
ORGANIZATION DESIGN AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

¹Margaret Ala, ²Amah, Edwinah (PhD), ³Amah, Chinemenum

¹Garden City Premier Business School; ²Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship, University of Port Harcourt; ³Integrated Renewal Program Team, University of British Columbia

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between organisational design and sustainability from a theoretical perspective. The study was based on stakeholder theory. In addition, this study explored extensively the literature on the construct, organisation design and its dimensions (e.g., strategy, structure, process, reward, and people), and organisational sustainability with its measures (e.g., environmental, economic, and social sustainability). The research is based on the concept that traditional organisations are confronted with numerous obstacles in the face of the new global economic setting. These challenges arise from conflicting patterns of globalisation and de-globalization processes. To establish optimal circumstances for organisations to not only endure but thrive, a novel approach has been suggested. This approach centres around formulating and executing strategies for organisational sustainability, moving away from a limited emphasis on economic expansion and profits, and instead embracing concerns of social inclusivity, fairness, and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Organisation Design, Organisational Sustainability, Stakeholder Theory.

1.0 Introduction

To be sustainable, an organisation must take use of economic, environmental, and social opportunities to achieve its goals and increase long-term shareholder value (Sev, 2009). The ecological, economic, technological, and social factors of sustainability are examined using the organisational sustainability framework (Hill & Bowen, 1997). Organisational sustainability has many advantages, such as raising brand awareness and credibility, attracting and retaining top talent, attracting and keeping investors, suppliers, and consumers, increasing productivity, and more. In order to keep an organisation going for the long haul, its employees need to be inspired and committed to working together to create policies and procedures that will help them reach their objectives (Vargas-Hernandez, 2020).

Values of organisational sustainability must be ingrained at all levels of the organization's structure for the workforce to actively participate in the projects as they are carried out. Workforce diversity initiatives help with talent acquisition, training, and retention in order to meet the problems of sustainable economic, social, and environmental viability over an extended period of time. Sustainable business practises are those that are in line with an organization's stated principles and are backed by the management team in charge of developing and implementing that strategy (Vargas-Hernandez, 2020).

When developing plans and practises, as well as capitalising on the vision and leadership of management, for the long-term success of a company, sustainability must be a top priority. Moore and Manring (2009) define organisational sustainability as a competitive approach that improves the capacity to implement lasting change." Organisations adopt various strategies and initiatives to promote environmental sustainability and preserve environmental progress. These include addressing internal factors such as human behaviour and the role of humans (Ones & Dilchert, 2012; Oskamp, 1995), as well as participating in environmental development initiatives that extend beyond the organization's boundaries (Uzzell & Moser, 2009).

Conversely, organisational design refers to the steps taken to alter the composition and responsibilities of an existing organisation. According to Zajac and Shortell (1989, as referenced in Udofot & Akpan, 2017), it's when an organization's strategy is reflected in its structure, processes, rewards, metrics, and talent. According to Kates and Galbraith (2007), organisational design refers to the intentional establishment of an organization's structures, procedures, reward systems, and personnel practices in order to efficiently execute the business plan. Hence, the design should align with the organization's goals.

Individual and collective conduct inside an organisation can be significantly impacted by the design of the organisation itself (Huwins, 2013). The global nature of company increases the importance of carefully considering organisational design. There is a plethora of options available for managers to choose from when it comes to design. During the design phase of a project, management has the ability to establish guidelines for employee and team behaviour in order to effectively accomplish the organization's objectives. Managers decide how the organisation will achieve its objectives through its design.

Numerous research has been conducted on the correlation between organisational structure and performance, but the findings of these studies, as well as the literature on the subject, remain divisive. Some studies found a favourable association between organisational structure and efficiency (Nkuda & Okocha, 2023; Jorry, 2016; Wendy & Wilmar, 2014; Gilbert & Adeyemi, 2016), while others (Eden, 2015; Bernard, 2015) did not. Organisational sustainability (environmental, social, and economic) and the design of organisations

(strategy, structure, process, people, and reward) are theoretical areas in which we hope to make a contribution.

Literature Review

Concept of Organization Design

Today's businesses function in an era where information is crucial to success. Wei Chong, Choy Chong, and Chew Gan (2011); Guidice, Heames, and Wang (2009) all agree that organisational design is becoming increasingly important as businesses seek to gain a competitive edge. Because of its pervasiveness and criticality to businesses everywhere, scholars have dedicated a great deal of time and energy to studying organisation design (see, for example, Angle & Perry (1981), Kim (2001), Nyhan and Lio (1994), and Lo, Ramayah, and Min (2009)).

The purpose of organisational design is to implement procedures that encourage workers to work towards the objectives established by the company's leaders. Decision-making authority is delegated to various employees (creating a hierarchy), employees are compensated and monitored in various ways by their superiors and peers, and many other practises are in place (Okoro, Nebo, & Nwosu, 2017).

Concept of Strategy

A company's strategy is the secret to its prosperity. It guides operations and incorporates the organization's long-term and short-term aims (Kates & Galbraith, 2007). Analysing the external factors such as competitors, suppliers, customers, and emerging technology that impact the company, along with assessing the organization's strengths and weaknesses in relation to these factors, enables the leadership to design a strategy. Based on the work of Kates & Galbraith (2007), Gutterman (2015), and Brian & Joyce (2007), it is clear that the strategy of an organisation is crucial to the design process. A strategy's end goal is to improve one's position relative to the competition. This benefit can be attained by either the application of external forces or the development of superior internal organisational capabilities.

Concept of Structure

The company's organisational structure dictates the specific placement of official power and authority. Organisational units commonly establish a hierarchical structure to enhance management and decision-making processes, considering aspects such as function, product, region, or customer base (McFaden & Lansbury, 2011).

Organisational structure is founded on four pillars, as stated by Ibitayo and Essien (2016). Included in this list are "function," "product," "geography," and "customer." All four types of organisational frameworks can be broken down into its constituent parts: function, product, geography, and consumers.

Concept of Process

Kates and Galbraith (2007) define the term "process" as a series of interconnected acts that enable the movement of data within an organisation. Tasks such as developing a new product, completing a sale, or fulfilling an order are encompassed within this category. Management procedures encompass several activities such as sales planning, forecasting, portfolio management, price setting, standard creation, capacity management, and dispute resolution. Cross-functional processes necessitate cooperation between departments within an enterprise. How successfully units cooperate with one another vertically or laterally is strongly influenced by their design. The development of effective procedures requires the precise definition of responsibilities and obligations. Words like "team," "integrative roles," and "matrix" all came about as a result of some action.

Concept of People

This refers to how an organisation handles its people resources. Selection, staffing, training, and development are all examples of procedures put in place to build the skills and attitudes a business needs to implement its strategy. A proficient management team that effectively utilises the company's competitive advantage is important for the success of a company. It is essential for employees at all levels to have a fundamental set of skills that allow them to collaborate effectively in teams and integrate multiple perspectives into decision-making processes (Akpan & Nsien, 2017).

Kates and Galbraith (2007) suggest that the organisation should prioritise the development of specific competencies. These include the capacity to analyse issues comprehensively and from various functional and cultural viewpoints, the ability to negotiate and exert influence without relying on formal authority or positional power, the skill to establish relationships and networks and effectively navigate informal channels, the aptitude to advocate and collaborate without resorting to intimidation or compromising, and the capability to distribute decision-making authority and resources in order to maximise their impact. Others are able to adapt to new circumstances, handle disagreements, keep projects on track, and make judgements in the face of uncertainty.

Concept of Reward

Motivating employees to work towards common goals is much easier when they are rewarded for doing so. This is because a company's internal compensation system is much more effective at conveying the company's ideals than any set of guidelines could ever be. Salary, bonuses, stock, recognition, and perks are only some of the ways in which the incentive system encourages and reinforces the actions that contribute to the success of the firm.

According to Thierry (2016), an incentive is more likely to be well received if it is constructed on principles of openness, equity, and manageability. Each of these characteristics is connected to the others.

Concept of Organizational Sustainability

Sustainability in the workplace involves integrating sustainable development principles, including social equality, economic efficiency, and environmental awareness, into the day-to-day operations of organisations (Varsei et al., 2014). Therefore, in the manufacturing sector, sustainability refers to the core of eco-friendly products or services rather than the specific means by which they are achieved. Manufacturing companies may have different sustainability standards than service businesses. According to Shrivastava (1995), modern environmental issues are a continuation of prior, unsustainable industrial activity. As a result of effective trade agreements that prioritise the quantity of resources over the sustainability of the planet (Daly, 2005; Meadows et al., 2004), the global capitalist powers that have embraced the intensity of global economic activity, which has led to continuous and rising economic growth.

This indicates a potential shortage problem for companies that impact and actively influence their business activities, particularly economic activities, beyond the limitations imposed by environmental resource constraints. There is still an ecological or environmental crisis, and it affects every facet of business, from the economic to the political to the cultural to the intellectual (Mebratu, 1998; O'Connor, 2002). Incorporating discussions and proposed solutions for long-term growth and sustainability into business plans is thus essential (Husted, 2005; Vachon, 2010; Germanovich et al., 2020; Borim-de-Souza et al., 2015).

Concept of Environmental Sustainability

According to the work of Lam and Lai (2015), "environmental sustainability" refers to "the integration of multiple organisational competencies or the overall performance of an organisation to lower the carbon footprint of its products." Energy resources are being tracked alongside the effects of pollution on air, water, soil, and minerals (GRI, 2002). The company's impact on air quality in the area is tracked to ensure enough supplies of clean air. Clean and safe drinking water is dependent on the management of water consumption and water pollution. The negative effects on soil quality and biodiversity from both direct and indirect pressures on land resources are controllable. Contaminants in the soil are critical to resolving the issue of resource depletion in order to achieve environmental sustainability. The impact of a corporation on renewable energy sources, as well as on fossil fuels, is something that regulators keep an eye on.

Concept of Economic Sustainability

The term "economic sustainability" (Daly, 1996) describes a country's capacity to keep its GDP stable over time (or its capital assets intact). The term "economic growth" is shorthand for a rise in per capita income. A rise in the stock of capital is essential to maintaining economic expansion. Investment quantity, FDI, and macroeconomic policy all have a role in the expansion of the economy. Uncertainty is inherent in economic policymaking because the proposed strategy may or may not provide the desired outcomes (Baker et al., 2016). The sustainability paradigm must take into account the unpredictability of economic policy.

Concept of Social Sustainability

The pressure from stakeholders whose concerns span environmental to social issues has led to an increase in the focus of modern businesses on the social aspects of sustainable development (Yawar & Seuring, 2017). Human resource issues, both internal and external, can be addressed by implementing elements of social sustainability. Internal human resources encompass several aspects such as employment stability, acceptable accommodations, health and safety programmes, and skill development possibilities (Ahmadi et al., 2017). We focus on the influence on job prospects within the organisation.

Employment policies take into account issues of human rights, fair treatment of employees, and gender equality. Methods used in health and safety to detect hazards and treat injuries are assessed. Research and development, as well as training and education for staff, are at the heart of capacity building. The external population establishes connections between human capital, productive capital, and social capital. Human capital encompasses work skills and revenue creation, whereas productive capital includes specific resources, infrastructure, the requirements of persons seeking happiness in life, and the impact of organisational actions on social capital.

Theoretical framework

Stakeholder Theory

According to stakeholder theory (Freeman & Reed, 1983), stakeholders possess the ability to exert influence and affect the functioning of a company. Businesses rely on input from stakeholders to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public and influence policy (Sarkis et al., 2010). Companies are compelled to accommodate the demands of their stakeholders (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Companies may expand, remain competitive, and earn their communities' approval by developing abilities that set them apart. Workers, service providers, communities, creditors, and other affected parties are all included in the scope of the stakeholder's principle (Lin & Tom, 2018). Ethics and management concepts like

corporate social responsibility, free market capitalism, and social contracts are explored. A well-known variant of stakeholder theory, described by Phillips and Roberts (2003), examines managers' interactions with the many groups of people who have an interest in an organisation. Organisations should take into account, communicate with, and respond to the requirements and wants of their stakeholders (Greenley & Foxall, 1998).

Researchers have examined corporate sustainability concerns via the lens of stakeholder theory, which encompasses sustainable supply chain management (Co & Barro, 2009), marketing strategies for sustainability (Laczniak & Murphy, 2012), and sustainability reporting (Horisch et al., 2014). Various authors, such as Gadenne et al. (2012) and Lodhia and Martin (2014), have suggested employing stakeholder analysis as a means of assessing the prospects of corporate sustainability (Grewatsch & Kleindienst, 2017). Writings by Carvalho (2013) and Silva et al. (2019), among others, argue that stakeholders' goals and interests must be taken into account while evaluating sustainability progress.

Organisational design and long-term viability can both benefit from the insights provided by stakeholder theory. Better decisions, higher performance, and more sustainable practises can result when organisations take into account the requirements of all stakeholders.

Empirical Review

Nkuda and Okocha (2023) looked at the sustainability of SMEs in Nigeria from the standpoint of organisational design contingencies and strategic entrepreneurship. The researchers used a cross-sectional online survey with a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire to compile their findings. Purposive sampling was used to choose 273 SMEs from the whole population. We analysed the survey data using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method and evaluated the hypotheses using the software application Smart PLS 4.0. The findings indicated a strong and statistically significant correlation between strategic entrepreneurship factors (namely, exploration, invention, and exploitation) and aspects of organisational design variables (namely, organisational size, technology, and strategy). Organisational sustainability has a notable effect on the relationship between uncertainty in organisational design and strategic entrepreneurship. The findings of this study demonstrate a strong and meaningful correlation between the organisational structure and the strategic entrepreneurship of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

The Nigerian building business was the focus of an investigation by Udofot and Akpan (2017). Using a modified version of a questionnaire developed for a previous study, data were collected from 181 participants. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and the hypotheses were put to the test using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient analysis. Correlation coefficients (r) for strategy, structure, process, rewards, and people are 0.623, 0.559, 0.528, 0.601, and 0.614, respectively. The findings indicate a strong positive correlation between the five aspects of organisational design examined and organisational success. The results of our study indicate a strong and positive relationship between the structure of an organisation and its performance.

Akpan and Nsien (2017) examined the performance of organisations in the construction industry of Nigeria. The study utilised a survey research approach, distributing copies of the questionnaire to 341 persons for them to complete. Organisational design proxies were derived from the "Star Model" proposed by Kates and Galbraith. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and the hypotheses were put to the test using basic linear regression. The study findings indicate a robust and positive association between the five criteria examined and organisational efficiency.

The effects of organisational design on industrial workers' productivity were examined by Okoro, Nebo, and Nwosu (2017). We used a cross-sectional survey research design, and four different businesses in Enugu were chosen to participate. Some examples of these businesses may be found in the city of Enugu, such as the Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Innoson Nigeria Ltd., PZ Industries Plc, and Nigerian Breweries Plc. The research team relied heavily on interviews and questionnaires to collect their data. Tables with analyses of the data were supplied, with values shown as percentages. The statistical methods utilised to assess the hypotheses were the Z-test and the Chi-square test. The results show that in Nigeria's manufacturing sector, a strong correlation exists between organisational design and worker productivity. Manufacturing worker productivity is significantly correlated with organisational design and job structure. Organisational design that prioritises the development of its workforce has been shown to boost both productivity and revenue.

Conclusion and Implications

Businesses aiming to address sustainability difficulties could utilise sustainability value as a durable competitive advantage by hiring, instructing, and preparing personnel to attain sustainability performance goals. In order to effectively achieve sustainability, organisational strategies must include the present and future economic, social, and environmental requirements of all stakeholders concerned.

Organisations that can adapt to rising levels of competition and shifting consumer expectations are those that examine structural and cause-and-effect links at the industry, organisation, and job levels. In particular, labour is not done in isolation but rather by companies that are embedded in a market or the global economy. The most effective businesses today are those who have found a way to marry a versatile organisational solution with a versatile approach to work design. Therefore, sustainable organisational design greatly affects productivity. The following suggestions were given in light of the study results:

1. Companies that want to thrive in today's dynamic business climate should adopt a design that allows them to adapt quickly to new circumstances, particularly in the face of increased competition.
2. Organisational success depends on high levels of both design and performance, both of which must take the culture of the society into account.
3. Employees should be put to their full potential in the workplace, according to the study's recommendations; nevertheless, companies should take care not to overburden their workers.
4. Additionally, it suggests that firms regularly rotate employees between different positions and explore granting workers more autonomy and decision-making authority over their work.
5. Finally, managers and senior staff should undergo consistent training to equip them with the skills necessary to be proactive and responsive in today's ever-changing workplace.

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