



ALIGNING STRATEGY AND ORGANISATION'S OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION: A CRITICAL

LINK TO ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESS

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Abstract

This paper explores the significance of aligning operational activities with strategic alignment in the context of Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study determined the importance of aligning strategy with operations in Nigerian Breweries in Benin City, Edo State, identifies the common challenges faced by Nigerian organizations in achieving this alignment in Benin City, Edo state and to determine the extent strategy alignment affect operation of the organisations in Edo state. The population of the study is one hundred and forty (140). Taro Yamani's formula was used to determine the sample size of one hundred and four (104). Linear regression was adopted to test the hypothesis. It was concluded that aligning strategy with operations is a critical factor for organizational success within Benin City challenging business environment and Nigeria at large. Findings reveal that organisational performances are difference due to the standard of strategic alignment implementation. It was recommended that an effective strategy alignment with operation of the organization should be implemented for the benefits the organisation

Keywords: Strategy, strategic alignment, organization, organisation's operation

Introduction

Sharma and Behl (2023) reveal that strategic alignment is a critical trend among contemporary strategic concepts helping organizations to cope up with challenges and altering old work system to productive one. It is caused by growing extensiveness and competitiveness forcing organizations to be flexible to adapt to changes to meet customers demand and become more competitive. There is always the fear of change due to products disruptions when the change is anticipated or announced. The management adequately plan or anticipate for responses of their employees to a proposed change to avoid disruption. The ability of the organization to align its operations with its main business goal is very important to its success in today's business competitive environment. For years, strategic management scholars have emphasized the importance of aligning organizational strategies to the overall business strategy (Cao, et al., 2012) since such strategic alignment will lead to a more concerted and focused pursuit of organizational objectives, which in turn improves firm performance (Hooper et al., 2010). Strategy clarifies how organisation coordinates its activities to attain its goal.

In today rapid evolving business landscape, aligning strategy with organisational operation has become vital for organisations pursuing to achieve competitive advantage over contemporaries and sustainable growth. Prior research has shown that strategic alignment generally enhances firm performance; it is also one of the most difficult challenges facing managers (Vorhies & Morgan,2003). The competitive landscape in Nigeria today, is characterized by economic volatility infrastructural deficits, and regulatory challenges. Thus, organizations must ensure that their operational capabilities are closely aligned with their strategic objectives to accomplish long-term success. Tan *et al*, (2023) state that for businesses aiming to lead through innovation, adopting cutting edge technologies and fostering a culture of continuous improvement are essential to maintaining a competitive advantage. Strategic alignment with the operations of the organization focuses on the ways in which the organisation can achieve its objectives differently by differentiating itself effectively from its competitors to gain a competitive advantage by capitalizing on its distinctive strengths for better value to its customers in the global competitive world. Strategic alignment is the result of a successful strategic plan implementation. It enhances harmony relation and transparent co

communication between the lower and higher-level management. Alignment has to do with ensuring everyone in the organization to have a shared definition of success. A firm's performance is highly likely to be determined by how effectively and efficiently the firm's business, IT, and marketing strategies are implemented to support one another (Olson, et al., 2005).

Statement of the Problem

The study identifies key challenges organisations face in achieving alignment and proposes effective strategies for fostering this critical link. There is operational deficiency, lack of decision making and lack of sustainable growth in the firms in Benin. Many researchers have written on the topic but none is aligning strategy with organisational operations: a critical link to organizational success in Benin City, thereby, creating a gap in knowledge. Hence the study explores the significant of aligning strategy with organisational operations within the Benin City context, while also incorporating insights from international best practices for attaining this alignment.

Research Question

The research question is: what are the importance of aligning strategy with operations in Benin City, Edo state

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of the study is: to analyse the importance of aligning strategy with operations in Benin City, Edo State.

Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Strategy Alignment:

Strategic alignment is a management framework that focuses on ensuring each element of an organization function toward the same set of business goals. That is, getting every unit, team, and employee on the same page. Aligning strategy also includes ensuring that the business model vision, and mission are all aligned. The focus is on

how to effectively combine and maximise the available resources to realise the target of the organisation (Egbivie, 2017).

The correlation between an organization's strategy and its information system or process is known as strategic alignment (Luftman, 2000). This is a process by which a planned strategy is put into action and spread across the entire organisation. It involves coordinating the strategy with the personnel, employees, governance, structure, and culture of the organisation. To maintain a balance with the external environment, strategic planning must adapt as the environment does, since it is always changing due to competition and nature. Organizations create their core values based on an evolutionary coherence between the environment, their specific mission, and their competencies in a complex environment where the primary question is "what to do" rather than "how to do it" (Bonne, 2004). Nonetheless, the organization must support the "what to do" even if the "how to do" is not its main concern. This suggests that the organization strategy must be supported by and aligned with its operation for successful attainment. An organisation's capacity to build its procedures and plans on the goods it produces determines its long-term success. Effectiveness inside an organization requires alignment of strategy. (Aversano *et al.*, 2013), state that strategic alignment is the result of the organisation's IT commitment and organisation direction working together, and it is thought to increase the organisation success. It is still true that a key component of organisational business performance is strategic alignment (Aversano *et al.*, 2013) Kwanroengjai *et al.*, (2014), reveal that an organization that is well-aligned has a shared understanding of its objectives and strategies. As a result, the organization's components, people, and roles all work toward the same goal (Fonvielle & Carr 2001). In addition to setting itself apart from the competition through a distinctive or superior strategy, a business may also stand out from the crowd by ensuring that the strategy is implemented throughout the entire organisation.

2.1.1 Importance of Alignment

a. Operational Efficiency

Habib et al. (2022), state that efficiency in operations is an indispensable requirement for organizations to thrive in the intensely competitive business landscape. Aligning operations with strategic goals enhances operational efficiency by optimizing resource utilization. In Nigeria, where resources are often limited and competition is fierce, effective alignment can lead to significant improvements in productivity and cost management.

Example: Telecommunications Sector

In Nigeria's telecommunications sector, MTN Nigeria has demonstrated how operational alignment can drive efficiency. By synchronizing its marketing strategies with customer service operations, MTN has enhanced customer satisfaction while reducing churn rates. The company implemented a cross-functional approach that allowed teams to work collaboratively towards common goals, resulting in a 20% increase in customer satisfaction scores within six months.

b. Enhanced Decision-Making

Effective alignment ensures that decisions made at all organizational levels are coherent and support overall strategic goals. This reduces departmental silos and fosters collaboration across teams. In a Nigerian context where hierarchical structures often prevail, promoting a culture of collaboration is essential for improving decision-making.

Example: Cross-Functional Collaboration

Organizations that implement cross-functional teams often experience improved decision-making processes. For instance, First Bank of Nigeria integrates its marketing, risk management, and IT departments to better align product offerings with customer needs while managing risks effectively.

c. Competitive Advantage

Organizations that successfully align their operations with strategy can respond more swiftly to market changes and customer demands. This agility allows them to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate risks more effectively than competitors who may struggle with misalignment.

Example: Dangote Group

The Dangote Group exemplifies competitive advantage through operational alignment. By aligning its production capabilities with strategic goals in the cement industry, Dangote has become a market leader in Nigeria while also expanding into other sectors such as sugar and flour. The company's ability to adapt its operations to meet changing market demands has been key to its sustained growth.

2.1.2 Challenges to Achieving Alignment

(Short 2008) state that there is no shortage of advice on how to achieve alignment, but sometimes the offerings seem overplayed and simplistic, and to overlook the increasing complexity of organisational life. Despite its importance, many Nigerian organizations encounter significant challenges in aligning strategy with operations due to the following:

a. Lack of Clarity

A poorly defined or communicated strategy can create confusion regarding operational priorities. Employees may not understand how their roles contribute to strategic objective leading to misaligned efforts.

Case Study: Blockbuster vs. Netflix

The downfall of Blockbuster serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of misalignment due to a lack of clarity. While Netflix embraced a clear strategy focused on digital streaming and customer engagement, Blockbuster failed to adapt its operational model accordingly.

b. Communication Barriers

Ineffective communication between leadership and frontline employees can hinder the execution of strategic initiatives. When employees are not engaged or informed about strategic goals, they may lack motivation or clarity needed to align their work accordingly.

Example: Organizational Silos in Nigerian Firms Many organizations in Nigeria suffer from silos where departments operate independently without sharing information or resources. This lack of communication can lead to duplicated efforts or conflicting priorities that undermine overall strategy.

C. Resource Allocation

Misallocation of resources—whether financial, human, or technological—can create friction between strategic intentions and operational capabilities. Without adequate resources aligned with strategic priorities, organizations may struggle to execute their plans effectively.

Example: Startups vs. Established Firms Startups often face resource constraints that hinder their ability to align operations with strategy effectively. Conversely, established firms may have more resources but struggle with bureaucratic processes that slow down decision-making.

2.1.3 Strategies for Effective Alignment

The human resource development professionals have long searched for trustworthiness (Iles, Preece and Chuai 2010) and a lot has been written about the challenges HRD faces, mainly keeping the field relevant, adopting more strategic approaches, embracing technological changes and measuring its contribution to organisational performance.

mance (McGuire & Cseh 2006). To bridge the gap between strategy and operations in Edo State, organizations can adopt several key practices:

a. Clear Communication

Leadership must ensure that the strategic vision is communicated effectively throughout the organization. This includes cascading goals from top management down to frontline employees through regular updates and internal communications.

Implementation Steps in Clear Communication: 1. **Regular Town Hall Meetings:** Hold quarterly meetings where leadership shares updates on strategic goals and progress.

2. **Internal Newsletters:** Distribute newsletters highlighting departmental contributions toward strategic objectives.

3. **Visual Dashboards:** Use dashboards in common areas displaying key metrics related to strategic goals.

b. Set Measurable KPIs : Developing key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with strategic goals is essential for tracking progress. Regularly monitoring these metrics allows organisations to identify successes and areas needing improvement.

Best Practices:

1. **SMART Criteria:** Ensure KPIs are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

2. **Balanced Scorecard:** Use a balanced scorecard approach to measure performance from multiple perspectives (financial, customer, internal processes).

c. Feedback Mechanisms

Encouraging open dialogue across all levels fosters understanding and buy-in for strategic initiatives. Feedback mechanisms-such as surveys or suggestion boxes-can help gather insights from employees about operational challenges and opportunities for alignment.

Examples of Feedback Mechanisms

1. **Employee Surveys:** Conduct regular surveys assessing employee understanding of strategic goals.

2. **Suggestion Programs:** Implement programs where employees can submit ideas for improving alignment between strategy and operations. i

d. **Integrated Planning**

Creating a framework that connects strategic plans with operational execution is vital.

This involves aligning departmental objectives with overall business goals to ensure all efforts contribute toward shared outcomes.

·Steps for Implementing Integrated Planning:

1. **Annual Strategic Planning Retreats:** Involve cross-departmental teams in annual retreats focused on aligning departmental plans with corporate strategy.

2. **Project Management Tools:** Utilize project management software that links tasks directly back to strategic objectives.

3. **Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation**

·Regular reviews of both strategic objectives and operational performance allow organizations to make necessary adjustments in response to changing market conditions or internal dynamics. This adaptability is crucial in aligning strategy and organisation's operational integration to maintaining alignment over time. The idea of alignment takes a managerial perspective (Field 2004).

2.1.4 Case Studies in Edo State in Nigeria and International Examples

2.1.4.1 Case Study 1: MTN Nigeria's Operational Alignment

MTN Nigeria has successfully aligned its operational strategies with its corporate objectives through effective communication channels and cross-functional teams. By integrating marketing campaigns with customer service initiatives, MTN has enhanced customer satisfaction scores significantly within six months of implementing these

changes. The extent to which a manager accomplishes corporate goals depends on his ability to communicate effectively (Herich, 2008).

2.1.4.2 Case Study 2: Dangote Group's Strategic Expansion

The Dangote Group exemplifies how effective alignment between strategy and operations can lead to successful diversification into new markets such as sugar production while maintaining leadership in cement manufacturing.

2.1.4.3 Case Study 3: Nigerian Breweries' Use of Balanced Scorecard

Nigerian Breweries adopted the Balanced Scorecard framework to align its operational activities with its strategic vision effectively. By establishing clear KPIs across various departments-such as production efficiency and market penetration-the company has improved performance tracking significantly. Organizations perform various activities to accomplish their organizational objectives (Musheke & Phiri 2021)

2.1.4.4 International Example: Toyota's Lean Manufacturing Model

Toyota's Production System (TPS) is an international example of successful strategy-operation alignment through lean manufacturing principles that reduce waste while enhancing quality-directly supporting Toyota's competitive strategy globally. Homburg et al., (2008), reveal that strategic and operational alignment reflects the extent to which field sales personnel embrace the strategies proposed by marketers and wholeheartedly operationalize them in the field.

2.1.4.5 International Example: Amazon's Customer-Centric Approach

Amazon's strategy revolves around customer satisfaction and innovation; its operational practices such as advanced logistics systems-are designed to support this strategy effectively. A large number of organizations, marketing is typically responsible for strategy development by building a consistent brand image, while sales is responsible for strategy execution by closing the sale in the field (Biemans et al., 2010)

2.1.5 Concept of Organisation Operation

Organisation operation involves decisions related to the process design, capacity planning, supply chain management, technology adoption, and workforce management strategically aligned with the organisation's goal. This is to optimize these elements to achieve high levels of efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction while minimizing costs (Becot et al, 2022)

The aligning strategy with operations of the organisation makes the organisation to be efficiently and effectively deliver its value proposition to prospective customers while maintaining a competitive edge in the global market. Aligning process design with business goals ensures that operations are streamlined to support the company's strategic objectives.

Operations refer to the various activities, processes, and systems that a business employs to produce goods or services and deliver them to customers. The primary goal of operations is to ensure that these activities run smoothly and efficiently, ultimately contributing to the organization's overall objectives and profitability.

2.1.5.1 Importance of Operations

Efficiency: Well-managed operations lead to increased efficiency, reducing waste and lowering costs. This is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the market. Efficiency is **doing things right**, using the **least amount of resources, time, money, materials, and labour** to produce the maximum output. It's about **reducing waste and maximizing productivity**. Efficiency is important because it reduces cost, increase productivity, satisfy customer, and result to profitability, competitive advantage, and sustainability. Efficiency in operations is an indispensable requirement for organizations to thrive in the intensely competitive business landscape (Habib et al., 2022).

Quality Control: Effective operations ensure that products and services meet quality standards, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is a serious aspect of operations management in the organization that concentrates on ensuring products and services meet set standards and customer expectations. It is used to **monitor, measure, and improve the quality of services or products** throughout the production or service delivery process in the organisation. It detects variations and makes corrections before final products get to the customer. Dal

wai and Salehi, 2021), argue that quality is a dimension of the ability of a product to meet customer satisfaction and therefore the product that must be produced must comply with predetermined quality standards

Revenue Generation: Operations are directly linked to revenue generation through the production of goods and delivery of services that meet customer demands. This is the capability of an organization's operations to generate income through the provision of goods or services to customers. Operations are all the processes adopted to produce, deliver, and support a product or service of which money is earned. To succeed in a constantly changing market and environment, businesses need to implement a strategic approach that prioritizes resource conservation (Dalwai & Salehi, 2021)

Adaptability: This is the ability of an organization's operations to adjust quickly to changes in the business environment, customer demands, technology, market conditions, or unexpected disruptions. A robust operational framework allows businesses to adapt quickly to changes in market conditions, customer preferences, or technological advancements. Adaptability is a vital aspect of organization operations because it enables an organization to respond effectively to internal and external changes. Robustness has been postulated as a key property of evolutionary systems providing adaptive and protective mechanisms to intrinsic and environmental challenges (Kitano, 2004)

2.1.6 Behaviour and Strategy Alignment For Organization's Effectiveness

Added component of employees' behaviour is proposed in these various models of strategic alignment with operation for a successful organisation's achievement. Robbins (2005) states that organization behaviour is a field of study that investigate the impact individuals, groups, and structure have on employees' behaviour within the organisations for the purpose of applying such knowledge toward improving on organization's effectiveness. It simply means that the various components of an organisation impact behaviour, ranging from the individuals, groups and structure of the organization, the resultant behaviour may impact on the improvement of that organization's effectiveness. Ethical decision making can hinder the context of the pressure of competition and striving for organizational success. In line with this confront is the fact that ethical behaviour guiding principles are often vague. Organizations as a whole should expect ethical behaviour from their employees, the lack of a clear definition hinders success of attaining ethical behaviour in terms of what would be expected and would not be tolerated. It is n

ecessary to observe value and the organization working with behaviours that accompany the value. From these values to the level of individual employee's behaviour is the means to successful achievement of organizational objectives. The organization values can be attained successfully by translating it into specific employee's behaviours. What constitutes good ethical behaviour has never been clearly defined (Robbins, 2005)

2.1.7 Strategic Alignment and Organizational Effectiveness for Success

This increased employees' understanding of organizational strategies leading to improved organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and trust among employees (Willems & Ingerfuth, 2018). Every unit, members and functions of the organisation working toward the same purpose need common agreements about the goals and means for organisation effectiveness and success. The goal of an organisation will not be accomplished unless the employees have the knowledge and its responsibilities. Aligning strategies with operation of the organisation is crucial for organizational effectiveness. Employee's performance and productivity is high when they have a better knowledge and understanding of the strategies alignment and their responsibilities in the cause of operation. The employees be precisely and accurately communicated on the strategic and goals of the organization (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study anchored on contingency theory

2.2.1 Contingency Theory

Fred Fiedler proposed his Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness in 1964. The balance between the organization's strategy and its environmental context has significant impacts on performance (Macdam, et al., 2019). It shows that clarity in the goal if backed by clarity in the job assigned to accomplish stated goal with clear procedures through which assigned jobs performed improves performance for success. It proves contingency theory statements stating fitness and balances between component parts lead to higher performances. The study attempted to find out the aligning strategy with organisational operations: a critical link to organisational success. Operation is balanced fits between organisation's strategy and its environmental context. The theory reveals that operation and performance effectiveness is based on situational fit with the organisation strategies. There is no single management system and/or situation is fit for organisational effectiveness with this theory. The essence of aligning strategic with operation is also the fitness between different components of organisational working system for better performance achievement. The importance of contingency theory for this study is to reside in fitness between strategic alignments dimensions used for study with operation of the organisation for success. Contingency theory argues that there is no universally acceptable management system applied equally at all organization in all conditions. But it suggests that features of the system and effectiveness of operating system is depending on organizational situation and contextual factors. Therefore, it was used to investigate strategic alignment implementation and organizational operation for success in sampled Nigerian Breweries.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey design method because it is the most appropriate. Primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaire. The target population of the study include the senior and junior employees of the Nigerian Breweries company in Benin City. The population number is one hundred and forty. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size, giving one hundred and four (104). T

The data generated for the study were presented in tables and percentages. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression. A proper structuring of the questionnaire and a conduct of a pre-test of every question contained in the questionnaire was carried out to ensure that they are valid.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: the importance of quality control and efficiency in aligning strategy with operation in Benin City, Edo State.

Table1 Response to quality control and efficiency are the importance of aligning strategy with operation in Benin, Edo State.

Table 4.6: The importance of aligning strategy with operations in Benin City.

Nigerian Brewery Company				
Rating	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	Freq	%
S. Agree	10	31	41	45.6
Agree	22	24	46	51.1
Undecided	-	1	1	1.1
Disagree	1	-	1	1.1
S. Disagree	-	1	1	1.1
TOTAL	33	57	90	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025.

From the table 4.6, it is observed that 41 of the respondents (45.6%) strongly agreed that strategy alignment enhances operations with increase in production in Edo State, 46 of respondents (51.1%) agreed, 1 respondent (1.1%) were undecided, 1 respondent (1.1%) were disagreed, while 1 respondent (1.1%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, it is concluded that strategy alignment enhances operations with increase in production in Edo State.

Model Summary

Mod El	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin- Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.F Change	
1	625a	.391	.384	1.05201	.391	59.597	1	93	.000	1.787

Source: SPSS

Discussion of Result

The data analysis is a table and percentage observation, and expected frequencies (counts) of the organisation and five category response options was used in conducting the test of the hypothesis. On careful observation, the responses of agree and strongly agree had more frequency counts than strongly disagree, disagree and undecided. From table 1, a linear regression test was computed. The result shows that strategy alignment has impact on organization operation because the significant of exchange is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, so at 5% is significant. And there is no auto-correlation in the model. The R Square shows 39.9% variation in the dependent variable. Using the rule of thumb, the Durbin-Watson is equal to 2%. For a result to be relevance or good, the Durbin-Watson must be up to 2%, and now we have 1.787% which can be approximated to 2% because it's above 1.5%. The researcher strongly supports the finding because aligning strategy with operations helps organizations to achieve desired business objectives, which may ultimately dictate its necessary condition for organizational success. The employee's level of performance is higher with better knowledge and understanding of the organizational strategies, alignment processes and responsibilities to the operation. It is favourable to integrate the business strategies with the vision, mission, objectives, and goal of the organisation with great synergy for success. Aligning strategy with operation of the organization enhances pressures from the environment with the available resources for higher level of performance and profitability. Strategic alignment installs new values, attitudes, norms, and behaviours within an organization that support new ways of doing work and overcome resistance to change into meet demands.

Egbivwie (2017) reveals that strategic formulation is a series of events which ensure that the organisation remains focused amidst environmental change and competition. The industrial revolution, shareholders and stakeholders demand in an organization today presses the organizations to be on the move. Added to the global

lization and inter-cultural exchange had made us even more susceptible to strategic alignment with operation than ever before. We adopt new techniques due to the fast additions and technological changes which also affect the management theories and practices in the organisations today. Strategic alignment involves the idea of achieving a degree of compatibility and harmony among a range of organizational elements that ensures achievement of the strategic priorities of the organization (Alkarabsheh et al., 2022). The strategic alignment with operation emphasis on cost cutting, innovative and competitiveness, which makes it more important to embrace change rather to resist it. Strategy alignment, competition and changes in management is inevitable if you must succeed.

Conclusion

Strategy alignment is one of the most serious management problems in Benin City, organizations. Strengthen strategy, processes, operation, available resources, technology and employees' synergy enhance organization effectiveness for a successful goal attainment. Strategic alignment improves the organisation response to environmental pressures and factors toward a higher level of performance for goals achievement and organizational success. Alignment of strategic with the operation of the organisation enhances effectiveness of managerial decision with great achievement impact on organizational success. The prospect of aligning strategy with operation is useful to most organisations.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings, the following recommendations were provided:

1. Effective strategy alignment should be implemented for the benefits of the organisation.
2. There should be integration of the mission, objectives, and plans of organization that synchronized with the business strategies.
3. Management of the organisation should endeavour to involve the employees in the strategy alignment for effective and efficient work done.

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