

Corporate Culture and University Goal Achievement in South-West Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between culture and university goal achievement in South west geo-political zone, Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose was to find out the nature of the corporate culture and university goal achievement as well as to determine the relationship between corporate culture and university goal achievement in South west geo-political zone, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study.

Survey research design was adopted in carrying out this study. The sample of the study was 1361 lecturers and 96,595 graduate of the five federal universities in South west geo-political zone between 2008/2009-2012/2013 academic sessions. The sample was selected using proportional sampling technique for the lecturers while purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the students. A questionnaire titled corporate culture questionnaire and student academic performance pro-forma were used to collect information for this study. The instruments were validated and the reliability value was 0.69. The research questions were answered using percentage and Pearson moment correlation statistic. The findings of the study include; that the corporate culture in South west universities is both collegial and bureaucratic in nature; that university goals have been achieved to a high extent in South west geo-political zone, Nigeria and; there is significant relationship between corporate culture and university goal achievement in South west geo-political zone, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that university administration should ensure that team work, lecturers' development and research collaborations strive in the universities to ensure high university goal achievement.

Keywords: *corporate culture, goal achievement, management style, university goals, graduate output, organizational structure*

Introduction

Corporate culture is a key component in the achievement of an organization's mission and strategies, the improvement of organizational effectiveness, and the management of change. It reflects what has worked in the past. It is a pattern of shared beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and values, which may not have been explicitly articulated. Corporate culture shapes the way people act and interact and strongly influences how things get done in an organization. It encompasses the organization's goals, behavioural norms, and dominant ideologies. Culture can be expressed through the organization's myths, heroes, legends, stories, jargon, rites, and ritual.

Academicians have realized that corporate culture influences employee performance (Lee & Yu, 2004) and organizational goal achievement (Saeed & Hassan, 2000). Many organizations like Continental Airlines, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Ernst & Young (EY), Hyundai Car (UK) have become leading organizations because of changes in their corporate culture and because these changes have led to positive influence on the organizational goals achievement (Zain, Ishak & Ghani, 2009). Corporate culture influences and shapes employee attitude and behaviour which in turn influences university goal achievement. Employees are the currency of successful business especially in service industry. Employee mindsets, their fundamental attitudes and behaviors matter to achieve and maintain high performance (Thomas, Harburg & Dutra, 2007).

Review of Related Literature

The culture of an organization includes all beliefs, feelings, behaviours, and symbols characteristic of an organization. More specifically, corporate culture is defined as shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values (Schein, 2011).

Martins and Terblanche (2003) state that the general definition of organizational culture as "a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organization from other organizations." In relation to this definition, Mansoor and Tayib (2010) opined that "organizational culture is the distinctive norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that combine to give each organization its distinct character." These two definitions suggest that organizational culture distinguishes one organization from another organization. Therefore, organizational culture is to an organization what personality is to an individual (Lunenborg, 2011).

Schein (2011) also defined organizational culture as "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to

cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." This description highlights that organizational culture is created assumptions, which are accepted as a way of doing things and are passed on to new members of an organization. Tharp (2009) defined corporate culture as "the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organization's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members." This suggests that organizational culture is articulated in the organization, in order to shape the way in which organizational members should behave. While there is considerable variation in the definitions of organizational culture, according to Lunenburg (2011), most of the definitions contain the following characteristics:

Observed Behavioral Regularities. When organization members interact, they use common language, terminology, and rituals and ceremonies related to deference and demeanours.

Norms. Standards of behaviour evolve in work groups that are considered acceptable or typical for a group of people.

Dominant values. An organization espouses and expects its members to share major values. Typical examples in schools are high performance levels of faculty and students, low absence and dropout rates of students, and high efficiency.

Philosophy. Policies guide an organization's beliefs about how employees and clients are to be treated. For example, most school districts have statements of philosophy or mission statements.

Rules. Guidelines exist for getting along in the organization, or the "ropes" that a newcomer must learn in order to become an accepted member.

Climate. This is an overall atmosphere that is conveyed in an organization by the physical layout and the way in which members interact with clients or other outsiders.

None of these characteristics can by itself represent the essence of organizational culture. However, the characteristics taken collectively reflect and give meaning to the concept of corporate culture (Lunenburg, 2011).

Universities Goals Achievement in Nigeria

Despite the generalized opinion on the decay in Nigerian university education system, it is necessary to point out some of its achievements. Between 1960 and the mid-80s Nigeria had a well-developed university

system comparable to highly rated universities all over the world and with the University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria earning global recognition for research in health and agriculture respectively (Okebukola, 2010). Okebukola pointed out that “between 1965 and 1970, Nigeria contributed the highest to the international literature in science, engineering, medicine, social sciences and arts,” and also had exemplary teaching quality, community and extension services.

Beginning with Nigeria’s independence in 1960, Nigerian university education sector has witnessed explosion both in the number of universities and academic enrollment. At independence in 1960, only one tertiary institution existed in the country, the University of Ibadan, which according to Okebukola, 2010) had about 1000 students and 300 staff. Okebukola further states that between 1960 and 2010, there had been rapid increase in the number of universities and enrollment. This was evident with the representation of 104 universities by their Vice-Chancellors at the 25th meeting of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities held on 20th April, 2010 at Osun State University, Oshogbo. As of 2005, the Federal Ministry of Education recorded a total undergraduate enrollment of 780,001 in the various universities in the country with the academic staff in the system numbering 23,535 (Okebukola, 2010). In a paper presented at a session of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation in 2008, the incumbent Executive Secretary of NUC, Professor Julius A. Okojie indicated the current total enrollment in the universities to be 1,096,312 and the total staff of 99,464 comprised of 27,394 academic staff and 72,070 non-teaching staff.

Another area of achievement is in the modernization and enrichment of curriculum (Akinnaso, 2011). In this regard, knowledge in the subject areas of mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, pharmacy, medicine, and engineering, Nigerians compete favorably with other counterparts in other countries and is evident in the ability of the Nigerian Post-Graduate students in other countries to compete favorably with their colleagues. Schneider & Smith (2004), on a study of Nigeria’s higher education system indicated as follows, that by 1980, Nigeria had established a well-regarded higher education system offering instruction at an international standard in a number of disciplinary area. Furthermore, Schneider & Smith (2004) note that in terms of broadening of curriculum base, Nigerian universities are paying more attention to this requirement by making provision for the co-existence of specialization and a broad-based program. The mandatory General Studies course for all students in the universities, for example, is seen as an attempt to enrich the students’ experience.

The emergence of various organized groups in the university sector is also one of the key achievements of the universities. These groups act as

pressure groups to ensure that things work well in the system for the purpose of achieving the mandates of the universities and shaping the nation's policies for education and democracy in general (Akinnaso, 2011). Such groups include the Committee of Vice-Chancellors, the Committee of Pro-Chancellors of universities, Alumni Associations, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Universities (SSANU), and National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS).

According to Kayode, Yusoff and Veloo (2014), university goals achievement can be measured in terms of goals approach, system resource approach, internal process approach, strategic constituency approach. According to Kayode, et. al., the goal approach is best used in a place where the goals of the institutions are well defined. This approach concentrates on output in order to discover the indispensable functional objective which include benefit, innovation and quality of the product. Therefore, the graduation rates are adopted in this study for the assessment of university goals achievement. This is because, according to the National Policy on Education (2004); the goals of university education in Nigeria is the development of human capital towards the development of the society.

Corporate Culture and University Goal Achievement

According to Kandula (2002), the key to good performance is a strong culture. He further maintains that due to difference in corporate culture, the same strategies do not yield same results for two organizations in the same industry and in the same location. A positive and strong culture can make an average individual perform and achieve brilliantly whereas a negative and weak culture may demotivate an outstanding employee to underperform and end up with no achievement. Therefore, organizational culture has an active and direct role in performance management. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) believed that research on culture will contribute to the understanding of performance.

Magee (2002) contended that without considering the impact of corporate culture on organization, organization could be counterproductive. Pinho, Rodrigues and Dibb (2013) examined the role of corporate culture on organizational performance and the result indicated that organizational culture impacts positively on organizational performance. Therefore, this study assumed that corporate culture plays a significant role towards university goals achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Every organization is established to achieve an objective or pre-determined goals and the university system globally and in Nigeria is no exception (Oduwaiye, Ogundele, Sofoluwe, & Kayode, 2014). In this era of globalization, the university

system is expected to be accountable in their services, most especially in terms of the graduates they produced (Kayode, Yusoff & Veloo, 2014). As such, it becomes pertinent to determine how such predetermined goals of the university system can be achieved.

Organizational culture has been the subject of exploration for academics and practitioners for many years. Various dimensions of organizational culture, such as communication, training and development, rewards and recognition, risk-taking, creativity and innovation, team- and people-oriented, results-oriented, etc., have been explored in relation to organizational outcomes. However, no empirical studies have been undertaken to explore the relationship between corporate culture (interns of management style, organizational structure and team dynamics) and university goal achievement, especially in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. This study, therefore, was designed to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between corporate culture and university goal achievement in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a descriptive survey which investigated the relationship between corporate culture and university goals achievement in the southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the study includes to

1. examine the nature of the corporate culture in universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria;
2. determine the level of university goal achievement in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria;
3. and determine the relationship between corporate culture and university goals achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What is the nature of the corporate culture in universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the level of achievement of university goals in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between corporate culture and university goals achievement?

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in carrying out this study. This research design is appropriate for this study because it allows collection of data

from sample of a target population, analyze these data collected using appropriate data analysis technique and reach reasonable conclusion about the population from the findings of the study.

This study focused on the Federal Universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria. There are seven federal universities in the zone, namely the University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Lagos, Akoka; University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Federal University of Technology, Akure; Federal University, Oye- ekiti and National Open University, Lagos. Federal University, Oye- ekiti was exempted from the study because the university is yet to produce graduates at the time this study was carried out. National Open University, Lagos was also exempted because it operates an open system of education.

The target population of the study include all 4952 lecturers and 96,595 students of the five federal universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria.

Proportional sampling technique was adopted to select the sample of the study. This involved obtaining the population of the lecturers in each of the selected federal universities and selecting the sample proportionally from these populations using the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as shown in Table 1. The technique is appropriate for this study because it would enhance the selection of a true representation (sample) of the target population. Purposive sampling technique was used to select students that graduated from the universities from the 2008-2009 academic session through the 2012-2013 academic session. The students' grades were used to determine the achievement of teaching goals of the universities. The technique is purposive because final year results are relevant to graduated students. This information cannot be derived from students that are yet to graduate. The sample of the study is therefore 1361 lecturers proportionally selected from all the faculties in the five federal universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria and 96,595 graduates from 2008-2009 academic session through the 2012-2013 academic session in the five federal universities as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling strategy

SN No. of Lecturers	Names of Universities	Lecturer Population	Sampled
1	University of Lagos, Akoka	1255	297
2	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife	1290	297
3	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	1203	291
4	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	570	234
5	Federal University of Technology, Akure	634	242
Total		4952	1361

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Instrumentation

One researchers-made a questionnaire and student academic performance pro-forma were used for data collection. The researcher-designed questionnaire is titled Corporate Culture Questionnaire (CCQ) while the Student Academic Performance Pro-forma (SAPP) was titled as such. The corporate culture questionnaire consists of items designed to elicit information on the corporate culture. It was designed with a five response pattern, viz: very high extent, high extent, moderate extent, low extent and very low extent in descending order.

The SAPP is designed to collect information on the performance of graduates of selected universities from 2008-2009 academic session to 2012-2013 academic session. This information was retrieved from the graduation handbook of each sampled university for five years. The pattern adopted is as follows: number of first class graduates, number of second class (upper division) graduates, number of second class (lower division) graduates, third class graduates and number of graduates with pass.

To ensure content validity of the instruments, draft copies of the instruments were given to three experts in the educational management discipline and two experts in measurement and evaluation. Relevant corrections were made based on their observations, modifications, and recommendations. The final was produced and used for data collection.

The reliability of the instruments was ensured using test-retest method. This was done by administering 100 copies of the questionnaire to lecturers who were not part of the sample of the study. The instruments were re-administered to the same set of lecturers two weeks the initial sampling. The two sets of data were correlated using Pearson moment correlation statistic. The reliability values were 0.07 and 1.0 for CCRCGACQ and SAPP respectively. These values showed that the instruments were reliable.

In order to ensure higher response rates, the corrected questionnaires were distributed with the assistance of ten research assistants from the sampled universities. Effective distribution of the questionnaires was also aided by cooperation of colleagues and friends in the sampled universities. Their presence in the sampled universities aided respondents' cooperation. The respondents were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. These contributed to high return rate of 92%.

Data collected for this study was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The research questions one and two were answered using percentage while Pearson moment correlation coefficient statistic was used to answer research question three in order to determine the relationship between the variables. The P-value was compared to the significant level (0.5) to determine the rejection or the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Results

Research Question One: What is the nature of the corporate culture in universities in south west geo-political zone, Nigeria?

Table 2: Nature of the Corporate Culture in Universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria

SN	Items	High Extent	%	Low Extent	%
1	Flexibility of Leader	999	73.4	362	26.6
2	Instilling Discipline in Staff	743	54.6	618	45.4
3	Staff Involvement in Decision-Making Process	1002	73.6	359	26.4
4	Rigidity of Structure	1200	88.2	161	11.8
5	Staff Support	805	59.1	556	40.9
6	Strict Adherence to Job Descriptions (Role)	801	58.9	560	41.1
7	Research Collaborations Among Departmental Staff	1290	94.8	71	5.2
8	Collective Effort Toward Achieving Individual Objectives	681	50	680	50
9	Free Information Flow	853	62.7	508	37.3
	Percentage Average (%)		68.8		31.2

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 2 shows that 68.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that corporate culture in universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria is highly characterized by flexibility of leaders, instilling discipline in staff, involvement of staff in decision-making, rigidity of structure, staff support, strict adherence to job description, research collaborations among departmental staff, collective effort towards achieving individual objectives, and free information flow among staff while 31.2 % were of the opinion that these characteristics occurred to a low extent. Since large percentage (68.8%) of the respondents are of the opinion that these characteristics occurred to a high extent, it is therefore deduced that what constitute the culture of universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria are: flexibility of leaders, instilling discipline in staff, involvement of staff in decision-making, rigidity of structure, staff support, strict adherence to job description, research collaborations among departmental staff, collective effort towards achieving individual objectives, free information flow among staff.

Research Question Two: what is the level of university goals in South west geo-political zone?

Table 3: University Goal Achievement in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria

SN	Years	Number of Graduates According to Class of Degree Under Study				
		1st Class	2nd Class	2nd Class	3rd Class	Pass

			Upper	Lower		
1	2008-2009	347	5032	15,936	1100	50
2	2009-2010	298	4699	16,464	1302	72
3	2010-2011	303	7820	17,107	930	100
4	2011-2012	101	3110	14,157	1529	89
5	2012-2013	73	2320	13,143	2091	132
Total		1122	22,981	65,107	6942	443

Source: Graduation brochure of five federal universities from 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 academic sessions.

Table 3 shows that 1122 (1.2%) students graduated with first class, 22,981 (23.8%) students graduated with second class (upper division), 65,107 (67.4%), 6,942 (7.15%) students graduated with third class while 443 (0.45%) graduated with pass between 2008-2009 to 2012-2013 academic session in the five federal universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria. It therefore showed that the universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria to a great extent achieved the goals for which they set out to achieve.

The federal universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria produced 96,595 graduates during the five years of this study. Moreover, 92.4% of the students graduated with second class (lower division) and above while 7.6% graduated with third class and below. Thus, the universities produced more average and higher leveled students (92.4%). This further showed that the universities achieved their goals to a high extent.

Research question three: what is the relationship between corporate culture and universities goal achievement in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria?

Table 4: Result of Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of Corporate Culture and University Goals Achievement

Variable	N	X	SD	Coeff.	P-Value
Corporate Culture	1361	32.3	2.88	0.64	0.00
University Goal Achievement	96,595	198.3	9.2		

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

As seen in Table 4, corporate culture are said to be significantly related to university goals achievement ($r = .64, p < .01$). The correlation coefficient between corporate culture and university goals achievement is .64 which according to Cohen (1988) are adjudge to be high. This suggesting that a favourable organizational culture will bring about university goals achievement. As the r value is .64, r^2 value = .41 suggesting that 41% variation in university goals achievement is explained

by the university corporate culture in Universities in South-west geo-political Zone, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Answering research question one revealed that the nature of corporate culture in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria involves flexibility of leaders, instilling discipline in staff, involvement of staff in decision making, rigidity of structure, staff support, strict adherence to job description, research collaborations among departmental staff, collective effort towards achieving individual objectives, free information flow among staff. This findings conforms to the observation of Adedoyin (2006) that the manifestations of culture include artifacts, the tangible aspects of an organization that people hear, see, or feel; management style, the way in which managers behave and exercise leadership and authority; organizational behavior, the way in which people act and interact in the organization, the structure of the organization, the process and systems used in the organization; and, organizational climate, the working atmosphere of the organization. Furthermore, these characteristics showed that university culture in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria combines collegial and bureaucratic corporate culture. Adedoyin, (2006) defined collegial corporate culture as a corporate culture that lays emphasis more on common values and goals, participation, consensus, connections, family atmosphere, flexibility rather than rigidity, encourages creativity and individual contribution. Bureaucratic corporate culture on the other hand is a corporate culture that lays emphasis on strict adherence to rules and regulations, hierarchy of authority, rigid structures, job descriptions (role). No room for creativity or employee's contribution (Adedoyin, 2006).

The answer to research question two was that university goal achievement is at the high level in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria. This because a higher percentage of students in the universities in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria graduated with second class lower division and above compared to a lower percentage that graduated with third class and below. This finding supports the observation of Akinnaso (2011), that in subject areas of mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, pharmacy, medicine, engineering, Nigerian university graduates compete favorably with other counterparts in other countries and that this is evident in the ability of the Nigerian Post-Graduate students in other countries to compete favorably with their colleagues.

The result of the analysis for research question three revealed that there is significant relationship between corporate culture and university goal achievement in the southwest geo political zone of Nigeria. This finding conforms to Pinho, et. al. (2013) and the observation of Kandula (2006) which stated that the key to good performance is a strong culture. Kandula further maintains that due to difference in corporate culture, same strategies do not yield same results for two organizations

in the same industry and in the same location. Magee (2002) also contends that without considering the impact of corporate culture on organization, organization could be counterproductive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that in order to enhance graduate output in the university system, organizational culture in terms of flexibility of leaders, involvement of staff in decision making, strict adherence to job description should be encouraged by university leaders. In addition, supporting environment which includes collaboration among staffs, free flow of information among staff, staff support and training as well as staff discipline should be enhanced among staff to improve their productivity which will directly enhance graduate output. Since social support (co-worker and supervisory support) within the organization also plays an important role towards university goal achievement, it is therefore crucial to implement certain policies that would ensure safe, friendly, trustworthy and supportive working environment in the universities. Specifically, staff who perceive their workplaces to be more dynamic and entrepreneurial have a greater sense of satisfaction in their roles and give their best toward achieving goals of the organization. In many cases there may be difference between the corporate culture and the culture preferred by its employees. This could lead to decrease in job performance (which invariably decrease university goals achievement) and increase job dissatisfaction and job burnout.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that organizational culture affects graduate output. Corporate culture has serious influence on university goal achievement and everyday life within and outside the university system. In addition, university goal achievement is not only influenced, but also predicted by employees' perceptions of corporate culture, especially leadership and social support. There is need to put in place a corporate culture that is encompassing so as to achieve university goals to the optimum level.

This study like any other organizational study has limitations that future study can examine. For instance, other approaches of measuring university goals and achievement of graduate output can be considered in future studies. Furthermore, this study revealed that 41% variation in university goals achievement using the graduation rate is explained by organizational culture while 51% are explained by variables not captured in this study. It is therefore suggested that future study should examine other factors that influence university goals achievement.

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