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Strategic Management And Operational Efficiency In Land Surveying Firms, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This article explores the relationship between strategic management practices and operational efficiency in land surveying firms operating within Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Using a survey research design, data were collected from 248 respondents across 20 registered land surveying firms. The study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, including Spearman's Rank Correlation, to test hypotheses relating to goal setting, environmental scanning, strategy formulation, and implementation. Findings revealed that strategic management practices significantly influence operational efficiency, service quality, and corporate performance. The study recommends the institutionalization of strategic planning, adoption of digital technologies, and investment in professional capacity-building to enhance operational outcomes and sustainability within the sector. These findings reinforce the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm by emphasizing the role of internal capabilities in achieving competitive advantage.*

Keywords: Strategic management, operational efficiency, land surveying firms, corporate performance, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Strategic management has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success, especially within dynamic and technologically evolving industries. It entails the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of cross-functional decisions that enable organizations to achieve long-term goals (David & David, 2021). Within the professional service sector, particularly the land surveying industry, strategic management practices are instrumental in navigating environmental uncertainty, technological disruptions, and regulatory complexities.

In Port Harcourt, Rivers State, land surveying firms operate within an urban environment characterized by rapid infrastructural expansion, environmental challenges, and complex land tenure systems (Amadi et al., 2023). Despite the sector's crucial role in urban planning, infrastructure development, and environmental management, many firms suffer from inefficiencies arising from inadequate strategic management, obsolete technology, and limited human capital development (Okeke, 2018).

This study, therefore, examines the relationship between strategic management and operational efficiency in land surveying firms, emphasizing how structured managerial practices can enhance corporate performance and sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Management

Strategic management is the art and science of aligning an organization's internal strengths with external opportunities through structured decision-making (Pearce & Robinson, 2013). It encompasses stages of environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Wheelen & Hunger, 2020).

In the context of Nigerian land surveying firms, strategic management extends beyond technical precision to include strategic foresight, innovation, and resource optimization. Many firms, however, operate reactively rather than proactively, limiting their ability to capitalize on emerging technological trends such as UAV mapping and LiDAR applications (Oloyede & Akinlabi, 2021).

2.2 Operational Efficiency in Professional Service Firms

Operational efficiency refers to the ability of firms to deliver quality services using optimal resources and minimal waste (Okoro & Ekwueme, 2020). In land surveying, it involves timely project completion, data accuracy, and cost-effectiveness. Efficient firms exhibit strong process coordination, modern technology adoption, and a motivated workforce (Quadri, 2022).

2.3 Strategic Management and Corporate Performance

Empirical evidence across multiple industries demonstrates a positive link between strategic management and organizational performance (Hadi et al., 2020; Kundu et al., 2021). Specifically, in the professional technical services industry, strategic planning enhances competitiveness by aligning resources with environmental demands. However, limited empirical studies have focused on the land surveying profession, especially in developing contexts such as Nigeria.

2.4 Environmental Challenges in Port Harcourt's Surveying Industry

Surveying firms in Port Harcourt face challenges including:

Technological obsolescence and limited access to modern tools such as GNSS and LiDAR (Akinyemi & Oluwafemi, 2020).

Complex land tenure systems and bureaucratic bottlenecks under the Land Use Act (Adeniyi, 2022).

Infiltration of unlicensed practitioners undermining professional credibility (NIS, 2022).

Security threats, high operational costs, and inconsistent regulatory standards (Ebeku, 2020).

These challenges highlight the importance of strategic adaptability and structured management processes.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on three key theories:

2.5.1: Resource-Based View (RBV): Proposes that a firm's internal resources; skills, technology, and organizational capabilities are vital for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney, 2020).

2.5.2: Dynamic Capabilities Theory: Emphasizes the ability of firms to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2018).

2.5.3: Balanced Scorecard (BSC): Suggests that strategic performance measurement across financial, customer, internal process, and learning dimensions enhances operational effectiveness (Kaplan & Norton, 2004).

These frameworks collectively explain how strategic management processes translate into improved efficiency, adaptability, and performance within the land surveying sector.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised 700 employees across 20 registered land surveying firms in Port Harcourt. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table and Bowley's (1964) proportional allocation, a sample of 248 respondents was drawn. Data were collected using structured questionnaires covering key dimensions of strategic management and operational efficiency.

Descriptive statistics were used for demographic profiling, while Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was employed to test hypotheses regarding relationships between strategic management components and operational efficiency indicators.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Key Findings

The analysis revealed significant relationships between strategic management variables and operational performance metrics:

Goal Setting and Operational Effectiveness: Firms with clearly defined goals achieved higher efficiency in project delivery.

Environmental Scanning and Efficiency: Firms that routinely monitored external trends (technological, legal, and economic) adapted better to environmental changes.

Strategy Formulation and Quality: Strategic alignment between resources and market demands improved service quality.

Strategy Implementation and Organizational Structure: A well-structured hierarchy facilitated faster decision-making and operational coordination.

5. Discussion

The results support prior research emphasizing that structured strategic management enhances performance in dynamic environments (Wheelen et al., 2018; Hadi et al., 2020). The findings also affirm the RBV proposition that internal competencies (skills, technology, and leadership) determine competitive advantage. Firms that integrated digital technologies, training, and process standardization demonstrated measurable improvements in service delivery and client satisfaction.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study extends the Resource-Based View (RBV) by illustrating how intangible assets; managerial expertise, organizational learning, and innovative capacity drive operational efficiency in technical service industries.

6.2 Practical Implications

For practitioners, the findings underscore the need to:

i. Institutionalize formal strategic planning and evaluation systems.
ii. Invest in digital transformation (e.g., GNSS, UAVs, GIS).
iii. Strengthen professional development and leadership succession planning.
iv. Enhance collaboration with regulatory bodies to curb unlicensed practice and standardize deliverables.

6.3 Policy Implications

Regulatory agencies such as the Surveyors Council of Nigeria (SURCON) should promote strategic management training among registered firms and establish digital infrastructure that supports efficient data management and submission processes.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that strategic management significantly enhances operational efficiency and corporate performance in land surveying firms in Port Harcourt. Strategic goal-setting, environmental scanning, and effective implementation foster adaptability, productivity, and service quality. For firms to remain competitive in Nigeria's evolving geospatial industry, strategic management must be institutionalized as an organizational culture rather than an occasional exercise.

8. Recommendations

Adopt Comprehensive Strategic Planning: Firms should integrate strategic management as a continuous cycle involving goal formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

Invest in Technology: Adoption of advanced geospatial tools such as LiDAR and UAVs should be prioritized.

Capacity Building: Continuous professional development programs must be institutionalized.

Enhance Regulatory Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships between firms and professional bodies (SURCON, NIS) to promote ethical and efficient practice.

Implement Balanced Scorecard Systems: Firms should measure performance across financial and non-financial dimensions for holistic assessment.

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