public universities dictate their performance. It was recommended that the management of public universities in Nigeria should do in-depth diagnosis of management-structure decision areas, such as institutional planning, staff training and development, organizational design among others. This should cover issues like the best management systems and techniques to adopt at the right time, with the right cost and to the right staff, and also taking into consideration the environmental factors and variables that are external to the university systems in Nigeria.

Keywords: Administrators, Organizational Structure, Employee Morale, Public Universities,

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In any university, a number of activities are performed. These activities are required to be coordinated. The university's organizational structure is designed for division of tasks, grouping of activities and coordinating and controlling the tasks of the institutions. The detailed study of all components and dimensions of a university structure is required for creation of efficient and stable structure (Hill, 2008). Structure is the arrangement by which various organizational activities are divided up, and how efforts are coordinated. Structure is pivotal between task and process(Jennifer and Gareth, 2009). Auniversity needs to be appropriately structured for the circumstances in which it finds itself and, particularly, the tasks it has decided to carry out. It follows therefore, that strategy should be determined first, followed by the organizational structure (Ouchi & Harris, 2004; Onodugo, 2005; James & Jones, 2006).

Organization structure may be defined as the established pattern of relationships among the components of the organization. University structure in this sense refers to the network of relationships among individuals and positions in a university. Porter (2008),have defined organization structure as the formal system of task and reporting relationships that controls, coordinates and motivates employees so that they cooperate and work together to achieve an organization's goals. In fact, organization structure describes the organization framework. Just as human beings have skeletons that define their parameters, organizations have structures that define-theirs. It is like the architectural plan of a building. Just as the architect considers various factors like cost, space, special features needed etc. while designing a good structure, the managers too must look into factors like benefits of specialization, communication problems, problems in creating authority levels etc., before designing the organization structure(Jones, 2010; Hinings and Greenwood, 2009; Certo and Peters, 2013).

The manager determines the work activities to get the job done, writes job descriptions, and organizes people into groups and assigns them to superiors. He fixes goals and deadlines and establishes standards of performance. Operations are controlled through a reporting system. The whole structure takes the shape of a pyramid. The structural organization implies the following things: The formal relationships with well-defined duties and responsibilities, the hierarchical relationships between superior and subordinates within the organization; the tasks or activities assigned to different persons and the departments; coordination of the various tasks and activities; and a set of policies, procedures, standards and methods of evaluation of performance which are formulated to guide the people and their activities (Wright, 2000, Hitt, Ireland& Hoskisson, 2002).The arrangement which is deliberately planned is the formal structure of organization. But the actual operations and behaviour of people are not always governed by the formal structure of relations. Thus, the formal arrangement is often modified by social and psychological forces and the operating structure provides the basis of the organization.

The term organizational performance is often used interchangeably with organization productivity

especially when used as the name of a department or part of human resources function within an organization. In the context of a university system, organizational effectiveness is the concept of how effective a university achieves the outcomes the university intends to achieve (Aaker, 2011). The idea of organizational effectiveness is especially important for non-profit organizations like public universities as most people and government who donate money to them are interested in knowing whether the university is effective in accomplishing its goals. However, scholars of nonprofit organizational performance acknowledge that the concept has multiple dimensions and multiple definitions. For example, while most nonprofit leaders define organizational performance as 'outcome accountability,' or the extent to which an organization achieves specified levels of progress toward its own goals, a minority of nonprofit leaders define performance as 'overhead minimization,' or the minimization of fundraising and administrative costs. According to Richard (2009), organizational performance captures organizational effectiveness and productivity plus the myriad internal outcomes normally associated with more efficient or effective operations and other external measures that relate to considerations that are broader than those simply associated with economic valuation (either by shareholders, managers, or customers), such as corporate social responsibility.

Asika (2004) has significantly pointed out one major phenomenon that becomes a driving force in many Nigerian public universities. To him, this has to do with ineffective organization structure, and he further added that many of our public universities are becoming underperforming especially in the area of ranking and reputation because of the structural problem inherent in many of these universities. Staff has tended to execute inconsistent behavior due to poor management structure in public universities. In addition, students have complained severally on delay in time and as well improper decision which frequently occurs due to lack of realistic structural design and ineffective leadership in these institutions. Former researches showed that studies with selected staff of many Nigerian public universities have revealed that the strategic decisions making of many of these institutions is predominantly determined by the structure they are incorporated into. These universities effectiveness depends largely on their image as depicted by the leadership, culture and structural dimensions of such institution. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study seeks to determine the impact of administrative structure on performance of Nigerian public universities.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to determine the impact of administrative structure on performance of Nigerian public universities. The specific objectives are to: evaluate the influence of organic and mechanic structures on tasks accomplishment; and investigate the effects on leadership styles and staff morale in the Nigerian public universities.

1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following are the research hypotheses:
1. Organic and mechanic structures have no significant influence on tasks accomplishment of Nigerian public universities.
2. Leadership styles have no significant effect on staff morale in Nigerian public universities.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Conceptual Framework

Organizational Structure: Organic and Mechanistic Approaches

Organizational structure is an established pattern of relationships among the components of the organization. Organizational structure in this sense refers to the network of relationships among individuals and positions in an organization (Hill, 2008). Jennifer and Gareth(2009) define organization structure as the formal system of task and reporting relationships that controls, coordinates and motivates employees so that they cooperate and work together to achieve an organization's goals. In fact, organization structure describes the organization framework. Just as human beings have skeletons that define their parameters, organizations have structures that define theirs. It is like the architectural plan of a building. Just as the architect considers various factors like cost, space, special features needed etc. while designing a good structure, the managers too must look into factors like benefits of specialization, communication problems, problems in creating authority levels etc., before designing the organization structure.

Digalwar & Sangwant (2007) explain that manager determines the work activities to get the job done, writes job descriptions, and organizes people into groups and assigns them to superiors. He fixes goals and deadlines and establishes standards of performance. Operations are controlled through a reporting system. The whole structure takes the shape of a pyramid. The structural organization implies the following things:

- The formal relationships with well-defined duties and responsibilities
- The hierarchical relationships between superior and subordinates within the organization;
- The tasks or activities assigned to different persons and the departments;
- Coordination of the various tasks and activities;
- A set of policies, procedures, standards and methods of evaluation of performance which are formulated to guide the people and their activities.

The two components of formalization and centralization of structure can be expanded into two broad categories of organizational structure: mechanisti**c** – having structure appropriate for an unchanging environment; and organic– having a structure appropriate for a changing environment. Mechanistic organizations are characterized by highly specialized tasks that tend to be rigidly defined. The authority and control are hierarchical and communication is generally from the top down. Obedience to superiors would, at least, on the surface, be a facet of the culture. Mechanistic organizations are very highly formalized and centralized. Members who tend to view their responsibilities in terms of their immediate role descriptions, are less adaptive to change, and rarely will be creative in the task to be done (Carla, 2005; Forslund, 2007).Bartlett (2002) explains that the organic organizations are characterized by a flexible approach to tasks where roles are interdependent and continually adjusted and redefined through interaction with organizational members. Control depends less on formal job description and more on expertise relevant to the task to be performed. Communication is both vertical and horizontal depending on the needed information. Members, who accept responsibility for task accomplishment beyond their role description, are more likely to adapt to change, and be creative in

their approach to task accomplishment.

Organizational Structure and Tasks Accomplishment

Onodugo (2005) explains that the fundamental reason for the establishment of an organizational structure is to accomplish work that cannot be accomplished by one individual on their own. No one organizational structure can be perfect for all situations. The prime target of the organization is to create a structure that merges task specialization with task integration under an appropriate chain of command. An appropriate chain of command is a reflection of the competency of the members of the organization. The greater the ability of the individual to perform a task and the more willing the individual to accept responsibility, the higher the chances are of success for a "widened span of control". Inherent in tall organizations is the underutilization of the worker's potential as well as a low level of motivation. Control by the supervisor is high, a product of constant interaction and a small workforce. Widening the span of control promotes autonomy, higher involvement in task, and an increase in motivation. It also lessons the amount of control supervisors have over workers.

Anderson & Gerbing, (2008) explain that narrow spans of control are indicative of bureaucratic organizations depicted in pyramidal form. Highly specialized functions, clearly defined departmental boundaries, "routine" job descriptions, and close supervisory control make sure that work is completed. They are designed to control the employee's behaviour and decrease empowerment creating an organizational culture that is generally passive/aggressive in nature with an aggressive/defensive leadership style. The narrower the pyramid, the smaller the span of control ratio and the smaller the ratio, the greater the expense that the organization has in administrative costs to maintain that ratio. If the ratio is 1:5 then a four layer pyramidal system could employ 125 workers. If the ratio were increased to 1:8 then in the same four layer structure 512 workers could be employed. The increase in personnel supervised is exponential and can represent a significant cost reduction to the organization by raising the ratio even slightly. As the organization flattens the human limitations of leadership will spawn attributes of an organic structure. Individuals and teams, lacking supervision will begin to make decisions on their own. Assuming the workers are positively motivated, the decisions will be made with the betterment of production in mind (Jennifer and Gareth, 2009).

Explaining the Concept of Leadership Styles

Leading is the process of motivating subordinates, directing others, selecting the most effective communication channels, and resolving conflicts. Leadership is a set of interpersonal behaviors designed to influence employees to cooperate in the achievement of organizational objectives. Without leadership, an organization is but muddle of men and machines (Carla, 2005). Bartlett (2002) explains that leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor, which binds a group together and motivates it toward goals. Management activities such as planning, organizing and decision-making are dormant cocoons until the Leader triggers the power of motivation in people and guides them toward goals.

The leaders while influencing the subordinates perform the following functions (Forslund, 2007):

- **Taking initiative:** A leader has to take all initiative to lead the business activities. He himself should come in the field and take all steps to achieve predetermined targets. Hence, a leader is initiator.
- **Guide**: A leader has the primary duty of guiding others by communicating instructions and orders.
- **Representation:** A leader is a representative of the organization.
- **Encouraging Others:** A leader is the captain of the team. Encouragement is necessary to build team work. The leader must win the confidence of his colleagues.
- **Arbitrator and Mediator**: A leader has to create a smooth relationship among employees. In addition, he has to settle disputes arising among employees

Leadership styles are the patterns of behavior which a leader adopts in influencing the behavior of his followers (subordinates in the organizational context). These patterns emerge in the leader as he begins to respond in the same fashion under similar conditions: he/she develops habits of actions that become somewhat predictable to those who work with him. Various researchers have proposed different leadership styles (Jennifer & Gareth, 2009; Digalwar & Sangwant, 2007). These styles are either based on either behavioral approach or situational approach. Leadership styles are also broadly classified based on three points of view: Motivation, Authority and Supervision. On the basis of Motivation, leadership style can be positive or negative style. In positive style a leader motivates his followers to work hard by offering them rewards, for example, higher bonus. In negative styles, a leader forces his followers to work hard and punishes them for lower productivity.

On the basis of Authority, leadership styles are divided into three types namely: autocratic, democratic and free-rein (Hill, 2008):
   i. **Autocratic Leadership**: An autocratic leader is one who dominates and drives his subordinates through coercion, command and the instilling of fear in his followers. An autocratic leader alone determines policies, plans and makes decisions. He demands strict obedience. Such leaders love power and love to use it for promoting their own ends. They never like to delegate their power for they fear that they may lose their authority.
   ii. **Democratic Leadership**: This style of leadership is also known as participative leadership. As the name itself indicates, in this style, the entire group is involved in goal setting and achieving it. A democratic leader follows the majority opinion as expressed by his group. Subordinates have considerable freedom of action. The leader shows greater concern for his people's interest, is friendly and helpful to them..
   iii. **Free-Rein**: In this type of leadership, the leaders exercise absolutely no control. He only provides information, materials and facilities to his subordinates. This type of leadership is employee centered and the subordinates are free to establish their own goals and chart out the course of action.

2.2   Theoretical Framework
Classical and Non Classical Organization Theories

This work is anchored on classical and the non classical theories of organization. The classical theory of organization was developed in the 20th century to merge together the explanations of the earliest discussants. It brings together the scientific management (Taylors, 1910), bureaucratic theory (Weber, 1933) and administrative theory (Frayo, 1920). Scientific management focused on getting the best people and equipment, and scrutinizing each production task. Bureaucratic theory involved establishing a hierarchy to describe the division of labor in a company and recognizing the importance of specialization. Administrative theory worked to establish a set of management principles that applied to all organizations. Classical organization theory didn't work because it described motivation only as a function of economic rewards. Latest developments in organization theory gave rise to the consideration of the work environment. Productivity improves in an environment with coherence of values and purpose. Organizations can succeed with a cohesive environment where subordinates are accepting managerial authority. The key to this theory is maintaining equilibrium. Of course, there can be unpredictable responses to managerial authority (Anderson, 2001) and this is what the neo-classical theory emphasized on.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a survey research design. This is so because survey research focuses on the people, the vital facts of people and their beliefs, opinion, attitudes, motivation and behaviour. The area of this study is south-eastern states of Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi States. Four public universities were selected from the four states. These are University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The researchers selected these four universities because they have been in existence for about two decades. The population of this work consists of the staff of the four selected public universities. The populations of staff of each university are shown below in tabular form:

S/N	Service Firms	Staff Population
1.	University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State	1273
2.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State,	3982
3.	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	1911
4.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	2123
	TOTAL	**9289**

SOURCE: Personnel Department, Registrar's office of the selected Universities (2021)

Having defined the population, the researchers estimated the sample size with Trek (2004) formula. Final sample size of441 was drawn. The non-probability convenience sampling was used as the sampling technique for this study. Data for this study were collected mainly from primary source. Data were gathered from the primary source through questionnaire that was self-administered. The sample respondents consist of the staff of the four selected public universities in Eastern part of Nigeria. In order to ensure that the research instrument was valid, the researchers ensured that the instrument measured the concepts it was supposed to measure. The questionnaire was vetted by experts in the Faculty of Business

Administration, University of Nigeria. A pilot survey was used to test 30 respondents and their responses, comments and preliminary analysis were used to modify and fine-tune the instrument. To ensure reliability of the data, the researchers administered the questionnaire in batches that yielded nearly equivalent responses. To ascertain that the instrument is reliable, the test-retest was adopted. The outcome of the test-retest was determined using Cronbach Alpha and the result was 0.774. Since the result was very high, we therefore assert that the instrument was highly reliable.

4.0   DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents various data gathered and the analytical techniques used. Of the four hundred and forty-one (441) questionnaire copies administered, four hundred and thirty five (435) representing 98.6% were returned and found good for the data analysis. Table 2 below shows that 98.6% of the distributed copies of the questionnaire were returned and used whereas i.4% were not returned and were not used for the analysis

Table 2: Distribution and Return of the Questionnaire

	Frequency	**Percentage (%)**
Returned	435	98.6
Not Returned	6	1.4
Total	**441**	**100**

Two hundred and sixty (260) respondents representing 60.07% were males, whereas 175 respondents, representing 40.22% were females. This indicated that males were more than the females. The age distribution of the respondents showed that 94 respondents representing 22.00% were between the age of 25-30, 100 respondents with 23.08% were within the age bracket of 35-45, while 241 respondents representing 55.40% were within the age bracket of 45 years and above. This implies that greater proportion of the respondents fall within the age of 45 years and above. The collected data was presented using mean and standard deviations. The 5 Likert type questionnaires rating of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were assigned numbers 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The formulated hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlations and Regression Analysis at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). The decision rule was based on the sample mean greater than 3 for agreed and otherwise for disagreement.

Table 3: The influence of organic and mechanistic structures on tasks accomplishment

Question	Mean	SD
– Q1 There are highly specialized tasks that tend to be rigidly defined in public universities	2.61	1.214
-Q2 The authority and control are hierarchical and communication is generally from the top down	3.59	1.208
-Q3 Mechanistic organizations are very highly formalized and centralized, hence, tasks accomplishment becomes difficult	3.58	1.070

-Q4 Organic organizations are characterized by a flexible approach to tasks	3.68	1.023
-Q5 Communication is both vertical and horizontal depending on the needed information which leads to timely accomplishment of tasks	3.49	1.247
Average	3.91	.542

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

With respect to the influence of organic and mechanistic structures on tasks accomplishment, the mean for respondents response to the question was 3.91 (SD=.542) indicating that the respondents rate high on the influence of organic and mechanistic structures on tasks accomplishment in the Nigerian public universities. Specifically, the mean score for Q1 was 2.61. The model one which indicated that the influence of organic and mechanistic structures on tasks accomplishment in the Nigerian public universities was also significant with $F(1, 434) = 449.185, p < 0.001$ as shown in Table 4. Also, the model one explains 0.556 or 55.6% of the moderation between organic and mechanistic structures and tasks accomplishment. The model reports the following: $R = 0.746$, $R^2 = 0.556$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.555$ as Table 4 reports.

Table 4a: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.588	1	25.588	449.185	.000[b]
	Residual	20.450	434	.057		
	Total	46.038	435			

a. Dependent Variable: tasks accomplishment
b. Predictors: (Constant), organic and mechanistic structures
Source: Author computation

Table 4b: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.746[a]	.556	.555	.239

a. Predictors: (Constant), organic and mechanistic structures
b. Dependent Variable: tasks accomplishment

The significant level was found to be 0.00, and because of this, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate that states that organic and mechanistic structures significantly influence tasks accomplishment in the Nigerian public universities. Our finding is closely related to the work done by James & Jones (2006); and Ouchi & Harris (2004) who argued that ineffective corporate structure is a downturn route for firms. However, our result negates the findings of Onodugo (2005). The result of his paper was that the one of the interface between organic and mechanistic structures can stimulate business growth.

Table 5: The effect of leadership styles on the staffs' morale in the Nigerian public universities

Question	Mean	SD
–Q1 Public universities in Nigeria are characterized by autocratic top management	3.11	1.62
-Q2 The university systems with democratic styles enjoys taff commitment	2.59	1.02
-Q3 Lassie-fair type of leadership can stimulate effectiveness among Nigerian public universities	3.22	1.21
-Q4 Leadership styles dictate the reputation and global goodwill of public universities in Nigeria	2.68	1.01
Average	**3.77**	**.449**

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

With respect to the effect of leadership styles on the staff' morale in the Nigerian public universities, the mean for respondents response to the question was 3.77 (SD=.449) indicating that the respondents rate high effect of leadership styles on the staff' morale in the Nigerian public universities. Specifically, the mean score for Q1 was 3.11. The model which indicated that leadership styles affect staff' morale in the Nigerian public universities was also significant with $F(1, 434) = 332.117, p < 0.001$ as shown in Table 6. Also, the model one explains 0.662 or 66.2% of the moderation between leadership styles and staff' morale. The model reports the following: $R = 0.723$, $R^2 = 0.662$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.595$ as Table 6 reports

Table 6a: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.224	1	24.442	332.117	.002[b]
	Residual	23.431	434	.052		
	Total	**47.655**	**435**			

a. Dependent Variable: staff' morale
b. Predictors: (Constant), leadership styles
Source: Author computation

Table 6b: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.723[a]	.662	.595	.283

b. Predictors: (Constant), leadership styles
b. Dependent Variable: staff' morale

Having analyzed the second hypothesis on table 6 **above** with regression, the statistics revealed that the regression result shows the existence of significant result on the variables with the significant level

of 0.002, and due to this, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that leadership styles affect staff' morale in the Nigerian public universities... However, findings may not be the same in all the institution or in all countries since the works of Kilman, Pondy, & Slevin, 2006; MacKenzie, 2008did not conform to our results. Though, our finding is partially similar to the finding of the research outcome of Melcher (2006) who explains the role of leadership to the 21st century organizations.

5.0   CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In line with the findings, the study concluded that organizational structures of university systems utilized by the administrator have significant and positive impact on the institutional performance. This is so because the dimensions of the school's structures and its institutional strategies go a long way in impacting on the overall institutional performance. There is a significant relationship between structure, leadership, decision making and productivity. Structure gives rooms for reliable leadership which also in turn leads to proper decision making. An effective strategy is made by informed leaders with excellent decision making skills.

In line with these conclusion, the management of today's universities particularly the public universities in Nigeria, should intensify their efforts to identify the synergistic importance of the structures adopted by the administrators and must as well improve on them if there are structural misfits. Furthermore, there is need for universities management to do an in-depth diagnosis of other management-structure decision areas, such as corporate planning, staff training and development, organizational design among others. This should cover issues like the best management systems and techniques to adopt at the right time, with the right cost and to the right staff, and also taking into consideration the environmental factors and variables.

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