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Effective Leadership and Organizational Performance in Moro Local Government, Kwara State

[1] SALAHU Olayinka Moshood, [2]Ashiru Olayemi ALIYU, & [3]Akeem Aderayo SARAKI

[1,2 & 3]Department of Politics and Governance, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Kwara State University-Melete. Kwara State-Nigeria.
[1]moshoodsalahu@gmail.com, [2]ashiru.aliyu@kwasu.edu.ng &
[3]akeem.saraki@kwasu.edu.ng / kilani.jilani@gmail.com

Abstract

Globally, there is need for strong political leadership at the local Government for high organizational performance to be attained. That is why scholars are of the opinion that leadership effectiveness is shown by quality results (determined by the leader's strategic planning experience and leader's managerial skills. The study assessed effective leadership and organizational performance in Moro Local Government Area. The study is a "Desk Review" i.e. a conceptual research because its analyse and synthesise existing knowledge to understand a phenomenon. In essence, the study relied on the findings of extant studies and evidence from empirical case to arrive at logical conclusion. Moreover, the study also relied on secondary data e.g. Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit" report, 2018 and Moro Local Government Performance Report, 2024. From the presentation of an empirical case, the study found that leader's strategic planning experience significantly led to organization in Moro Local Government. This is shown in the use of leader's strategic planning experience and managerial skills to achieve the goal of bringing together all the different Yoruba-speaking communities towards common goal. The study also discovered that managerial skills among the leaders significantly led to organization in Moro Local Government. The study recommends the need to strengthen strategic planning experience among present and future leaders in Moro Local Government for better result (efficient organization) in order to be fair and responsive to public needs and demands. There is also need for the leaders to as a matter of fact learn to apply the skills of management for effective organization and organizational development in Local Governments for management skills will guide a leader to have problem solving skills and motivating skills and time management.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Managerial Skills, Performance, Service Delivery and Strategic Planning*

Introduction

Globally, there is need for strong political leadership at the local Government for high organizational performance to be attained. This include having clear vision and strategy for future as well as the ability to mobilise and inspire others to achieve the set vision. Political leadership therefore, is critical for the success and survival of all forms of organizations worldwide (being it public or private). That is why Hughes (2014) argues that "the role of leadership in organizations is to put structure and order; to direct and coordinate the work of group members and building interpersonal relationships with others". Additionally, Sifuna, (2014) averred that "Leaders who are visionary can actually steer the

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organization towards great success; as such, leadership effectiveness is shown by quality results (determined by the leader's strategic planning experience and leader's managerial skills)". It is on this ground that Sendlove, (2007) asserted that leadership is a complex, multifaceted process concerned with the art of influencing followers in a particular direction which involves casting a vision and directions, goal setting and motivating people. In line with the argument of Sendlove, Brown (2001) proposes that effective political leaders have to develop both managerial and leadership behavior and traits.

Accordingly, Local Governments as third tier units of government are created to bring government closer to the people at the grassroots and for transformation of lives at the rural level. One of the ways of bringing government closer to the people at the grassroots is through organization or orderliness. On this note, Ayotunde and Kunle (2016) stressed that Local Government that is supposed to serve as a form of political and administrative structure facilitating decentralization, national integration, and a sense of belonging at the grassroots through effective leadership and efficiency in governance, but the kind of political leadership that exists in most Local Governments definitely jeopardises organizational progress.

In Moro Local Government, Kwara State, the political leadership has managed to organise its activities leading to organizational development. Needless to say that the strength of the leadership in Moro Local Government lies on its strategic planning experience and leader's managerial skills which have significantly led to organization and organizational development. Regarding strategic planning experience, the leaders in Moro Local Government uphold to professionalism; fair to public needs and are responsive to public needs. With respect to leader's managerial skills, the leaders in Moro Local Government applied decision making skills; problem solving skills; motivation skills and time management as against what was hitherto obtainable. That is the major reason why several authors argue that organizational goals will remain unrealistic without a 'designated individual' known as leader. As a result, leaders are 'central instruments' to any organization and or to ensuring organization in Local Government. It is against this background that the study assessed effective leadership and organizational performance in Moro Local Government.

Statement of the Research Problem

Leadership has been identified as one of the major problems militating against growth and development in all sectors of the economy and levels of government in Africa (Lamidi and Adeyeye, 2013). The need for effective leadership in any level of government is very essential. This is because Local Governments exist with stated objectives and leaders as 'machineries' for achieving such stated objectives. However, despite broad plans and massive injections of international and domestic resources to most Local Governments in mostly Nigeria, organizational progress is still a mirage. This is primarily due to poor fund management which in essence, is indicative of poor leadership commitment to improved decision-making and low managerial skills of the leaders in Local Government (Local Government Gazette 2020).

Several efforts have been put in place by Kwara State Government to strengthen leadership qualities; one of such efforts has to do with improvement in strategic planning experience of leaders of the State. Workshops and training programmes were organised between 2010 to 2017 meant to get the leaders taught about strategic planning experience (such as

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responsiveness and fairness to public needs; ways by which leaders can uphold to professional values etc.) (Kwara State Leadership Development report, 2018).

In the same vein, development of managerial skills and competence of the leaders within the State including Local Government leaders is another viable effort put in place by Kwara State Government to strengthen leadership qualities. State sponsored seminars conducted in 2016 is one of the strong example meant to develop the managerial skills and competence of leaders in Kwara State (Kwara State Leadership Development report, 2018).
In spite of all efforts by various leadership to promote organization and organizational development (i.e. development in Local Government), empirical evidences, and records showed that low strategic planning experience among leaders and lack of requisite managerial skills have been detrimental to for effective organization and organizational development (Moro Local Government Service Delivery Challenges and Way-out report, 2019). It is against this stated problem that the study assessed effective leadership and organizational performance in Moro Local Government.

Research Questions
From the stated research problems, the following specific questions are pertinent to guide the study

i. To what extent has leader's strategic planning experience led to organizational performance in Moro Local Government?
ii. To what extent has leader's managerial skills led to organizational performance in Moro Local Government?

Research Objectives
The overall objective of the study is to assess effective leadership and organization (i.e. system and structures that exist to facilitate the delivery of services) in Local Government: A study of Moro Local Government. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Assess the extent to which leader's strategic planning experience led to organizational performance in Moro Local Government.
ii. Examine the extent to which leader's managerial skills led to organizational performance in Moro Local Government.

Methodology
The study is a "Desk Review" i.e. a conceptual research because its analyse and synthesise existing knowledge to understand a phenomenon. In essence, the study relied on the findings of extant studies and evidence from empirical case to arrive at logical conclusion. Moreover, the study also relied on secondary data e.g. Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit" report, 2018 and Moro Local Government Performance Report, 2024.

Conceptualizing Leadership
Defining leadership is a recent academic activity, though the phenomenon of leadership has been ever present in human relations. Stogdill reminds us that the word "leader" has origins back to the 1300s and the word "leadership" dates back to the 1800s. He reviewed over 3,000 studies directly related to leadership and suggested that there are almost as "many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (Stogdill, 1974).

Notwithstanding the multitude of definitions, the few comprehensive ones are defined below: According to Goetsch and Davis (2006, p. 255), "leadership is the ability to inspire people to make a total, willing, and voluntary commitment to accomplishing or exceeding organisational goals". In addition, Hellriegel (2006, p. 286) explain that leadership "involves influencing others to act towards the attainment of a goal. It is based on

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interpersonal relationships, not administrative activities and directives."

Despite the plethora of definitions of leadership, some authors such as Doh and Stumpf (2015) contend that the ultimate question is not what the definition of leadership is, but rather what constitutes good leadership. They add that there is no confusion about what leaders do - the question is, what would be the best way to do it. After all, that is the point of studying leadership. With due consideration of the multitude of definitions, for the purpose of this study, effective leadership was defined as "the mobilisation and influencing of people to work towards a common goal (i.e. efficient service delivery) through strategic planning experience and adequate managerial skills.

Strategic Planning Experience

Strategic planning is a management tool for several key purposes: to help an organization do a better job, to focus its energy, to ensure that members are working toward the same goals and to assess and adjust its direction in response to an ever-changing environment. Strategic planning provides the master plan an organization uses to achieve its aims. It charts the direction and goals of the entire organization and all aspects of its operation. In short: "Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. (Bryson, 1988)". In addition, strategic planning does the following:

- Shares an organization's vision with a large internal and external audience.
- Clarifies and makes the organization's mission specific. The process is strategic because it involves choosing how best to respond to the circumstances of the organization's environment.
- Identifies clients, consumers and stakeholders served by the organization.
- Identifies distinctive strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
- Scans the relevant environment to find emerging opportunities and threats for an organization.
- Involves the key people inside and outside the organization in the planning process – The process is about planning because it involves intentionally setting goals (choosing a desired future) and developing an approach to achieving those goals.
- Creates a context for making choices about possible future directions (National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Manual, 2014).

Managerial Skills

Managerial skills or techniques develop out of theory and practice. According to J.S. Ninomiya (1991), the skills of effective managers could be summed up in seven roles as follows: listener, teacher, peacemaker, visionaries, self-critics, team captain, leader. Management skills can be defined according to Gboyega (2014) as certain attributes that an executive should possess in order to fulfil specific tasks in an organisation. They include the capacity to perform executive duties in an organisation. Management skills can be developed through learning and practical experience as a manager. The skills help the leader to relate to their fellow co-workers and know how to deal well with their subordinates, which allows for the easy flow of activities in the organization (Gboyega, 2014).

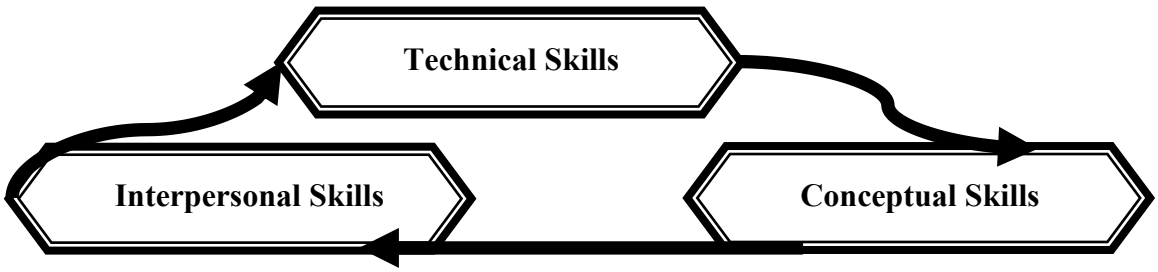
We could therefore, add that good management skills are vital for any organization to succeed and achieve its goals and objectives. A leader who foster good management skills is able to propel the organisation's mission ad vision forward with fewer huddles and objections from internal and external sources.

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Types of Management Skills

According to American Social and Organizational Psychologist – Katz (2013), the three basic types of management skills includes: ***Technical Skills*:** Technical Skills not only involve operating machines and software, production tools, and pieces of equipment but also the skills needed for priority service delivery. ***Conceptual Skills:*** These involve the leader's ability to see an entire concept, analyse and diagnose a problem, and find creative solutions. This helps the leader who has conceptual skills to effectively predict hurdles the organisation may face in the future. ***Human or Interpersonal Skills:*** The human or interpersonal skills are the skills that present the leader's ability to interact, work or relate effectively with people. These skills enable the leader to make use of human potential in an organisation and motivate employees for better result – service delivery in the case of public sector. Figure 2.1 depicts the three broad managerial skills according to – Katz (2013).

Fig. 1: **Managerial Skills**



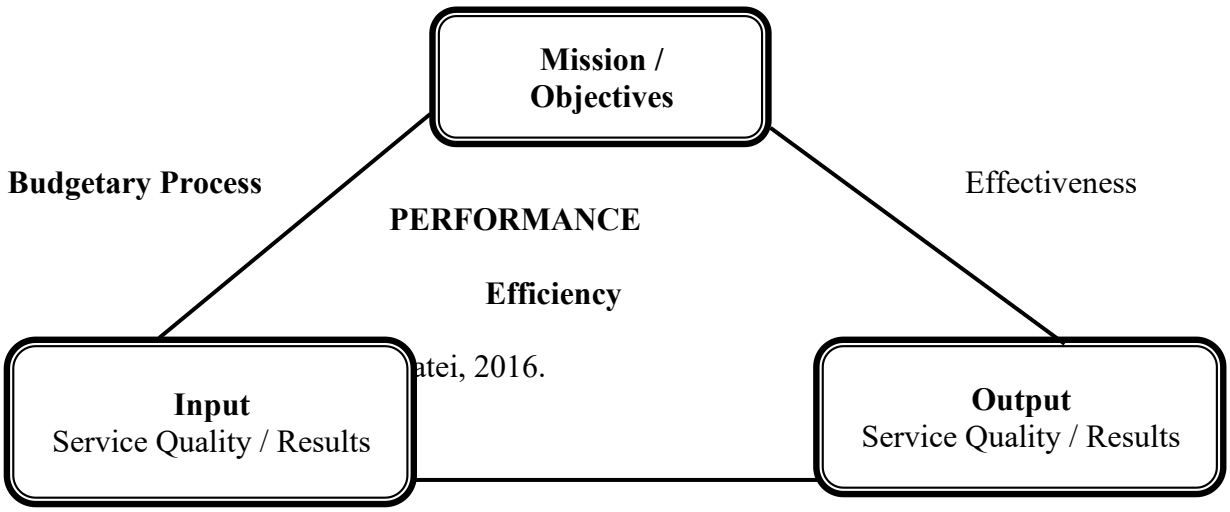
Source: Adapted from Katz (2013).

Performance

The concept of performance has gained increasing attention in recent decades, being pervasive in almost all spheres of the human activity. The concept of performance, as it appears defined in the dictionaries of French, English and Romanian, as the idea of outcome, achieved goal, quality, and less the economic aspects of efficiency and effectiveness. Noyé (2012) believes that performance consists of ″achieving the goals that were given to you in convergence of enterprise orientations″. In his opinion, performance is not a mere finding of an outcome, but rather it is the result of a comparison between the outcome and the objective. Profiroiu (2021), defines performance in the public sector to involve ″the existence of a relationship between objectives, means and results. To him, performance is the result of simultaneous exercise of efficiency, effectiveness and adequate budgetary process″. This is in line with the argument of Matei, (2016) as graphically represented in figure II:

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Figure II: Definition of Performance by Matei in Graphical Form



Ojokuku (2012) study on Impact of Leadership Style on Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Nigerian Banks. The study examined the impact of leadership style on organizational performance in selected Banks, in Ibadan Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting a total of sixty (60) respondents as sample for the study, while relevant data was gathered with the aid of a structured questionnaire. One hypothesis was formulated and inferential statistical tool was used to analyze the data specifically Pearson product moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between leadership style dimensions and organizational performance, while Regression analysis was used to examine the significant effect of leadership style dimensions on followers and performance. Findings showed positive and negative correlation between leadership style dimensions and organizational performance. It was also found that leadership style dimensions jointly predict organizational performance, which counted for 23% variance of performance. The study concluded that transformational and democratic leadership style should be employed by the Banks' management in order to wax stronger in a global competitive environment.

Abdulazeez (2014) empirically examines the relationship between leadership style and organizational effectiveness in the Nigerian small and medium enterprises. A survey of two hundred and sixty-eight (268) small and medium enterprises was used. The self-administered questionnaire was used as sources of data for the study. A total number of 209 copies of the questionnaires were returned and properly filled and subsequently used for the analysis. Descriptive Statistics-T-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation test were used. Data processing and analyses were carried out with the aid of computer using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). All the analyses were conducted using 5% level of significance. The results found that the Nigerian SMEs are more autocratic and less participative as the power distance between business owner and employees is very wide. The study further reveals an insignificant relationship between leadership style and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, the study finding cannot be generalized because it uses only two styles of leadership as determinants for the study.

Theoretical Framework: New Public Management (NPM) Theoretical Perspective

The NPM movement began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its first

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practitioners emerged in the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and in the municipal governments in the U.S. (e.g., Sunnyvale, California) that had suffered most heavily from economic recession and tax revolts. Next, the governments of New Zealand and Australia joined the movement. Their successes put NPM administrative reforms on the agendas of most Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries and other nations as well (OECD, 1995). Only later did academics identify the common characteristics of these reforms and organize them under the label of New Public Management (Dunsire, 1995, p. 21). NPM as a contemporary watchword is based on how management performs from the private segment are currently being functional in the public service area (Lane, 2000). The vital features of NPM (Pollitt, 1994) are given below:

i. NPM identifies the need for leadership which undertakes strategic planning while upholding values such as professionalism, fairness and responsiveness to public needs;
ii. The issue of effective communication (bottom-up communication) also aligns with the NPM perspective which emphasizes on quality services delivery and consumer satisfaction as desired outcomes in the public sector.
iii. Inclination of lean/flat, independent organizational forms and decentralization;
iv. Favoring contract-like relations in place of hierarchical relations and concentration on quality services;
v. Value based: preferring individuality and competence instead of parity and diversity.

Evidence from Empirical Case

An illustration (empirical case) of effective leadership and organizational performance in Moro Local Government is the "Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit". This summit was organised in 2018 by the Local Government in collaboration with other stakeholders, with the aim of promoting economic development and social cohesion in the Local Government Area. The summit brought together key stakeholders from across Yoruba speaking Local Governments in Kwara State including traditional rulers, political and religious leaders and Civil Society Organizations [CSOs]; this leadership summit led to the development of a "Comprehensive Development Plan for the Area" (Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit" report, 2018). ***Note:***Moro Local Government is not technically part of Igbomina-Yoruba territory. However, "Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit" was held in Moro Local Government Area.

The summit made use of leader's strategic planning experience and managerial skills to achieve the goal of bringing together all the different Yoruba-speaking communities towards common goal.

In response, the local government leadership under the recent elected chairman (with high level of **managerial skills**) implemented a series of **strategic initiatives** aimed at improving organizational performance and enhancing community welfare. The chairman adopted a transformational leadership style; focusing on collaboration (through partnerships with private organizations to enhance service delivery in areas like waste management, healthcare, and infrastructure development), community involvement (Regular town hall meetings were established to involve citizens in the decision-making process. This approach not only enhanced trust but also allowed the leadership to understand the community's needs better), Capacity Building Programmes (through investing in training programmes for staff to improve their skills in service delivery, financial management, and project implementation)

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and transparency. The implementation of these strategies led to significant improvements in organizational performance like enhanced service delivery, increased revenue generation, sustainable development projects etc. (Moro Local Government Performance Report, 2024).

Discussion of Major Findings

The study assessed effective leadership and organization in Moro Local Government Area. From the presentation of an empirical case, a number of findings were arrived at which are discussed below.

i. The study found that leader's strategic planning experience significantly led to organization in Moro Local Government. This is shown in the use of leader's strategic planning experience and managerial skills to achieve the goal of bringing together all the different Yoruba-speaking communities towards common goal.
ii. The study also discovered that managerial skills among the leaders significantly led to organization in Moro Local Government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study set out to assess effective leadership and organization in Local Government: A study of Moro Local Government. The study concludes that leader's strategic planning experience and managerial skills among the leaders significantly led to effective organization with evidence of "Igbomina–Yoruba National Development Summit" organised in 2018. In view of the research findings, the following recommendations were made in order to strengthen leadership thereby ensuring efficient organization in the Local Government Area and beyond:

i. The study then recommends the need to strengthen strategic planning experience among present and future leaders in Moro Local Government for better result (efficient organization) in order to be fair and responsive to public needs and demands.
ii. There is also need for the leaders to as a matter of fact learn to apply the skills of management for effective organization and organizational development in Local Governments for management skills will guide a leader to have problem solving skills and motivating skills and time management.

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