

Strategic Leadership Styles and Employees' Productivity in Benin Electricity Distribution Company

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of strategic leadership style on workforce productivity in Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC). Using a survey research design the population of 356 with the use of primary sources of data, sample size of 189 was achieved. The modified five-point Likert scale research instrument was administered to staff of the BEDC in various locations in Edo State to obtain responses. Analyses involved the use of percentage analysis, correlation, and regression analyses with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 software. Result revealed that strategic leadership styles (Transformational and Transactional) have a significant effect on employees' productivity. The study recommended that, leaders should learn the process of combining strategic approach and management style, while observing the discharge of their responsibilities. Also, leaders should embrace visionary and diversity of thoughts as an approach and ensure their vision to guide the actions and behaviours of the employees, to bring about change in individuals as well as improved productivity in the organization.

Keywords: Employees, Productivity, Leadership Style, Strategy, Transformational, Transactional

Introduction

Leading is one of the most crucial human activities in management. Since the time humans initiated forming social and religious establishments to accomplish aims and objectives they could not accomplish as individuals, managing has been essential to ensure the coordination of individual efforts. It would be difficult for the human resource of any organization to post consistently impressive business performances if they are not motivated and inspired. The quantity of goods and services produced by an employee in a given time is known as employee productivity. Productivity among employees is crucial to an organization's success. However, it is also challenging. The trick is to work smarter, hence; Strategic leadership does play a key role in setting direction, inspiring adoption and implementation of change in the organization (Willy 2019). The right leadership style must be in place for an organization to record an enviable performance and a high level of production, and a leader's chosen strategies for motivating team members are crucial.

The literature provides several perspectives that help define strategic leadership. One perspective focuses on "executives who have overall responsibility for an organization, their characteristics, what they do, how they do it, and particularly, how they affect organizational outcomes" (Finkelstein et al., 2009). These researchers have defined the scope of strategic leadership to include CEOs, the heads of business units, boards of directors (Finkelstein et al., 2009, Boal & Hooijberg, 2000). Hambrick (2007) defined strategic leadership as being

concerned with the entire scope of activities and strategic choices of the individuals at the pinnacle of the organization. Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) is the 4th largest Distribution Companies (Discos) with distribution capacity and 3rd largest in number of households among the privatized Distribution Companies (Field work 2021). Given that a number of major electricity generation and transmission hubs are situated in the vicinity, it is ideally situated to take advantage of any opportunities that may develop as Nigeria's power trading market becomes more competitive and liberalized. There was also the belief that there was one management technique that worked best in all circumstances. 'Command and control' approach was widely regarded as the standard before the 1980s. Emphasis on leadership style as the manner in which leaders relate to others, particularly those who directly report to them, has undoubtedly increased in recent years.

Creativity and productivity of many employees have been at a low ebb due to work misconduct and leadership style of those at the upper cadre of such organization and institution. In such a setting, the employees lack motivation, organization, control, and coordination. As a result, the negative effects of ineffective leadership, low productivity, high operational costs, and uncooperative employee attitudes emerge. Jenkins (2013) and Paul (2017). Strategic leadership can benefit from a variety of leadership philosophies, especially those that emphasize the behavior of the leader. The distribution companies in Nigeria have been overwhelmed with lot of complains on the sluggishness, slow response and arrival time to any power issue in the country, of which the researcher has been a victim of their gross incompetence, many citizens are yet to get the meter they paid for, which has made the customers resort to other sources of power (Field work 2021). Most recent studies on the influence of strategic leadership on performance suggest that it is substantial (Quigley & Graffin, 2017).

Researchers have mostly augmented the quality of strategic leadership within sights from charismatic, transformational, visionary, adaptive, transactional, servant, reflective, transcendental and empowered leadership respectively (Waldman et al., 2001; Castelli, 2016; Crossan et al., 2008). Adaptive, transactional, servant, reflective, transcendental and empowered leadership can be viewed as types of charismatic, visionary and transformational styles that focus on the leadership of the self, others and of the organization respectively (Crossan et al., 2008; Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Waldman et al., 2001; Bass, 1985). Specifically, strategic leadership has been described by most scholars as encompassing a core of critical practices, which include: determining the long term goals of the organization; exploring and exploiting an organization's core capabilities; managing the human and social assets; inculcating a sustainable organizational culture; emphasizing ethical values and formulating and implementing balanced control systems that will not hinder continuous transformation but at the same time ensure organizational stability (Ireland & Hitt 1999; Hagen et al., 1998).

For the purpose of this study, strategic leadership will be defined as the capacity to motivate others to voluntarily make daily decisions that enhance the organization's long-term sustainability, while maintaining its current stability. Therefore, transformational and transactional leadership styles are taken into account as strategic leadership styles in the context of this study. Inspiration, motivation, challenge, vision, personal growth and greater performance by followers are key components of transformational leadership. There is also considerable evidence that transformational leadership is effective and it is positively related to subordinate satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Allio, 2013; Glann, 2001). The transactional leadership style has a strong link between leadership and the ability to motivate goal attainment and improved employees' productivity through reward structures (Funda & Cihan 2014). It is therefore the essence of this research having considered the above, to examine

the application of strategic leadership styles and productivity from the workforce in the BEDC. Focusing on the question; what is the effect of strategic leadership styles on employee productivity? The following hypotheses are here stated to be tested in the achievement of the specific objectives of this research:

- H₀₁:** Transformational leadership do not have significance effect on employee productivity in BEDC.
- H₀₂:** Transactional leadership style does not have relationship on employees' productivity in BEDC.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant correlation between strategic leadership style and employee productivity

Literature Review

Employee productivity

The measures of labor productivity can be determined with respect to workers' underlying productivity, either between workers, or over time. Employee productivity decision-making in the public and private sectors utilizes evaluation. Organizations have frequently turned to using specific performance indicators, such as how different incentives affect employees' behavior, due to the lack of effective ways to evaluate workers' productivity. These measures have been embraced by both the public and private sectors for employee performance evaluation (Sauermann & Jan, 2016).

Leadership Style

One concept that academics have tried to define is leadership. Today, leadership is the most studied and least understood topic, since we assume that it's a life's phenomenon which is complex and mysterious, Wendy (2012). Since the beginning of the 20th century, leadership has been continuously redefined as a result of the numerous leadership theories that have been developed based on distinct theoretical viewpoints by various researchers. Leadership is a complex concept with no clear-cut definition that is agreed by all. There are several literatures and research papers on leadership. Getting a group to work toward a common objective is a recurring topic in most definitions. Bell (2013) defines leadership as "the relationship between an individual and a group based on common interest and they behave as per the directions of the leader". According to Mathias and John (2007), leadership is the process of influencing followers.

Leaders play an important role in the attainment of organizational goals by creating a climate that would influence employee's attitudes, motivation, and behavior. Cole (2005) and Chowdhury (2014) define leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences other to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the objectives towards the common goal. Helping a group or organization achieve sustainable development and growth is the group's aspiration and core value Cummings et al., (2010). Leadership brings in the required change to influence learning and development of required skills (Malik et al., 2016), performance and creates a platform for individual growth in an organization. Aldoory and Toth (2004) and Men (2010) assert that, despite the extensive research on the construct of leadership in the disciplines of management, business and marketing, a scholarly discourse on leadership is lacking in public relations.

Over the years, researchers and practitioners have developed a belief that leadership is an adaptable developmental process and with constant development in the area of research, it has seldom disagreed with it. These include whether leaders are born or made, how followers have

affected successful leaders; can strategic leaders be the game changers by building or destroying societies, and what will be the impact on leaders through knowledge on the performance of group and individuals? (Avolio et al., 2009). In Leadership and management, styles are viewed in many businesses as essentially relating to how leaders use their power to accomplish tasks and successfully meet goals.

Strategic Leadership Style

Ayo and Oluseyi (2009) posited that strategic leadership has become a veritable organizational tool in modern organizational set up and it has been highly regarded as one of the most instrumental elements for effective organizational strategy implementation, hence it is imperative to give a detailed definition of strategic leadership. The scope of strategic leadership focuses on group of executives referred to as the chief executive officers (CEO), top management teams (TMT) and the board of directors who have the overall responsibilities of an organization (Lord et al, 2016; Strand, 2014). Despite its importance to performance, strategic leadership researchers and practitioners are yet to agree on a common definition (Allio, 2013). Regardless of the diverse terms and disconnected concepts used in past strategic leadership studies, Bass (2007) defines it as a group of chief executive officers (CEO) who set overall policies for acquiring and integrating resources for an organization.

Specifically, strategic leadership has been described by most scholars as encompassing a core of critical practices, which include: determining the long term goals of the organization; exploring and exploiting an organization's core capabilities; managing the human and social assets; inculcating a sustainable organizational culture; emphasizing ethical values and formulating and implementing balanced control systems that will not hinder continuous transformation but at the same time ensure organizational stability (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Hagen et al., 1998). Most recent studies on the influence of strategic leadership on performance suggest that it is substantial (Quigley & Graffin, 2017). Thus, it is critical for scholars to pinpoint essential strategic leadership behaviours or practices that will lead to high levels of performance (Mutia 2015; Jansen et al., 2009; Joste & Fourie 2009; Boal & Hooijberg, 2000). A variety of leadership philosophies are pertinent to strategic leadership, especially those that emphasize leader conduct and have been the focus of more recent research.

For the purpose of this study, strategic leadership is defined as being concerned with an organization's leadership, or the capacity to encourage others to voluntarily make daily decisions that enhance the organization's long-term sustainability while maintaining its current stability. Transformative and transactional leadership styles are therefore taken into account as strategic leadership styles in the context of this study. The focus of a transformational leadership style on followers is on superior performance, inspiration, motivation, challenge, and vision. Transformational leaders combine strategy and leadership, and they use their vision to direct the employees' activities and behaviors in order to positively impact both the organization and the people within it. This type of leadership entails persuading people to change for the better. The focus of this leadership strategy is the benefit of the organization (Funda & Cihan, 2014). There is also considerable evidence that transformational leadership is effective, and it is positively related to subordinate satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Bass, 1999; Rowe, 2001).

The transactional leadership style has a strong link among leadership and the ability to motivate goal attainment and improved employees' productivity through reward structures (Funda & Cihan, 2014). Elements of transactional leadership, such as providing contingent rewards, have been found to be positively associated with employee performance and effort (Bass, 1985).

Recent research has also found a positive relationship between transactional leadership and diversity practices and have higher social values (Ng & Sears, 2012). The transactional leaders make sure that everyone on the team is aware of what is expected of them in terms of both the processes and the results. Through performance evaluations and employee motivation, the leadership and strategic management styles are balanced. Incentives such as enhanced pay, promotion and bonuses for good performance are used. They may also punish bad performance through reduced pay or job loss. (Tucker & Russell, 2004; Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Theoretical Review

Various theories abound for the explanation of strategic leadership style, the open systems theory, the institutional theory and environment dependency theory (Alex & Vincent, 2018). This study is anchored on the Environment Dependency Theory (EDT) advanced by Ansoff and Sullivan (1993). According to the hypothesis, productivity is improved when organizations are able to predict and adapt to environmental changes. The open systems theory postulates a close interaction between the internal and external environments of the organization. This implies that strategic leaders can better understand the importance of the external environment and in turn, on its overall influence on performance (Mathias & John, 2007; Ansoff & Sullivan, 1993).

Empirical Review

According to Ayo and Oluseyi (2009), strategic leadership has evolved into a true organizational tool in today's organizational structure and is recognized as one of the key components for successfully implementing organizational strategy. Hence it is imperative to give a detailed definition of strategic leadership. Brown (2007) affirmed that the dictatorial, authoritative, consultative, and participative styles have short and long-term effects on productivity. According to the works of Zhang, (2016), an approach used by a leader can have an influence on the productivity of her staff and the rest of the organization. Yahaya et al., (2016) concluded in their work that transformational leadership style enhances staff productivity, in the case that when leaders motivate their employees through recognition and providing incentives for good work done by them, it will increase their sense of self-esteem and create positive impact on productivity.

In the work of Akintayo (2010) on the impact of work-family role conflict on employee commitment of Industrial Workers in Nigeria, he found that there was a significant but negative contribution of work-family role conflict to employee commitment. In another work, Schaufeli and Salanova (2012) examined the linkage between transformational leadership and employee commitment by focusing on psychological empowerment and structural distance using a sample of 520 staff nurses employed by a large public hospital in Singapore. Their findings showed that there is a positive association between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

According to Goren (2018), in their work on effect of leadership styles on employee productivity, found out that there is positive significant relationship between autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style and employee productivity. However, a negative relationship existed between laissez-faire leadership style and employee productivity. The research carried out by Yusuf-Habeeb and Ibrahim (2017) reveals a significant positive impact of effective leadership, as per interpersonal relations of superiors and subordinate, in creating an organizational climate that breeds commitment and performance of employees.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted to elicit data from the respondents on the effect of strategic leadership styles on employee's performance in BEDC, Benin, Edo state, the study population is 356, which includes staff in textile mill road office (220) and Oluku road offices (136). The study focus on the team leaders, human resource managers, supervisors, branch directors, departmental heads and other employees in the BEDC, Benin City Edo state, Nigeria.

The study area has a geographic span of 55,770 square kilometers, BEDC is in charge of retail power distribution in the states of Delta, Edo, Ekiti, and Ondo. The company currently has eighteen districts, employs about 1000 people across the four states, and operates out of twenty-five (25) business districts with about 350 offices spread across the four (4) states, which have a combined population of about 13 million and about 4 million households. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is represented by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and the Ministry of Finance (MOFI), while Vigeo Power Limited (Vigeo Power) is the primary investor. Investors and technical partners include, among others, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), Global Utilities Management Company Limited (GUMCO), a technical service provider and financial investor, and *North Delhi Power Limited* (NDPL) a technical service provider. Vigeo Holdings Limited (Vigeo Holdings) is the lead financial investor.

The population of the study is 356, the sample was derived using Yaro-Yamene's (1973) sampling technique to ascertain the actual sample size for the research. This constitutes the sample used for the study.

The formula is given thus:

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

Where:

n = sample size

N = Population size

1 is constant

e = Level of prediction of sampling error margin $(0.05)^2$

From the population of 356 staff of BEDC with an error limit of 5%, a sample size of 188 was achieved. The study adopted the primary sources of data collection, utilizing the research instrument, which is the questionnaire was administered. 188 copies of the questionnaire were successfully retrieved, amounting to a response rate of 91.75%. the measuring instruments was considered valid considering the face and content process of validation and the instrument was also subjected to internal consistency method of reliability. the instrument is considered reliable because the Cronbach Alpha values of its scales were above 0.7 or 70%. The data were analyzed using the Statistical package for social (SPSS 16.0) method of analysis.

Results and Discussions

Correlation Result: Table: Correlations Matrix

		Transform ational Leadership Style	Transactio nal Leadership Style	Strategic Leadership Style	Employee Productivity
Transformational Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.138	.558**	.158*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.059	.000	.034
	N	189	189	189	189
Transactional Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.138	1	.038	-.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059		.601	.000
	N	189	189	189	189
Strategic Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.558**	.038	1	-.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.601		.000
	N	189	189	189	189
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.158*	-.327**	-.332**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.000	.000	
	N	181	181	181	189

		Strategic Leadership Style	Employee Productivity
Strategic Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	-.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	189	189
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	-.332**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	181	189

On the correlation, result shown in table above, a positive relationship of 0.327 was seen between transformational leadership style and employee productivity; a negative association was observed between transactional leadership style and employee productivity. a negative correlation coefficient of -.332 is observed between strategic leadership and employee productivity which is significant at 5% level of significance (α).

Test of Hypotheses

Table: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.137	.286		14.463	.000
Transformational Leadership Style	.279	.061	.335	4.550	.000
Transactional Leadership Style	-.400	.054	-.379	-7.347	.000
Strategic Leadership	-.467	.062	-.490	-7.511	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

Source: Field work 2021, SPSS 16.0 Output

Table: Coefficients

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Strategic Leadership	-.467	.062	-.490	-7.511	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

Source: Field work 2021, SPSS 16.0 Output

The correlation test utilized SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 16.0). The hypothesis was tested and the results of the whole model was statistically substantial. Therefore, the earlier state null hypothesis in this study were rejected and uphold the hypothesis which states that, Transformational leadership styles, Transactional Leadership style and strategic leadership style have significant relationship on the employee productivity in Benin Electricity Distribution Company in Nigeria.

The aim of this study was to identify the extent to which strategic leadership styles affect the level of productivity of the BEDC Benin Electricity Distribution Company in Nigeria. Therefore, strategic leadership styles were studied along its proxies as transformational leadership styles and transactional leadership styles. The findings of the study show that there exists a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee's productivity. These findings corroborate the work on organizational interaction referring to a relational approach between two or more individuals based on social and organizational structures aimed at achieving goals (Ololube, 2012). The fundamental issue is that employees must work together in order to complete tasks, which tends to have an impact on the number and quality of interaction in a company. in order to accomplish tasks. The main purpose of strategic leadership concept and research is to understand how much influence top executives have over employees' productivity (Singhet al. 2016). Empirical and conceptual studies have shown that strategic leadership actions significantly influence performance (Quigley & Graffin,

2017; Ireland & Hitt, 1999). Empirical studies have demonstrated that strategic leadership is an important determinant of organizational performance (Witts, 2016; Lord, et al., 2016). Evidently, a large body of empirical research points to the superior performance outcomes of transformational leadership, which is consistent with Sauermann's (2016) assertion that it is helpful to identify certain characteristics by evaluating workers' productivity. In BEDC, a link between transformational leadership and increased employee productivity was found. Another step in becoming a good leader is to recognize the traits of successful leaders, such as integrity, zeal, respect, confidence, and focus. To create a productive, safe and supportive work environment, establish a framework that defines the leadership traits you value and tips on when to apply a specific leadership style, Lorraine (2012).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusively, the findings of this study have showed that the leadership style adopted by any organization to manage her employees can either make or be detrimental to the productivity of that organization. The study was to check the effect of strategic leadership style and how it has impacted the delivery of service and productivity from the workforce in the organization. Result revealed that strategic leadership styles remain a significant influencer of workforce productivity. Specifically, transformational leaders are more of enablers, directed by a high sense of duty and a robust set of values. As a result of the finding, the study recommends that: leaders should adopt the strategic leadership styles with emphases on transformational leadership style. By learning the process of combining strategic approach and management style, while observing the discharge of their responsibilities as leaders. Also leader should embrace diversity of thought, and ensure their vision to guide the actions and behaviors of the employees, to bring about positive change in individuals as well as the organization.

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