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Strategy, Structure, and Organizational Culture in Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC)

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between strategy, structure, and organizational culture within the Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC) and how these elements influence operational efficiency. The research employs a cross-sectional survey design to gather data from 176 employees across various departments within TSTC. Structured questionnaires were used to evaluate the alignment between the organization's strategic goals, structural frameworks, and prevailing cultural values. The analysis revealed significant positive correlations between strategy and organizational culture ($r = 0.512, p < 0.05$), and between organizational structure and operational efficiency ($r = 0.476, p < 0.05$). These concluded that a well-defined

strategy and a flexible organizational structure contribute to a strong, supportive culture, which in turn enhances operational performance. The study recommends that TSTC to always ensure that its strategic directions are effectively communicated throughout the organization. This can be done through strategic planning and management reviews and cultural touch point programs that target the employees. Appreciable feedbacks, training sessions, workshops should be integrated to ensure that the culture matches the strategic goals of enhancing transport services. This will improve the organizational culture to support TSTC's overall mission and operation since the strategic goals will be well understood and embraced.

Keywords: Strategy, Structure, Organizational Culture, Operational Efficiency, Public Sector, TSTC

Introduction

In contemporary organizational literature, the strategy-structure- culture triad remains central in defining the performance and flexibility of firms especially in dynamic settings such as the public transport industry. Strategy is understood as the grand tactics to be achieved in an organization while structure provides endorsement for realization of such strategies and may impact parts like roles, information flow, and decision-making. While organizational culture was defined by the system of values, norms, beliefs and practices which determine the ways in which employees of that particular organization behave and perform towards organizational objectives, (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009; De Wit & Meyer, 2020^[9]).

The literature review suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between strategy and structure. The structure can also hamper a well-defined strategy or it can support the implementation of strategies more efficiently (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009). Research has pointed out that decentralised structures are more flexible especially in environments that are constantly evolving, meaning that the organisation can make decisions fast and change them if need arises (De Wit & Meyer, 2020; Mintzberg; 2021)^[9, 16]. For example, in the transport industry, organisations with low levels of organisational hierarchy are more capable of adapting to shifts in demand, customer requirements or even regulatory frameworks hence delivering quality services (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021)^[16].

Another important determinant of strategy implementation is the organizational culture in that it determines how changes are done as well as how structures are supported. A good organizational culture complements strategic activities and improves structural design to support the reinforcement of culture values that drive innovation (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2018; Mintzberg, 2021)^[3, 16]. These three aspects are strategy structure and culture and the understanding of them is relevant for the enhancement of operation and service delivery of the public sector organizations such as Taraba State Transport Corporation TSTC.

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between strategy, structure and culture in determining the performance

of TSTC. Through the analysis of these relationships, the study seeks to establish how TSTC can improve its organizational performance by improving its strategic direction, structure and culture. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. To investigate the relationship between strategy and organizational culture in TSTC.
2. To examine the relationship between organizational structure and organizational culture in TSTC.

Conceptual Review

Strategy

In organizational context, strategy is understood as a course of action or policy aimed at the accomplishment of long-range or ultimate objectives. Many authors have given definitions that capture the complexity of the concept of strategy. Few authors consider strategy as a mere plan giving the fact that strategy is a pattern over a sequence of decisions as described by Mintzberg (1994). In the same way, Chandler (1962)^[5] defines strategy as “the formulation of the general and particular purposes of the enterprise and the employment of the resources needed to attain these purposes.” This definition lays much emphasis on the aspect of intentionality of strategy as well as the resource deployment aspect. According to Porter (1980) in his theory of competitive advantage, strategy is defined as the manner in which organizations align themselves to operate in a market in order to gain competitive advantage. These definitions taken together imply that strategy is the way in which organisations navigate their course to the future, and that both internal strengths and external threats and opportunities are important.

In the case of TSTC, strategy is a crucial component in defining how the organisation aligns its service delivery goals and responds to changes in the transport industry. The match between strategy and culture is crucial for TSTC because a clear strategy promotes the right culture that is customer focused, innovative and operationally efficient. For instance, as TSTC seeks to enhance its service delivery and extend its routes, it needs to have components that influence the behaviour of its employees and organisational culture towards the achievement of these goals (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021)^[16]. When employees embrace the strategic objectives, organizational culture is an enabling factor that leads the organization to its vision and mission (De Wit & Meyer, 2020)^[9].

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure can be defined as the formal arrangement of the tasks and the authority through which people regulate their interactions and utilization of resources in order to attain organizational objectives (Jones, 2013)^[15]. It outlines how jobs are officially partitioned, grouped and their execution coordinated (Robbins & Judge, 2017)^[19]. Some of the scholars have defined structure in the following ways. For example, Mintzberg (1979) identifies five basic parts of an organization's structure: Strategic apex, middle line, operating core, technostructure, and support staff. He then posits that the structural components of an organization have to be in sync with the strategy of the organization in order for the organization to be effective. Daft (2015) defines structure as the organization of departments and functions to implement a company's strategy; he notes that structural configurations – whether tall or lean – must align

with strategy.

In most of the public sector organizations including TSTC, organizational structures are formal and hierarchical with well defined organizational authority and decision making. But they can also lead to lack of flexibility and adaptability, which play an important role when the company has to respond to the changes in the market or its customers (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021, p.119)^[16]. A study has shown that decentralised structures that allow subordinates to make decisions, can enhance the flexibility and adaptability of the organisation and hence the organisational culture (De Wit & Meyer, 2020)^[9]. Therefore, for TSTC, it means that the structure must be sensitive to strategic goals such as the enhancement of service quality to foster organizational culture that is in tandem with the set goals.

Organizational Culture

Organization culture as postulated by Schein (2010)^[20] refers to the system of values, beliefs and attitudes held by the members of an organization regarding the workings of that particular organization. It plays the role of the social cement that binds an organization together by giving the employees an organizational personality. Cameron and Quinn (2011)^[7] define culture as a collection of key values, assumptions, understanding and beliefs that are inherent in an organization. These values and norms dictate the actions of people, their communication and their attitude towards opportunities and risks within an organisation.

To TSTC, organizational culture is important because it defines how employees view their responsibilities in the realization of the strategic plan of the company. Organizational culture such as a focus on customer satisfaction, and teamwork go hand in hand because when an organization imbues its employees with certain values and attitudes to life, work and job, people will be encouraged to perform in order to deliver quality services as demanded by the ever changing customer needs. Kotter and Heskett (1992) have established that organizational culture is a critical success factor because it defines how people in an organization will address new opportunities and threats. In a transport company such as TSTC where customer satisfaction is one of the core goals, adopting a culture that supports efficiency, responsibility and customer oriented approach will go along way in improving service delivery.

Strategic Management: Strategy, Structure and Culture

Strategy, structure and culture are not independent of each other and they have a symbiotic connection. Strategy defines the overall objectives of an organization while structure gives the framework within which the objectives will be implemented. Culture on the other hand determines how employees in the organization carry out activities in order to achieve these goals (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021)^[16]. Chandler (1962)^[5] made a significant assertion that strategy determines structure, in other words, structure must be aligned to support the strategy. However, culture can also be a powerful force in influencing both strategy and structure because it determines how employees will act and how they will view organizational objectives.

This paper has shown that strategy, structure, and culture are critical to the achievement of TSTC's operational objectives. If the strategy deals with the issue of enhancing the standards of service delivery and increasing the transport networks in the organization, then the structure is best

placed to provide for these goals in terms of facilitating decision making and resource mobilization. However, the culture must convey notions like accountability, teamwork, and customer-centricity, to encourage workers to meet organizational strategic visions (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021)^[16]. When these elements are out of sync, then there is likely to be a lot of waste, lack of good communication, and in the end, the organization's strategic goals will not be met (De Wit & Meyer, 2020)^[9]. Therefore, in order to enhance the organizational performance of TSTC and meet the needs of the public, the three elements of strategy, structure, and culture should be well matched.

Theoretical Framework

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory coming from scholars Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argue that there is not a way to perfectly organize a corporation, manage a company or make decisions. However, the best strategy that can be followed is contingent on the internal and external environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Galbraith, 2012). This theory presupposes that organizational goal is attained when there is fit between the organizational design, the strategic plan and the context within which the organisation operates. In layman terms, an organization structure and strategy should depend on factors like the organization industry, the organization's objectives, and the external environment (Mintzberg, 2021)^[16].

In the case of TSTC, this theory implies that the structure and culture of the organization depend on the extent to which they support the organization's strategy for providing transport services in Taraba State. This is the case since if the structure of TSTC is too rigid then it will be difficult for the institution to implement strategies that are meant to enhance service delivery. On the other hand, a flexible structure may enhance the development of novel strategies of public transport, thus enhancing the general organisational performance (Vassolo *et al.*, 2024)^[21].

Contingency theory holds that the relationship between strategy and structure is important. Chandler (1962)^[5] made a statement that strategy determines structure, that is, the structure of an organisation should be in harmony with its strategy. For TSTC, this would mean that if the strategy focuses on the development of new transport links and customer satisfaction, the structure has to allow for fast decision making and resource allocation. If the structure is not consistent with the strategy, there are high chances that TSTC will not meet the strategic objectives (Goold & Campbell, 2022)^[14]. Research in high-tech and service industries reveals that firms with structures that are consistent with their strategies reap better results (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021^[16]; Burgelman, 1985).

Contingency theory also acknowledges the fact that organizational culture determines the effectiveness of the structure in supporting the strategy. For example, a structural system in a public service organization such as TSTC may culminate in an organizational culture that is bureaucratic and hampers decision making. If the strategy requires flexibility and customer-oriented approach to service delivery, then such culture may negatively affect performance. In response to this, there is a need for the development of organizational culture that is compatible with both strategy and structure (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2021)^[16]. Coordination on these elements is important since failure to

do so results in cost, time and quality implications for both employees and customers.

When using Contingency Theory for TSTC, you can explore if the existing organizational environment is suitable for the strategic objectives of service extension and customer satisfaction enhancement. The research could examine how dynamic or bureaucratic the structure is and how the structure enables the organisation to adapt to changes in its environment, for instance, new government regulations or change in customer needs. However, performing assessments of the cultural values existing within TSTC, including efficiency, accountability, or innovation, will determine their congruency with the strategic plan. With the help of Contingency Theory, your study will be able to identify how TSTC can structure and culture itself to support its strategy. This theory provides a good working model because it can be easily adapted to the fast changing nature of public sector organizations such as TSTC that needs to operate in an environment that is constantly changing in terms of regulation and the market. It is this alignment that has potential to improve operational performance and thus deliver sustainable results.

Empirical Review

Dasgupta *et al.* (2021)^[8], investigates how organizational culture impacts strategic alignment and employee motivation in public and private institutions. Methodology: Using a comparative approach, the study collected data through surveys from employees in both public and private institutions. Regression analysis was employed to analyze the relationship between strategy and culture. Findings: The results indicated a significant positive correlation between a strong organizational culture and effective strategy execution in public institutions. Culture facilitated better alignment between employees' actions and organizational goals, leading to improved performance. Criticism: The study focused on the perspectives of employees only, which limits the understanding of management's role in shaping organizational culture.

Zain-Ul-Abidin *et al.* (2020)^[22], explore the relationship between organizational culture and performance in public-sector firms in Jordan. Methodology: A survey of 400 employees from public-sector organizations was conducted, and data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Findings: The study found that a positive organizational culture, characterized by strong communication and employee involvement, significantly enhanced organizational performance. Criticism: While the findings were insightful, the study was limited to the public sector in Jordan, and the results might not be generalizable to other regions with different cultural and economic contexts.

Dewi & Wibow (2020)^[10], explored the impact of leadership styles and organizational culture on the performance of public employees in Indonesia. Methodology: Using surveys and interviews with 200 public sector employees, the study applied multiple regression analysis to identify the relationship between culture, strategy, and leadership styles. Findings: The study revealed that an adaptive culture, supported by transformational leadership, significantly improved organizational performance by aligning strategy with employee behaviors. Criticism: The research primarily focused on leadership and did not delve deeply into the structural aspects that support or hinder cultural development.

Oberföll *et al.* (2021) ^[18], investigate the impact of organizational culture on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and performance in public and private firms. Methodology: The study analyzed data from 300 managers across multiple public and private organizations using regression analysis. Findings: A strong organizational culture was found to be a predictor of higher engagement in CSR activities, which in turn enhanced organizational performance, particularly in public sector entities. Criticism: The study mainly focused on CSR and its link to culture but did not explore how other aspects of organizational structure interact with strategy and culture.

Engidaw (2021) ^[11], examined the effect of organizational culture on employee motivation and engagement in public sector organizations in Ethiopia. Methodology: Using a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, data were collected from 250 public sector employees and analyzed using factor analysis. Findings: The results showed that a culture fostering open communication and collaboration improved employee engagement and alignment with the organization's strategic goals. Criticism: The study's limited focus on employee perspectives without considering the role of external factors like policy changes weakened its broader applicability.

Garcia *et al.* (2023) ^[13] aimed to understand the influence of organizational climate on job performance in both public and private companies. Methodology: A mixed-method approach was used, collecting data through surveys and interviews with employees and managers from 15 public institutions. Findings: The study revealed that a positive organizational climate, characterized by a supportive culture and clear communication, significantly contributed to the achievement of strategic objectives. Criticism: The research was conducted across both public and private sectors, which may dilute the findings relevant specifically to the public sector.

Methodology

The following sub-sections describe the research method used in the study on Relationship Between Strategy, Structure, and Organizational Culture in Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC). The methodology outlines the research method, data collection process, sampling procedures and data analysis method applied in investigating these variables in TSTC. The study applied cross-sectional survey design as recommended by Bhattacharjee (2012) ^[4]. This method enables the researcher to evaluate the current status of strategy, structure and culture at a given time. It was chosen because it allows for the assessment of perceptions, beliefs and practices within a specific population through the use of standardized questionnaires. The cross-sectional approach is most valuable when the researcher is interested in establishing relationships between variables and in gaining preliminary ideas about organizational behavior (Cooper & Schindler, 2003) ^[6].

The study was done within the Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC), operating in Taraba State. The target population consisted of all employees in TSTC which was 200 staffs from management, operation, logistics, and customer service departments. Census was used in the study of the population since the population size was relatively small and comprised of all employees. Census sampling was used in order to obtain a broad picture of the organizational climate, which would give a more accurate view of the

entire workforce. The primary data were administered through structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were developed to capture the linkage between strategy, structure and culture of the organization with special reference to its operational efficiency. The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

1. **Demographics:** Details of the participants' age, gender and the position they hold in the organization.
2. **Strategy:** Measures of the extent that organizational goals and objectives are matched to operational implementation.
3. **Structure:** Questions that can be asked in relation to the structure of the organization as being centralized or decentralized.
4. **Organizational Culture:** Articles that look at the culture of TSTC in terms of the beliefs, practices and expectations that are accepted among the people.

Participants were requested to indicate their level of consensus with different statements on a Likert type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). This rating scale enabled the quantitative assessment of the respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy, structure and culture nexus.

Reliability of the data collection instruments was established through a pilot study. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the completed questionnaire. The results showed acceptable reliability; Cronbach's alpha values for strategy was 0.76, structure 0.73, and organizational culture 0.75, which is higher than the recommended value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) ^[17]. This made it possible to have reliable instruments for the measurement of the constructs of interest.

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation to test the hypotheses relating to the interdependence of strategy, structure and culture. This statistical tool was chosen because it is useful in identifying the coefficients and directions of the relationships between two or more interval/ratio scales data (Field, 2018) ^[12]. The analysis sought to find out if there was a relationship between the strategy and structure independent variables and the organizational culture dependent variable at TSTC.

Analysis

This paper presents the demographic profile of the respondents in the study carried out among the staff of the Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC). Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 88% were returned with a total of 176 usable responses. The gender distribution reveals a majority of male respondents, 60%, and female respondents, 40%. This in some way reveals certain gender imbalance in TSTC's employees. In regard to the age of respondents, 55% of the respondents are aged between 31 and 40 years, which shows that the company has a pool of experienced workers. Moreover, 30 % of the respondents are aged 41-50 years, 15% are below 30 years, which means that the organization has a youthful and experienced workforce.

On the educational qualification, 45% of the respondents have HND or First Degree qualification followed by 35% with ND/NCE qualification. Just 5% of the workforce has postgraduate education, which means that, although a significant number of the working population has a good education, few people have postgraduate education. With regards to length of service, 40% of the respondents served

TSTC for 6-10 years, while 30% served TSTC for 11-15 years. This was seen to be an experienced and stable workforce since many employees have served their organizations for many years.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Combined Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategy	3.550	0.624
Structure	3.425	0.576
Organizational Culture	3.675	0.682

Source: SPSS V23 (2024)

The mean scores of the combined variables show that respondents have the impression that strategy, structure, and culture have a positive effect on the operations of TSTC. The results showed that the participants agreed most on the importance of Organizational Culture ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.68$). The strategy was closely followed with a mean of 3.55 ($SD = 0.62$), which indicated that well-developed strategies were beneficial to performance. This was slightly lower than culture and strategy but still agree that structure plays an important role where the mean was 3.42 ($SD = 0.58$). The mean score for Operational Efficiency was 3.48 ($SD = 0.59$) which shows that respondents had positive attitude towards the construct but the higher SD suggest that there was variation in the perception of the respondents.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis 1

HO1: There is no significant relationship between Strategy and Organizational Culture at TSTC.

Table 2: Correlations

	Strategy	Organizational Culture
Strategy	1	0.512**
Organizational Culture	0.512**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
N	176	176

Source: SPSS V23 (2024)

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The first hypothesis tested the relationship between strategy and organizational culture at TSTC. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.05$) between these variables. This suggests that as the clarity and effectiveness of strategic goals increase, the organizational culture at TSTC becomes stronger and more aligned with those goals. Thus, **Hypothesis 1** is rejected, and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between strategy and organizational culture at TSTC.

Test of Hypothesis 2

HO2: There is no significant relationship between Organizational Structure and organizational culture at TSTC.

Table 3: Correlations

	Structure	Organizational culture
Structure	1	0.476**
Organizational culture	0.476**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
N	176	176

Source: SPSS V23 (2024)

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between organizational structure and Organizational culture. The correlation analysis showed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.476$, $p < 0.05$) between the two variables. This indicates that a well-aligned structure, which promotes clear roles and effective communication, contributes to improved Organizational culture at TSTC. Therefore, **Hypothesis 2** is also rejected, demonstrating a significant relationship between organizational structure and Organizational culture.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings show that strategy and structure has a strong impact on organizational culture in TSTC. Although organizational culture is the most influential factor affecting performance, the match between strategy and structure is also significant. The findings therefore stress the need for the integration of these elements in order to improve service delivery and operations at TSTC. Based on the findings from the analysis of the relationship between strategy, structure, and organizational culture at TSTC, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Since strategy and organizational culture were found to have a strong positive relationship, it is crucial for TSTC to always ensure that its strategic directions are effectively communicated throughout the organization. This can be done through strategic planning and management reviews and cultural touch point programs that target the employees. Appreciable feedbacks, training sessions, workshops should be integrated to ensure that the culture matches the strategic goals of enhancing transport services. This will improve the organizational culture to support TSTC's overall mission and operation since the strategic goals will be well understood and embraced.
2. TSTC should think about the change in organizational structure from the current hierarchical model in order to increase the flexibility and shorten decision-making time especially in customer service and operations. Thus, the implementation of a decentralized structure allows adopting a decisive model for a company's middle management and frontline employees that will increase response rates and meet operative goals. This structural change will also contribute to the development of a more flexible organization that will be able to respond to fluctuations in transport needs and/or consumers' preferences.

Contribution to Knowledge

This research work therefore adds a wealth of knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on the link between strategy, structure and culture in a public sector organization especially the Taraba State Transport Corporation (TSTC). The results offer support for the idea that strategy and structure integration with organizational culture improves operational effectiveness in public organizations. This research builds upon existing knowledge by empirically demonstrating that:

1. The paper also underscores the importance of organizational culture in enhancing the strategic goals of an organization and the importance of culture change to enhance the performance of the public sector.
2. The link between the organizational structure and operational performance supports flexibility as a critical feature of structure since organizations in dynamic

industries such as transportation require fast adaptation to change.

3. The study offers a context-specific understanding of a Nigerian public sector organization and fills the existing research gap that has tended to offer more attention to private sector firms or multinational organizations.

Limitations of the Study

1. **Scope of the Study:** The study was carried out only in TSTC, one of the public transport companies in the country. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be overextended to other sectors or other geographical locations with different organizational structures and strategic goals.
2. **Sample Size:** However, the number of respondents (176) obtained by using census sampling might pose a limitation to the generalisability of the study findings particularly in large and complex organisations.
3. **Cross-sectional Design:** The cross-sectional study design used in the present research limits the understanding of the relationships to a specific time frame. A longitudinal research design would yield additional insight into how dynamic configuration of strategy, structure, and cultural patterns may influence long-term organisational performance.
4. **Data Collection Method:** The study was mostly conducted based on the responses from the employees. In this method, there might be response biases where respondent might have given socially desirable responses or the responding might not have understood well the items in the questionnaire.

Recommendations for further Studies

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Subsequent studies should employ longitudinal research design to capture changes in strategy, structure and culture over time and their aggregate effect on operational performance in public sector organizations.
2. **Comparative Studies:** Further research should be conducted in different sectors (healthcare, education etc.) and different geographical locations to determine the validity of the proposed relationships between strategy, structure and culture. Such studies would also facilitate an examination of the generalisation of the results.
3. **Role of Leadership:** Future research should explore the leadership factor in the integration of strategic direction, organizational design, and organisational culture in public organisations. It might have offered a better understanding of how leadership styles and decisions bear on these elements in order to improve organisational climates.
4. **Mixed Methods Approach:** This research could also be improved if future studies employed a mixed-methodology with survey data complemented by interviews or case studies. This would give better and more detailed understanding of how strategy, structure and culture are aligned in organizations.

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