



ABSTRACT

The paper focused on academic leaders applying strategic plan for institutional sustainability in the University of Abuja, Abuja Nigeria. Two research questions were set to guide the study. The researchers used survey research design for the study. The population of the study was 16 deans and sub-deans from eight (8) faculties in the University of Abuja. The sample was sixteen (16) deans and sub-deans who were sampled by purposive sampling technique. The

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CADEMIC LEADERS APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY: A STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, ABUJA NIGERIA

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Introduction

The responsibility of funding education has become too enormous for the government alone to bear. The institutions still want the government to fund all the transactions carried out by them whereas the government wants these institutions to be autonomous so as to fund all their transactions. This can never be a reality as institutions cannot have sources of funding to carry out some of their activities. It is germane for academic leaders at the helm of the institutions to “think out of the box” to come out with tangible sources of funding some of their educational transactions. These leaders can use strategic plan to properly plan and think out processes that will help the school to have the knowledge of what to do to be financially independent in future to sustain institutions (Morrison-Porter, 2021). Academic leaders should apply strategic plan if their aim is to improve high institutions of learning. There are several different ways to apply strategic plan depending on the priorities of the institutions and the needs of the community it serves. This plan will help to direct the focus of these leaders on what they should do over a period of time for sustenance. In applying strategic plan the academic leaders need to: identify the objectives of the projects for sustainability (what the institutions will engage in or do to sustain them), decide on the steps to accomplish the objectives. Mobilize the resources, state procedures and their



reliability of the study was carried out by giving two (2) respondents the instrument to respond. Test-re-test method of reliability was used to obtain data for analysis for internal consistency. The reliability index of 0.71 was obtained through Cronbach alpha statistics, Mean statistics was used to analyse the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that academic leaders do not have the knowledge of strategic plan to sustain the institution/university and that they did not apply the strategies of strategic plan for institution's sustainability. Based on the findings of the study the researchers recommended that the management of the university should organize seminars for academic leaders to have in depth knowledge on strategic plan and its application to achieve institution sustainability. Also that academic leaders should apply strategic plan strategies to sustain the institution in the face of the government not wanting to sponsor the university financially.

Keywords: Academic Leaders, Application, Strategic plan, Institutions, and Sustainability

alternatives necessary to carry out the pertinent activities to achieve the objectives and develop or formulate strategies to implement the objectives (Arend, Zhao, Song & IM, 2019; Abubakar & Hassan, 2017; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011 & Poister, 2010). Strategic plan most importantly is to identify specific desired results which all the efforts and activities of the institution will be dedicated towards. Hence, it does not need to be prepared by outside experts rather a prescription that is formulated by the combined expertise within the institution would be needed. The success of any plan is determined only by the results they produce, therefore, these institutional heads should be committed to applying effective strategic plan strategies to achieve the set objectives.

Conceptual Clarifications

Strategic Plan

Several authors and researchers have defined strategic plan according to the different perspectives they look at it. Meek (2016) defined the concept as a process of selecting the path that a discipline, field or organization will follow to make strategic planners envision how organizational goal will be set as well as the blueprint required to reach these goals through time. Meek further explained that this type of planning process allows organizations to examine their strengths and weaknesses while receiving knowledge on possible ways to attain their goals and objectives.

Mallon (2019) maintained that strategic plan is a process which will enable the education leaders to make decisions about institutional future action, state self-deadlines for



implementing initiatives and develop benchmark for measuring progress. The researcher maintained that strategic plan will aid the education leaders to state right institutional vision, objectives and stay current in a continuously changing educational environment. The researcher added that strategic plan can help academic leaders to achieve broad goals while still maintaining within the budgetary sphere. Mallon opined that academic leaders should employ community support when executing strategic plan in order to gather knowledge from the individuals who are involved in the community strategic planning initiative programmes.

Strategic Plan Strategies for Institutional Sustainability

Effective school leader is a leader that has vision to advance and move the school forward. The leader who has to drive a school culture that emphasized high expectations from students and academic staff as professionals. A leader who will collaborate with other academic leaders and staff to improve classroom practices to bring excellent expected outcomes. He should be a problem solver by searching better strategies to overcome challenges rather than giving excuses. He should maintain good relationship with staff based on trust, be interested in them, encourage them, be light hearted as well as being serious to deal productively with conflict situations, treat staff equally with respect and help them to be empowered. This can increase staff level of intrinsic motivation to work with him. He should enhance their sense of competence and work with them as a team to achieve any objectives to help to sustain the school (Global Forum 2019). Academic leader can apply the underlisted strategies to financially sustain the institution. The academic head of the institution can make use of direct labour if possible in carrying out some school projects in order to reduce expenses instead of using contractors. He should source funds from significant individuals, like the philanthropists (both home and abroad), government, other stakeholders (who love education), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as; Tetfund, UNESCO, UNISEF, UNDP etc. The academic leaders should source funds to build structures which can be hired for functions such as; lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, celebrations like wedding etc. and for general public use for rent.

Engage in investment such as: building institutional hotel, plaza, shopping mall, eatery centres, canteens etc. The leader should open centres for computer business services, radio/television stations, media related services and campus shuttles, bread bakery, mount water plant for sachet (pure) and bottle water, engage in horticultural and agricultural farming, rearing or involve in animals/life stock, business such as goatry, piggery, cow, fishery, poultry, planting crops, grain etc. all these can be sources of finance for institutional sustainability.



Sources of Revenue: They should involve in internally and internationally generated revenue by sourcing for grants, encouraging internal, external and international collaborative research and write-ups.

- Encourage lecturers to write and publish books to sell to students and the public with some percentages given to the institution.
- Promote and embark on lucrative entrepreneurial businesses to benefit the institution and the individuals involved. Nwoye et al (2017) affirmed that institutions can be funded through entrepreneurial endowments.
- Involve in appeal fund raising; the academic leaders could appeal in writing to wealthy persons where the institution is, to assist financially for institutional development. Ocho (2019) maintained that one of the sources of funds for educational development and institutional sustenance can be community fund raising.
- More so, student alumni if established and encouraged can be of financial benefit to the institution.

Funding of higher institution should not be only the government concern, Bologna (2012) reported that the Minister of European Higher Education emphasized on public funding and drawing on other appropriate sources from the country to fund institutions of learning. He posited that this should be regarded as investment venture to support institutions. The fact that government cannot adequately fund education implies that academic leaders must seek for sources to fund the institutions for sustainability. This if not done will result to inadequacy of financial resources which will certainly have a negative effect on institutional progress and advancement (Adewunmi & Ehiamentalor, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Academic leaders can apply strategic plan to accomplish some of the projects they want to carryout in institutions. Strategic plan can help them to think creatively on what they entail to do. Apply innovation to strategize steps on what to do. Hence, strategic plan involves identifying what you want to do, stating the objectives, deciding the steps to accomplish the objectives and choosing appropriate working procedures. The onus of the matter is whether the academic leaders have the knowledge of strategic plan to achieve institutional sustainability. If so, whether they have applied strategic plan strategies to attain institutional sustainability. This has therefore motivated the researchers to carryout research on “Academic leaders’ application of strategic plan for institutional sustainability”.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the study was to examine academic leaders’ application of strategic plan for institutional sustainability. Specifically, the researchers set out to:



1. find out whether academic leaders have the knowledge of strategic plan to achieve institutional sustainability
2. examine the strategic plan strategies applied by academic leaders for institutional sustainability.

Research Questions

Two research questions were set to guide the study:

1. Have academic leaders the knowledge of strategic plan to attain institutional sustainability?
2. What are the strategic plan strategies applied by the academic leaders to attain institutional sustainability?

Methodology

The researchers applied survey research design for the study. The research design helped them to sample respondents from the large population (Nakpodia 2010). The population of the study was sixteen (16) academic leaders (deans and sub-deans) from sixteen (16) faculties in the University of Abuja. The sample of the study was sixteen (16) respondents (deans and sub-deans). The questionnaire for data collection was “Academic Leaders Application of Strategic plan for Institutional Sustainability (ALASPIS). Data was gotten from the information received from the respondents and used for analysis. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja. The researcher used test-re-test method to collate data from the instrument for analysis. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to analyse the data. Index coefficient score of 0.71 was obtained, showing that the instrument was reliable for the study. Mean statistics was used to analyse the research questions. Mean score of 2.50 and above were adjudged as agreed whereas mean score of 2.50 and below were adjudged as disagreed. The sectional mean score of 2.50 and above were considered as accepted whereas the sectional mean score of 2.50 and below were considered as rejected.

Data Analysis

Research Questions One: Have academic leaders knowledge of strategic plan to attain institutional sustainability?

Table 1: Strategic plan to achieve institutional Sustainability

N = 16

S/N	Indicators of Academic leaders knowledge of Strategic plan to Achieve Institutional Sustainability	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
	You have the knowledge of strategic plan to achieve institutional sustainability by:						
1	Setting the objectives on what you have to embark on to sustain the institution	6	4	2	4	2.75	Agreed



2	Involving internal experts to pre-empt the result of what you are embarking on	3	5	2	6	2.31	Disagreed
3	Stating the steps you will apply to accomplish the stated objectives	4	3	1	8	2.18	Disagreed
4	Mobilizing human resources to carryout cogent activities	2	4	6	4	2.25	Disagreed
5	Getting material resources needed for the designated activities	4	2	5	5	2.31	Disagreed
6	Stating procedures and best alternatives to achieve the objectives	2	2	5	7	1.94	Disagreed
7	Developing strategies for sustainability	3	1	6	6	2.06	Disagreed
8	Implementing the objectives of the chosen projects for institutional sustainability	3	1	6	6	2.06	Disagreed
9	Monitoring the process	4	2	4	6	2.25	Disagreed
10	Assessing the results	3	3	5	5	2.25	Disagreed
	Sectional Mean					2.24	Unaccepted

Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with item 1 with the mean score of 2.75 that they have the knowledge of strategic plan to sustain the institution by setting the objectives on what they have to embark on to achieve institutional sustainability. The respondents in item 2 - 10 disagreed with mean scores of 2.31, 2.18, 2.25, 2.31, 1.94, 2.06, 2.06, 2.25 and 2.25 respectively that they have the knowledge of strategic plan to achieve institution sustainability by: involving internal experts to pre-empt the result of what they are embarking on, stating the steps they will apply to accomplish the stated objectives, mobilizing human resources to carryout cogent activities, getting material resources needed for the designated activities, stating procedures and best alternatives to achieve the objectives, developing strategies for sustainability, implementing the objectives of the chosen project for institution sustainability, monitoring the process and assessing the results. All the academic leaders rejected that they have the knowledge of strategic plan to attain institutional sustainability with the sectional mean score of 2.24.

Research Questions Two: What are the strategic plan strategies applied by the academic leaders to attain institutional sustainability?

Table 2: Strategic plan Strategies Applied by the Academic Leaders for Institutional Sustainability

N = 16

S/N	Indicators of Strategic plan Strategies Applied by the Academic Leaders for Institutional Sustainability	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Sourcing for fund and grant to embark on the chosen project	1	4	7	4	2.13	Disagreed
2	Building event centres for hiring, for academic and public functions	4	1	5	6	2.19	Disagreed
3	Engaging in grain/crop farming	2	3	5	5	2.00	Disagreed
4	Engaging in life stock farming	3	4	5	4	2.38	Disagreed



5	Mounting water plants for the production of sachet and bottle water to sell for students, staff, university community and public.	2	3	6	5	2.13	Disagreed
6	Build shopping mall, plaza, canteens, eatery	3	3	4	6	2.19	Disagreed
7	Establish television , radio/ media stations to serve the institution and the public	3	1	6	6	2.06	Disagreed
8	Involve in entrepreneurial businesses	2	3	6	5	2.13	Disagreed
9	Encourage academic staff to write books for publication by the institution with certain percentage given to the institution	6	3	1	6	2.56	Agreed
10	Encourage joint internal, external and international collaborative institution research/ personal projects for staff on grant basis with some percentage given to the school	2	4	3	7	2.06	Disagreed
Sectional Mean						2.18	Unaccepted

Table 2 showed that the respondents disagreed with items 1-8 and 10 with mean scores of 2.13, 2.19, 2.00, 2.38, 2.13, 2.19, 2.06, 2.13 and 2.06 respectively that they have; sourced for fund and grant to embark on chosen project; built event centres for hiring, for academic and public functions; engaged in grain/crop farming, engaged in life stock farming; mount water plants to produce sachet and bottle water to sell to students, staff, the university community and the public; build shopping mall, plaza, canteens, eatery; establish television, radio/ media stations to serve the institution and the public; involve in entrepreneurial businesses; encourage academia to write books for publication by the institution with certain percentage given to the institution and to encourage joint internal, external and international collaborative institutional research/personal projects for staff on grant basis with some percentage given to the institution.

Discussion of Findings

The research question one finding revealed that academic leaders did not have the knowledge of strategic plan to achieve institutional sustainability. Research question two finding also proved that academic leaders did not apply strategic plan strategies to achieve institutional sustainability. The fact that academic leaders do not have the knowledge of strategic plan for institutional sustainability proved that they did not even try to apply such. Hence their dependence on government to sponsor education at the university level. This has made scholars to suggest several ways whereby academic leaders can use to achieve institutional sustainability. Some of these include that: they should seek for fund /grants from organizations, establish internally revenue generating sources etc.(Ocho, 2019; Nwoye, et al, 2017; Adewunmi & Ehiamentor, 2017 & Balogun, 2012).

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that the academic leaders did not have the knowledge of strategic plan for institutional sustainability nor apply them to sustain the institutions.



Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that the university management should organize seminars on strategic plan and on its strategies for academic leaders to have it knowledge and apply it for university/institutional sustainability.

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