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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE IN YOLA ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY (YED), ADAMAWA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of strategic management practices on the performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company in Adamawa State, focusing on four key areas: innovation and learning, customer evaluation, staff motivation, and low-cost leadership. Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, the research adopts a quantitative design and relies on data collected through structured questionnaires administered to 185 employees, of which 172 were found usable. Using multiple regression analysis, the study found that all four strategic dimensions positively affect the company's performance. Notably, staff motivation was significantly associated with increased employee productivity and organisational commitment, while low-cost leadership strategies enabled the company to reduce costs, attract price-sensitive customers, and sustain competitive advantage. Innovation and learning, alongside effective customer evaluation mechanisms, also played critical roles in improving service delivery and organisational adaptability. The study concludes that strategic management practices are vital for enhancing performance in the energy sector and recommends the promotion of a culture of innovation, stronger customer evaluation systems, tailored staff motivation strategies, and the continued application of low-cost leadership to drive long-term growth and competitiveness.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Innovation, Staff Motivation, Customer Evaluation, Low-Cost Leadership, Organisational Performance.

Introduction

The primary aim of any business is to maximise outcomes while minimising effort and investment. Achieving these optimal results requires organisations to select and implement the most effective strategic management practices that confer a competitive advantage. By utilising the most appropriate strategic management tools, businesses can not only meet their primary objectives but also surpass them, ensuring sustained success and growth. To be able to harness opportunities in and out of the organisation, a firm owner has to employ Strategic management techniques. These practices are based on the owner's view of what drives change. Strategic management is a priority for organisations that consider themselves as independent market players capable of choosing their strategic course of action in terms of goals, accomplishments, and

failures and then taking full responsibility for the consequences. Sigrun (2017) has pointed out that most of the universities have adapted the strategic management in their functioning in order to cope with the challenges of operating in a complex environment with multiple requirements. In order to stay relevant in a highly competitive business environment, organizations may employ strategic management practices that include the acquisition of knowledge and the promotion of innovation, the use of technology, paying attention to consumer feedback and motivating the employees. Such has the ability to greatly improve their organization performance (Sigrun, 2017).

The management of a corporation requires the application of its internal capabilities and weaknesses in a bid to leverage opportunities and avoid threats (Awonusi, 2022). The use of strategic planning by firms explains why some of the entities succeed or fail, even when they are faced with similar conditions. Therefore, enterprises are always on the lookout for new ways to improve their strategic management processes with the view of minimising performance fluctuations. Hence, strategic management is a critical process which must be owned by any organisation and a key success factor.

In general, according to the intuitive tradition in organisational practices or beliefs, performance is highly related to planning; it is possible to prepare to succeed or to fail. This shows the relationship between performance and planning, which emphasises a natural instinctive approach to decision making. Performance, as the key concept of strategic management, is the basis for all managerial actions and organisational structures. In an attempt to achieve these superior outcomes, the managers should have the capacity to comprehend and implement strategies that will allow them to make well-reasoned strategic decisions (Alhawamdeh & Alsmairat, 2019, cited in Ngui, 2015).

Performance may be referred to as the results or achievements of an organisation or as the purposeful accomplishment of a task or function. Consequently, performance data provides essential knowledge on how to optimise improved efforts through monitoring, regulation, punishment and reward, in the process acting as a tool that ensures all individuals are directed towards the goals and objectives of the business. The management strategy applied by modern organisations to control, monitor, and distribute their resources is inextricably linked with their performance. It is postulated that performance defines the extent to which an organisation is successful or not (Mba et al., 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Today, there is a rapid change in the business environment, such that product development and competition are ever-increasing among organisations. Information technology is also improving in most organisations. As the day goes by, firms strategically plan, formulate, and evaluate their operations, products, and services. Strategic management practices play a pivotal role in shaping an organisation's direction, resource allocations, and decision-making processes.

Despite the potential advantages, the impact of strategic management practices on performance is still not fully resolved. There is a pressing need for ongoing discussion and enhanced research within institutions to address many unresolved theoretical and methodological issues. Areas such as innovation and learning, customer evaluation, employee motivation, and cost leadership remain underexplored, with many stakeholders still unaware of their critical importance and

potential impact. Further research in these areas is crucial for developing a deeper understanding of how strategic management can effectively influence organisational performance.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of strategic management practices on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED), Adamawa State. The specifically determined:

i. the effect of innovation and learning on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
ii. the effect of customers' evaluation on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
iii. the effect of staff motivation on the performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
iv. the effect of low-cost leadership on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).

Research Question

i. To what extent does innovation and learning affect performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED)?
ii. To what extent does staff motivation affect performance in Power Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED)?
iii. To what extent does customer evaluation affect performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED)?
iv. To what extent does low-cost leadership affect performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED)?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01} Innovation and learning do not have a significant effect on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
H_{02} Staff motivation does not have a significant effect on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
H_{03} Customer's evaluation does not have a significant effect on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).
H_{04} Low-cost leadership does not have a significant effect on performance in Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).

Review literature

Strategic management practices

Scholars have defined strategic management differently due to the differences in background but it is commonly regarded as future oriented, growth oriented and mainly associated with the top management that sets out the vision, mission, and organizational culture of the firm (Mohammad & Wang, 2019). It entails the process of developing, executing and assessing the plans that are required in the achievement of organizational goals (Mohammad & Wang, 2019). Strategic management involves the formulation of long-term objectives, the formulation of strategies for the achievement of these objectives and the implementation of the action plans (Oyedele et al., 2019). According to Gaturu (2018), strategic management decisions influence the long-term organisational performance with emphasis on resource deployment for enhanced performance. Ezeanolue (2023) defines it as an ongoing evaluation strategy that helps align business operations with optimal performance. This process means that there is coordination across functions and assists the managers in adapting to the dynamic business environments by means of real-time planning and strategic

change management (Anyoso & Mang'ana, 2022; Masuku et al., 2016).

Dimensions of strategic management practice

The dimensions of strategic management practices that influence organisational performance are numerous; however, this study focuses on innovation and learning, customer evaluation, staff motivation and low-cost leadership.

Innovation and Learning: This dimension is crucial for organisations to stay competitive. It involves creating a culture that encourages experimentation, learning, and innovation (Bogers, 2019). According to recent studies (Nambisan et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020), digital innovation is crucial for boosting corporate success. They argue that current knowledge is a prerequisite for innovators' capacity to take in and use new information. Looking at it from this angle, the role of cognition and organisational learning in encouraging or inhibiting innovation becomes quite clear.

In strategic management, customer evaluation is a tool for improving overall performance by providing business strategies with data on customer needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels (Zeithaml et al., 2017). It involves gathering data on customer experiences and perceptions, analyzing this information to identify trends and areas for improvement, and then using these insights to adjust products, services, and marketing approaches (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Understanding customer needs and preferences is vital for organizational success (Kumar *et al.,* 2019). Effective customer evaluation helps organizations align their offerings with customer expectations, leading to higher customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately, better financial performance. It also allows businesses to anticipate changes in customer behaviour and adapt accordingly, which is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge (Pansari *et al.,* 2020).

Staff Motivation: Staff motivation refers to the factors that drive employees to perform their duties effectively, remain engaged with their tasks, and contribute to the organisation's success (Robbins & Judge, 2018). According to Akinsola (2023) motivation encompasses both intrinsic motivators, such as personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, and extrinsic motivators, including rewards, recognition, and career advancement opportunities.

Highly motivated staff tend to exhibit greater productivity, creativity, and dedication, which are critical for achieving organisational goals. In strategic management, staff motivation is essential because it influences not only individual performance but also the overall organisational culture and effectiveness (Eisenberger et al., 2019).

Low-Cost Leadership: According to Barney and Hesterly (2019), one business approach is low-cost leadership, which is striving to become the industry's lowest-cost manufacturer. Additionally, they said that the corporation may get an edge over rivals and attract price-sensitive clients by offering goods or services at cheaper rates, which is achieved and maintained via cost reduction. This strategy often involves optimizing operational efficiency, reducing production costs, leveraging economies of scale, and minimizing waste. Companies that successfully implement low-cost leadership typically focus on standardizing products or services, streamlining processes, and maintaining tight control over costs (Grant, 2016). This approach can lead to higher market share and

profitability, especially in industries where price competition is intense.

Organizational Performance

Organisational performance is a complex concept that measures the efficiency of an organisation in the accomplishment of its goals and objectives, which makes it a central component of strategic management (Hitt et al., 2020). It involves the knowledge and development of processes that would improve organisational performance, in terms of both financial and non-financial returns (Alhawamdeh & Alsmairat, 2019, cited Ngui, 2015). Performance can be described as the achievements of an entity, which may include efficiency, productivity, and compliance (Nkemchor & Ezeanolue, 2021). Whereas financial performance is concerned with profitability, growth and market share, non-financial performance is concerned with factors such as personnel development, customer satisfaction and business processes (Eniola & Ektebang, 2014; Nkemchor & Ezeanolue, 2021). Research has revealed that performance depends on organisational culture, workplace spirituality and good strategic management practices, thus enhancing performance and competitiveness (Alhawamdeh & Alsmairat, 2019, citing Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Thus, performance measurement is one of the most crucial tools that help to determine whether the organisations achieve the set goals (Makanga & Paul, 2017).

Theoretical review

The theoretical framework of this research will be based on the resource-based view theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory was developed by Penrose (1959) on the theory of growth of the firm and further advanced by Wernerfelt (1984), whereby the firm's performance is a function of its internal resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable. Unlike other theories that suggested that firm growth was as resulted from environmental forces such as market forces, RBV postulates that competitive advantage stems from the exploitation of firm-specific resources (Barney, 1995). These resources, which are assets, capabilities, processes and knowledge, help firms to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1995; Gaturu, 2018). Despite the criticism that has been made of the theory by arguing that it does not explain how resources are developed and deployed, it is still important in explaining why some organisations perform better than others even in a similar environment (Gaturu, 2018, cited Galbreath & Galvin, 2008). This research uses RBV to analyse the effects of strategic management practices, including innovation and learning, customer evaluation, staff motivation and low-cost leadership on performance.

Empirical review

Innovation, Learning, and Organisational Performance

Singh et al. (2023) explore the connection between innovation and learning with organisational performance in the manufacturing sector of India. They utilised a quantitative approach and gathered data through a structured questionnaire from 150 firms. Regression analysis revealed that innovation and continuous learning significantly elevate productivity, market share, and financial returns. They advocate for manufacturing entities to invest in Research and Development (R&D) and ongoing training

to maintain competitive edges and enhance performance.

Zhao & Li (2022) investigate the implications of organizational learning and innovation on performance in the tech sector using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Their study, based on survey responses from 200 firms, underscores the pivotal role of fostering a culture oriented towards continual learning and innovation to boost operational efficiency and financial outcomes.

Daniel (2020) focuses on the impact of innovation strategies within Heineken's operations in Ethiopia. Despite adopting a cross-sectional survey method, the study concludes that the firm's innovation strategies are suboptimal across several dimensions. This highlights a gap between strategy and execution, suggesting a reevaluation of their approach to innovation.

Customer Evaluation and Organizational Performance

Kim et al. (2021) delve into how customer evaluations enhance performance in South Korean retail sectors through a mixed-method approach. They emphasize the need for robust evaluation mechanisms like frequent surveys and real-time feedback to better meet customer demands and improve performance metrics such as retention rates and sales growth.

Bonsu et al. (2023) examine strategic management practices in enhancing customer satisfaction in Kumasi's hotel sector. Their findings, derived from a quantitative analysis of 200 respondents, recommend cultivating an organisational culture that aligns with business strategies to improve customer relations and operational efficiency.

Martin & Smith (2023) highlight the significant role of customer feedback in product development across various industries. Their research recommends integrating customer insights into product development processes to refine offerings and achieve market success.

Staff Motivation and Organizational Performance

Agyemang & Osei (2023) assess the impact of motivational strategies on performance in Ghana's banking sector. Their study, involving 300 bank employees, shows that tailored motivational strategies enhance employee productivity and satisfaction.

Akinsola et al. (2023) also explore how motivational strategies impact employee performance in Nigerian banks. Their findings, analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS 4.0), advocate for formal recognition programs as a means to boost performance.

Nonye (2019) suggests that creating a supportive work environment, including adequate accommodations and office amenities, can significantly improve employee commitment and performance at the Nigerian Bottling Company PLC in Port Harcourt.

Cost Leadership and Performance

Manjeet et al. (2018) and Alice et al. (2018) both investigate the efficacy of cost leadership strategies in different sectors. Their studies suggest that while direct correlations to firm performance are not always evident, integrating cost leadership can lead to significant performance enhancements by improving quality management and operational efficiency. Zhang & Wang (2021) corroborate

these findings in the retail sector, noting that cost leadership strategies, when coupled with quality maintenance, attract larger customer bases and boost overall performance. These studies collectively underscore the importance of strategic innovation, customer-focused approaches, and motivational strategies in enhancing organisational performance across various sectors and regions.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design approach, as the data were numerical and analysed statistically. The area of the study is the staff of Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED), Adamawa State. The total population of 360 staff were targeted (source: Yola Electricity distribution Company). However, a sample size of 185 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table.

A simple random sampling technique was adopted in order to have a comprehensive coverage of the population. The method of data collection was through questionnaires. The instrument was validated by my project supervisor. For reliability test, twenty (20) questionnaires were given out to staff of Yola Electricity Distribution Company Wukari branch in other to conduct the pilot test before distribution to ensure the termination of possible errors and inconsistencies which was confirmed using measurement of internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) which has a bench mark value of 0.70. The result revealed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.73, 0.81, 0.74 and 0.72 for Innovation and learning, Customer evaluation, Staff motivation and Low-cost leadership, respectively. With the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS), multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The decision rule is that the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05; otherwise, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Model specification

The study regression model is shown in equation 1.

$EI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IL + \beta_2 CE + \beta_3 SM + \beta_4 LCL$

Where;

β = Intercept or Autonomous parameter estimates., SMP = Strategic management practice, IL = Innovation and learning, CE= Customer evaluation, SM = Staff motivation, LCL = Low-cost leadership

Results and Discussion

Out of the 185 that were sent out, only 172 were returned valid and used for the analysis

Table 1: Summary of the regression model

Variables	Coefficient	T values	P values	MEAN	VIF
IL	.603	9.277	.000	3.3211	2.472
CE	.710	19.921	.000	3.8245	3.052
SM	.809	3.320	.000	3.8877	2.400
LCL	.823	12.004	.000	3.9921	1.990
R2	0.761				
F statistics	44.02				
P values	0.000				

Source: SPSS V25, 2024

The results of the regression analysis demonstrate a strong explanatory power of the model, as indicated by an R^2 value of 0.761. This implies that 76.1% of the variance in organisational performance at Power Holding Company, Yola, Adamawa State, can be explained by the combined effects of the strategic management practices of innovation and learning, customer evaluation, staff motivation, and low-cost leadership. The remaining 23.9% of the variance may be attributed to factors not included in the model. Furthermore, the F-statistic ($F = 44.02$, $p < .05$) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant, confirming that the independent variables jointly contribute to the prediction of organisational performance. This significance level ($p < .05$) validates the robustness of the model and suggests that the strategic management practices considered in this study are critical determinants of organisational success in this context.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 1, the hypotheses were tested as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Innovation and learning have no significant effect on the organisational performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).

The coefficient for innovation and learning (IL) is 0.603, with a t-value of 9.277 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The positive impact of innovation and learning on organisational performance found in this study aligns with the findings of Singh et al. (2023) and Zhao & Li (2022**).** These studies emphasise the role of innovation and continuous learning in driving productivity and financial success in various industries. Specifically, Singh et al. (2023) concluded that manufacturing firms investing in innovation-driven learning initiatives improve their market share and financial returns. Similarly, Zhao & Li (2022) found that learning-oriented firms enjoy enhanced operational efficiency and product quality, which directly translates to improved financial performance. Thus, the results of this study are consistent with existing literature on the positive role of innovation and learning in organisational performance.

Hypothesis 2:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Customer evaluation has no significant effect on the organisational performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YED).

The coefficient for customer evaluation (CE) is 0.710, with a t-value of 19.921 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The significant positive effect of customer evaluation on organisational performance corresponds to the findings of Kim et al. (2021)**,** who argued that retail firms that employ effective customer evaluation techniques tend to perform better in terms of customer retention and sales growth. Moreover, Martin & Smith (2023) found that customer feedback is critical in refining products and achieving market success. In both studies, customer evaluation is identified as an essential strategy for aligning business offerings with customer needs, leading to improved organisational performance. Therefore, this study supports the notion that customer evaluation is a critical component of business strategy that directly impacts firm performance.

Hypothesis 3:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Staff motivation has no significant effect on the organisational performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED).

The coefficient for staff motivation (SM) is 0.809, with a t-value of 3.320 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The positive effect of staff motivation on performance found in this study is consistent with the findings of Agyemang & Osei (2023), who observed that banks implementing motivational strategies saw increased employee productivity and overall performance. Similarly, Akinsola et al. (2023) demonstrated that motivational strategies significantly enhance employee performance in Nigerian commercial banks. The alignment between this study and the existing literature highlights the crucial role of employee motivation in driving organisational success across industries.

Hypothesis 4:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Low-cost leadership has no significant effect on the organizational performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company, (YED).

The coefficient for low-cost leadership (LCL) is 0.823, with a t-value of 12.004 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The significant influence of low-cost leadership on performance in this study aligns with the findings of Zhang & Wang (2021), who demonstrated that retail firms adopting low-cost strategies experienced higher sales volumes and improved performance. This result also resonates with Alice et al. (2018), who found that logistics firms adopting cost leadership strategies saw improved performance. The emphasis on operational efficiency and cost reduction as a means to gain competitive advantage is a recurrent theme in these studies, further supporting the findings of this research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study sought to evaluate the effect of the strategic management practices of innovation and learning, customer evaluation, staff motivation and low-cost leadership on the performance of Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YEDC), Yola. The study shows that all four dimensions have an impact on the performance of the company. Innovation and learning are used in improving operations and products while customer evaluation assists in matching services to customer requirements. Staff motivation increases employee performance and commitment, while low-cost leadership increases market sensitivity through cost advantage. In general, these strategic management practices are key enablers of organisational performance, which provides the rationale for their regular application to attain competitive and sustainable advantage.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed: It is recommended that Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YEDC), Yola should increase its Research and Development (R & D), employee training and innovation programs. Thus, the company can maintain competitive advantage and adapt to the changes in the environment, which will result in the improvement of the organizational performance.

i. The company should therefore incorporate effective customer assessment tools like questionnaires, feedback forms, and statistical analysis in order to gain insight on the customers' needs and demands. Through the effective implementation of the service dominant strategy, Yola

Electricity Distribution Company (YEDC) can enhance customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and long-term organizational performance by frequently modifying services to suit the needs of the consumers.

ii. The management should ensure that there is provision of both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for the employees. Measures like awards and incentives, staff promotion, and training, better pay, and staff well-being can greatly boost staff morale, productivity, and organizational performance.

iii. The company should also continue to integrate efficiency and effectiveness in its operations and adopt cost cutting measures that do not affect the quality of products and services. This involves the improvement of supply chain, minimization of costs such as waste, and utilization of the principle of economies of scale.

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