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Effect of Strategy Evaluation on Business Performance Study of Union Bank Plc, Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the Effect of Strategy Evaluation on Business Performance, the study of Union Bank Plc, Delta State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to ascertain the effect of strategy evaluation on business performance. The research design method that was adopted for this study was the descriptive research design. The study used a stratified random sampling approach to select 60 employees to participate in the survey. The study adopted a census method because the population size was small and for accuracy. The study found a strong positive relationship exists between strategy evaluation and business performance (r = 0.887, p = 0.004). The coefficient of determination was found to be 25.5% which signified that 25.5% of the variations in the performance can be explained by strategy evaluation while other factors can explain the remaining 74.5%. The regression results established that strategy evaluation is positively and significantly related with business performance (β= .587, t = 1.943, p = .048). The study concluded that Strategy evaluation significantly affects business performance and a unit increase in strategy evaluation while holding all other factors constant increases performance by 0.587 units. The study recommends that, it would be strategic for the bank organization to have strategies that are completely consistent with the organizational overall strategic direction for improved effectiveness. It also calls for re-appraisal of the policies and their alliance to the general business goals. The reinforcement of evaluation enhancing strategies and extending the range of the study considering other organizations within the segment.*

Key words: Strategy Evaluation, Business performance, Customer Satisfaction, Business growth, Increase Profitability.

INTRODUCTION

Some of the key components of strategic management include strategy evaluation. Strategy evaluation is the process where the set plans are analyzed with the result to compare how well the organization has achieved its objectives (Ketchen & Craighead, 2020). The effectiveness of the strategy evaluation can be the starting point of enhancement in performance.

Consequently, strategy evaluation process makes sure that businesses adjust their strategies to any potential environmental changes. It might be argued that a thorough strategy evaluation process informs management of the reasons why the firm's strategic goal was not met (Adudu, Asenge, Zannu, and Sejoro, 2022). Every enterprise must constantly evaluate its strategic decisions to be relevant in a rapidly changing world. This is possible through systematic examination, appraisal, and management of the strategies' implementation because even the best-laid-out and well-executed plans lose their value when the business environment shifts (Dubihlela and Sandada, 2014). Strategic management now frequently includes the requirement for such a re-examination of previous hypotheses and the comparison of actual results with earlier theories. Therefore, for an organization to cope in such a rapidly changing and challenging business environment, strategy is highly an essential tool that no organization can do without. This is why various organizations focus on their strategy to enable them to manage their organizations effectively to avoid strategic problems by all means (Mba, Ogechukwu, Agbaeze, and Imhanrenialena, 2023).

Establishments are undertaking strategy evaluations with the aim of realizing cohesive business that are strategic and operationally proficient. From a hypothetical point of view, strategy evaluation is imperative because organizations operate in a fluctuating environment that needs continuous assessment of the strategies in reaction to changes in the environments. This can help the firm to remain viable and thus perform even in the most stormy business environment. Thus, strategy evaluation is an active procedure needed for better organization performance (Litov, Moreton & Zenger, 2012).
Evaluation of a strategy is the methodical process of identifying the factors that contributed to its success or failure in terms of its objectives, performance standards, and/or other performance indicators (Strydom, 2011). The strategy evaluation process determines the level of strategy implementation and provides early warnings of potential obstacles to the strategy's success by alerting management to inquire about the execution process or the dependability and competency of the leaders (Carpenter and Sanders, 2009**).** According to Johnson and Scholes (2002), the strategy evaluation process illustrates how well businesses respond to new

problems in order to accomplish their strategic goals. In fact, companies should assess their skills and capacities to successfully implement their strategy (Popa, Dobrin and Popescu, 2012).

strategy evaluation safeguards a firm from failure, stops businesses from making poor decisions, and aids them in anticipating issues when the internal and external environment change (Dubihlela and Sandada, 2014). A systematic approach to the process of evaluating a strategy could improve a firm's strategic performance. Financial and non-financial indicators of organizational performance provide data on the extent to which goals and results are attained (Adudu, Asenge, Zannu, and Sejoro, 2022). According to Kathuni and Mugenda (2012), organizations periodically reassess their strategies with the goal of developing an integrated business that is operationally efficient in order to remain competitive and fulfill their aims and objectives.

Organizational performance is one of the goals that drive survival of firms and it is reflected in ability to meet the reputable goals (Stanciu, 2019). Given the ever changing and vigorous business environment that organizations operate in, it is vital that the articulated and implemented strategies are constantly reviewed and observed to track their advancement (Muiruri, 2014). Strategy evaluation is a significant step towards better performance of an organization. Accomplishment in implementation of any strategies in organizations depends on how they are constantly monitored against established standards (Hieu & Nwachukwu, 2019). Strategy evaluation helps organizations to adjust their strategies to any threats of instabilities in the corporate environment. A strong strategy evaluation process mitigates the organization against corporate failure, prevents the organizations from undertaking unrealizable consequences that would results to better performance. As a model, strategy evaluation has received limited focus and attention in the literature of strategic management (Chebet, 2021).

The correlation between strategy evaluation and business performance can be explained through the dynamic capability theory (DCT) and the resource based view (RBV). The DCT argues that firms should constantly renew and reconfigure their competencies including the existing strategies in responses to the turbulence in the business environment (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997).

Hence, for suitable performance, firms should constantly monitor the progress made in implementation of the formulated strategies so that any abnormality from the strategic standards is identified and remedial measures accepted (Teece et al., 1997). The RBV philosophy on the other hand advances that firms leverage on the pool and bundles of both internal and external resources to remain competitive (Wernerfelt, 1984). This means that in order for organizations to gain superior performance, they must effectively leverage the pool of resources and capabilities that are in place (Barney, 1991). Conversely, unlike the argument of DCT, the advocates of the RBV discern that the resources and competences in question are inert.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The method by which management determines whether a given policy has been efficaciously executed and is effective or not is known as strategy evaluation. Basically articulated, evaluating and assessing the strategy implementation procedure and measuring organizational effectiveness constitute strategy evaluation (Kanano and Wanjira, 2021). In this phase of the strategic management process, managers work to ensure that the strategic decision is appropriately carried out and that the organization's objectives are met. In this view, evaluation is an instrument for strategic learning and continues to be essential for developing and putting into practice strategies.

In the works on strategic management, the strategy evaluation process has not gotten much consideration, predominantly in large corporations (Kanano and Wanjira, 2021).

Besides, studies conducted in Nigeria did not take strategy evaluation into consideration as a distinct construct within the strategic management process (Monday, Akinola, Ologbenla and Aladeraji, 2015). The connection between the strategy review process and performance is a distinct construct that may differ depending on the milieu. Hence, by scrutinizing the effect of strategy evaluation on the business performance; study of Union bank Plc, Delta State, Nigeria; this study aims to close the circumstantial gap in the literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Strategy Evaluation

According to Strydom (2011), strategy evaluation and control is a critical apparatus for managers to comprehend motives behind disappointments, accomplishment of specific objectives established, performance standard and any other performance indicator. Administrators at all stages use the resulting information to take curative action and resolve problems, while evaluation is the absolute main element of strategic management, it also can identify flaw in previously executed strategic plans and hence rouse the whole procedure to start over (Hunger & Wheelen, 2011).

Strategy evaluation is a process used to monitor the activities of the firm and performance outcomes to facilitate comparison between actual and desired outcomes (Hieu & Nwachukwu, 2019). It helps in identifying the level of implementation of the formulated

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strategies and provides an early warning on barriers likely to hinder successful strategy implementation (Chebet, 2021). The outcomes from strategy evaluation process are important for undertaking further action in case some problems have been identified after the evaluation likely to have adverse impact on realization of organizational objectives (Hieu & Nwachukwu, 2019). Strategy evaluation determines the effectiveness and efficiency of the comprehensive plans in realization of the planned outcomes. Through strategy evaluation, management in an organization is able to determine the appropriateness of the present strategy in the dynamic environment that organizations exist. There are four key criteria for any successful strategy evaluation process as identified by Kunene (2004) and Johnson and Scholes (2008) which include consistency, suitability, acceptability and feasibility. The goals from a given strategy should always be consistent. A strategy giving inconsistent policies and goals need to be rejected in an organization. At the same time, the strategy needs to be adaptive to key changes and the external surroundings in an organization (consonance) (Hieu & Nwachukwu, 2019). Acceptability requires that competitive edge should be created by an effective strategy. For feasibility, it implies that an organization should have in place competences and resources that help in delivering the strategy in question (Lehmann, 2012). Strategy feasibility is a general test to generate information of whether the strategy has capability to be attempted in the limited resources in the organization (Litov, Moreton & Zenger, 2012). Adaptability is the planned ability of the entity to react effectively after an abrupt variation in business and environmental issues. It is important for organizations to plan for the unforeseen so as to realize the strategic objectives (Muiruri, 2014). These are the four criteria that strategy evaluation should be based on and any identified flaws would lead to rejection of the strategy (Litov, Moreton & Zenger, 2012).

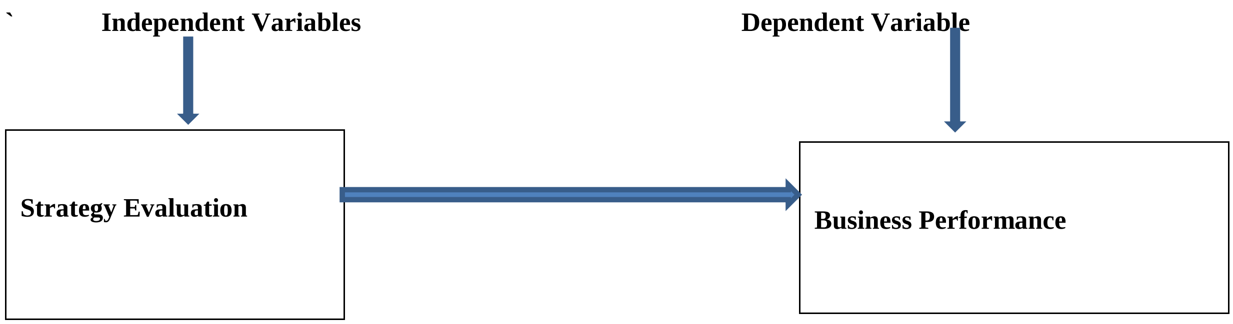
The Role of Strategy Evaluation on Business Performance of Union Bank Plc

Strategy evaluation had positive role towards business performance of Union Bank by guiding the board in its decision making on the strategic direction and intent of the organization. This finding is supported by Chebet (2021) who observed that a strong strategy evaluation process cushions the organization against corporate failure, prevents the organizations from undertaking unviable decisions that would results to better performance. These findings are also supported by the dynamic capability theory whose argument is that constant renewal and realignment of the strategies, competencies and capabilities allow the firm to meet the changing forces in Strategy evaluation contributing towards an improvement in performance measurement and helped in determination of the correction course of action to ensure strategies are kept on track besides facilitating assessment of the level of performance relative to the formulated and established goals. These findings are consistent with Hieu and Nwachukwu (2019) who noted that the critical action in strategy evaluation is determination of whether the execution of the formulated strategies contributes towards realization of the objectives of the organization. Hieu and Nwachukwu (2019) further argued that the outcomes from strategy evaluation process are significant for undertaking further action in case some problems have been identified after the evaluation likely to have adverse effect on realization of administrative goals.

Strategy Evaluation and Business Performance

Evaluation serves as a tool for strategic learning and continues to be employed in the creation and execution of strategies (Strydom, 2011).

Conceptual frame work



Source: Researcher conceptual model 2026.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Eren, and Birinci (2013) in the present study strategic management practices of the universities in Turkey were investigated and the effects of these practices on the performance of the universities were analyzed. The research investigated whether strategic management processes were implemented in universities in Turkey or to what extent they were implemented and the effects of these processes on the performance of the universities tested by means of a model which was developed. Concrete suggestions were made depending on the results. The study found a positive correlation between strategy evaluation and an organization’s performance. They concluded that after strategies are developed and fully implemented, monitoring and evaluation should be carried out to ensure they function properly.

Issack and Muathe (2017) in their study of strategic management practices on performance of public health institutions in Mandera County, the study adopted a mixed research design method. Mandera County has a total of Fifty (50) public health institution. The study therefore target one hospital administrators from each of the five (5) Sub-county Hospitals, Two (2) staff from Mandera Referral Hospital (Director of Medical Service and Administrator), nineteen (19) Health Administrators from each Health Centres and twenty five (25) nursing officer in charge of dispensaries thus totaling to Fifty one (51) respondents. The findings revealed that environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and performance of public health institutions in Mandera County are positively and significantly related. Correlation analysis showed that environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation are significantly and positively related to performance of public health institutions in Mandera County. Based on the findings the study concluded that environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation affects performance of public health institutions. The study recommends that public health institutions formulates strategies that can enable them to define their corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, develop strategies and setting policy guidelines.

Owich (2018) focused on listed companies to determine strategic management process effect on performance. Specifically interest was on forming, implementing and evaluating strategy and it examined regulations as a moderator. The study used explanatory research design and targeted 325 senior managers. Findings revealed that strategy evaluation was found to be insignificant. Also regulations failed to moderate the relationship.

Kitonga, Bichanga and Muema (2016), carried out a research with an aim of investigating the relationship between strategic evaluation and organizational performance in not-for-profit organizations. The study was carried out by collecting primary data from the NPOs and other members of top management team (project managers) from the sampled not-for-profit organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The regression analysis results indicated that all the components of strategic evaluation named correlate positively with organizational performance. The results further indicated that strategic decision and human capital correlate significantly with organizational performance while ethical practices and organizational control do not have a significant correlation with organizational performance. Their general conclusion is that strategic evaluation has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance.

Nthini (2013) carried out a research with an aim of investigating the effect of strategic evaluation on performance of commercial and state corporations in Kenya. They used descriptive survey design and collected data using questionnaires. Strategic leadership was divided into several components namely determined corporate strategic direction, effectively managed corporate resource portfolio, emphasized effective organizational culture, emphasized ethical practices and balanced organizational controls. The analysis of strategic evaluation in commercial and financial state corporations showed that, in positive organizational culture core values, symbols and ideologies are shared. Balanced organizational controls showed a positive strong relationship with annual employee turnover. All the components of strategic evaluation correlated highly with customer satisfaction, return on investment, net profit margin and low annual employee turnover.

Using quantitative research design, Koskei, Katwalo and Asienga (2013) conducted a research with an intention of investigating the influence of strategic evaluation on organizational performance of research institutions in Kenya. In the research methodology they used stratified random sampling technique. The results from regression analysis indicated that strategic leadership capability was positively and significantly related to research institution’s performance.

Wanjiru (2016) investigated how strategic management techniques affect business performance. The findings demonstrated that strategy evaluation significantly affects the effectiveness of Sarova town hotels. Similar to this, Maroa and Muturi (2015) looked into the relationship between Kenyan flower companies' performance and their strategic management approaches. Most floricultural businesses assessed their strategies, and this evaluation had a big impact on how well those businesses performed. The strategy evaluation step of the strategic planning process has a strong and favorable link with firm performance, according to Kumar (2015)'s findings via correlation analysis.

Abdalla (2015) examined the effect of strategy evaluation on the organizational performance of Centre Star Company. The study population consisted of the 200 employees of Centre Star Company (CSC). A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 60 employees of the organization to participate in the study. The study found four ways to improve the organization's performance through strategy evaluation. The study findings also show that CSC has a well-established culture of strategy review.

For strategy assessment, there is a common desire; set procedures for strategy evaluation; a purposeful effort to gather information on strategy performance; established duties for evaluation performance; and regularly informed demand for the outcomes of the information.

Business Performance

Performance as a multilayered term aims to produce results linked to any business's strategic goals and objectives (Ali, Elmi & Mohamed, 2013). Business performance is also described by Khan and Adnan (2014) as the actual inputs or outcomes of an organization as measured in relation to its envisioned goals, objectives, and outputs. They continued by unfolding it as a course by which organizations increase their efficacy and members' well-being through thoughtful actions.

Performance is refers to the act or course of carrying out or accomplishing an action, chore, or function. Performance comprises both a developmental and outcome phase. It is a multi-dimensional and dynamic concept. Daft (2010) identified organizational performance as the capacity of the organization to accomplish its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective way. An effective performance management provides valuable information to a decision make about present condition of performance and the deviation from the objectives (Santos, 2012). This requires the alliance of strategic and operational objectives and the firms set of activities in order to manage performance (Olawale, Salman, Akinroluyo, 2016). Precipitously, performance is the accomplishment of a given task measured against present known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and swiftness. The processes of business performance include the following:

Customer Satisfaction

In the views of Singh, Darwish, and Potočnik, (2016) organizational performance is the outcome of all of the organization's operations and strategies. The basis for developing strategic procedures and measuring an organization's achievement of objectives and goals is performance control systems (Elena-Iuliana and Maria, 2016). Firms that perform well are more likely to remain in business, which can be divided into two categories: financial and business performance (Elena-Iuliana and Maria, 2016). The fundamental of an organization's efficacy is its financial performance. Using accounting-based metrics like ROA (Return on Assets), ROS (Return on Sales), and ROE (Return on Equity), financial success is measured. Market share, performance, diversification, and product development are some of the metrics that are used to measure business performance in the context of the marketplace (Singh, Darwish, and Potočnik, 2016). The key measures of an organization's performance are its internal business processes and its ability to collect timely and accurate information, as well as its high-quality staff and working environment (Jenatabadi, 2015).

Hurduzeu (2015) defines organizational performance as the conversion of inputs into outputs for the purpose of achieving specific goals. Additionally, he stated in his paper that organizational performance sheds light on the connection between economy (minimum and efficient cost) and the overall efficacy of an organization's efficiency. Organizational performance, according to Khan and Adnan (2014), is the capacity of an organization to achieve stated goals for output and profit as well as the development and progress intended by the leader or creator. Organizational performance includes achieving goals or objectives like maximum profit, high-quality products, increasing market share, lucrative financial results, and a successful development and expansion strategy (Musmuliana, 2012).

Organizational performance provides guidance on the actions of the firm towards some critical outcomes. Conventionally, organizational performance has been defined as the ability of the firm to accomplish the established goals (effectiveness) by leveraging the available limited resources (efficiency) (Ondoro, 2015). Hence, a well performing organization is one that realized its goals and objectives on limitations arising from scarce resources in place. Lebans and Euske (2006) defined organizational performance as a set of monetary and non-monetary parameters that provide information on the extent of realization of the results and objectives. It is a measure and comparison of the actual results or outs of the organization against the desired ones (Shafi, Ahmad, Nawab, Bhatti, Shad, Hameed & Shoaib, 2019).
Organizational performance is not just determined on the basis of the financial indicators but also from non-financial information that include individual satisfaction and social performance. In most cases, the capability of the enterprise to respond to opportunities and threats in an effective and efficient manner has an influence on performance (Stanciu, 2019). The key measures of organizational performance that have been widely adopted in literature include customer satisfaction, goal achievement and efficiency. Well performing organizations are able to identify and measure the progress of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against some pre-determined targeted values of the respective proxies (Herciu & Șerban, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

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The descriptive research design was deemed the most appropriate research design to be utilized in the study. The target population was 60 respondents from departmental heads, sectional heads, superintendents and supervisors. The study conducted a census. The study applied purposive sampling since the organizational structure in Union Bank was homogeneous. The research instruments that were used to collect the data included questionnaires. A Likert scale was used to measure respondent's consensus with study variables as outlined on the semi-structured questionnaire. The study adopted a drop-and-pick later method.

Table 1. Study Population

Category	Sample Frame	Total Percentage
Administration	23	11.5%
Logistics	44	22.0%
Operations	76	38.0%
Sales & Marketing	57	28.5%
Total	**200**	**100%**

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study demonstrated that strategy evaluation helps organizations determine their strategic direction because it ensures that their goals are being met, streamlines processes to meet those goals, identifies and corrects strategic directions, and sets shared methods and goals. This is consistent with the findings of Dubihlela and Sandada (2014) that strategy evaluation becomes a crucial instrument and metric in determining the strategic position of the company. It gives management the ability to ensure that the organization is moving in the proper direction and that necessary corrective action is implemented.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

		SE	OP
	Sig.(2-tailed)		
Strategy Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig.(2-tailed)		
Corporate Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.887	1.000
		0.004	
	Sig.(2-tailed)		
	N	**52**	**52**

The correlation matrix in Table 2 indicate there was a strong positive association between strategy evaluation and performance r =0.887, p =0.004. This means that strategy evaluation improves performance of the organization. These findings were in agreement with Issack and Muathe, (2017) who revealed that strategic evaluation influences performance of public health institutions. It's further concluded that strategy evaluation informs the manager's failure in meeting a certain objective and target. In addition, Okwemba and Njuguna (2021) found a strong positive relationship between Strategy evaluation and performance. Univariate Regression Results for Strategic Evaluation and Firm Performance The study sought to determine whether strategy evaluation influences the performance of Union Bank Plc. The researcher used linear regression to establish the relationship between the study variables. The findings are revealed in the Table 3 below:

Table 3. Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.505[a]	.255	.188	.37785
a.Predictor:(Constant),	**Strategic Evaluation**			

The coefficient of determination (r2 = .255) indicated that 25.5% of the variation in organizational performance could be explained by strategy evaluation. Other factors can explain the remaining 74.5%.

Table 4. ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.539	1	.539	3.774	.048[b]
	Residual	7.293	51	.143		
	Total	7.832	52			
a.Dependent Variable:		performance				
b.Predictor:(Constant),		**Strategic Evaluation**				

The results indicated that the regression model influences the study positively. This is because the significance value (p = .048) was less than 0.05. Therefore, strategy evaluation significantly influences performance at Union Bank Plc. The coefficient results is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Coefficient

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.463	1.160		1.261	.233
	Evaluation:	.587	.320	.505	1.943	.048
a.Dependent Variable:		**performance**				

The results of regression analysis established that strategy evaluation is significant at β= .587, t = 1.943, p = .048). An interpretation can be made that at 95% confidence level, strategy evaluation positively influences performance at Union Bank Plc. A unit increase in strategy evaluation while holding all other factors constant increases performance to 0.587. Based on the results, the simple regression model was: Y= 1.463 + 0.587X; Where; Y=Performance; X=Strategy Evaluation.

The findings are consistent with Eren and Birinci (2013) who found a positive correlation between strategy evaluation and organization's performance. They concluded that after strategies are developed and fully implemented, monitoring and evaluation should be carried out to ensure they function properly.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that a unit increase in strategy evaluation while holding all other factors constant increases performance by 0.587 units. In addition, it was concluded that strategy evaluation facilitates organizational direction setting at it ensures compliance to organizational vision and streamline operations to specific objectives or targets. In addition, the strategy evaluation can help in inspiring and motivating employee as it enables employees' measure their performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that it would be strategic for the organization to have strategies that are completely consistent with the organizational overall strategic direction for enhanced performance.

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