AWARENESS, ACCEPTANCE, AND APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AMONG MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria embraced the use of State Education Strategic Plan (SESP) and State Education Sector Operational Plan (SESOP) spanning between 2010 and 2020. This was based on the belief that strategic planning is capable of boosting education performance and also improves strategic planning awareness, acceptance and application. Yet, scientific evidence established that only few organizations follow strategic planning practices beyond the first year, owing to low level of strategic planning knowledge and negative attitude of top officials. To this end, the study examined strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application among the ministry of education officials in South West Nigeria. The study adopted an expo-facto design to survey views of Ministry of Education officials. The population comprised of all the ministry of education's senior and operational officers including Directors and Deputy Directors in the five States that participated in SESP-SESOP (Phase II). Using simple random sampling technique, twelve officials per each of the five States were selected resulting in 60 respondents out of which four failed to return their questionnaires. A validated questionnaire, titled "Perception of Ministry of Education Officials on Strategic Planning" subdivided into Awareness, Adoption, and Application, with a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of $\alpha=.74$, was developed and used for data collection. Data were analysed using percentages and mean averages while multiple regression was used to know the contributions of strategic planning awareness and acceptance to its application by ministry officials. The findings revealed that although the levels of strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application vary from State to State in South West Nigeria, on the average, the strategic planning awareness (average mean=3.20), acceptance (average mean=3.02) and application (average mean=3.17) were high respectively (high ≥ 2.5). The findings further revealed that only strategic planning acceptance made a singular significant contribution to its application ($\beta=0.556$, $p>0.05$) while the joint contribution of awareness and acceptance to strategic planning application was also significant (F=13.527, p=0.00). The paper concluded that contrary to expectation, the acceptance level was comparatively low despite its significant contribution to strategic planning application. The paper therefore, recommended a deliberate nurture of values of change to boost levels of strategic planning acceptance without reverting to their traditional practices.

KEYWORDS: Acceptance, application, awareness, ministry of education officials, South-West Nigeria, strategic planning

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning aids the management to improve organizational performance by ensuring that everyone in the organization works towards the same objectives as the direction is continuously adjusted in line with the changing context and based on results obtained (UNESCO, 2010a). In the education sector, strategic planning is used to identify practical ways to achieve the desired vision at an individual, institutional, organizational, and societal levels (Kaufman & Herman, 1991, Richardson, 2004). Thus, as a groundwork to win the persistent war against ignorance, illiteracy, lack of skills and trainings, calculated efforts are made at various levels of education to assess education sector's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, identify winning routes, and then select the best of the winning strategies for the next few years. Miec (1995) rightly described strategic planning as making short- medium- and long-range decisions that cover both immediate and distant actions to accomplish institutional mission, goals, and objectives.

Chang (2006, 2008) divided the strategic planning process into the education sector study, formulation of policies and strategies as well as activity scheduling. To him, policy and strategy formulation involves the-must-do to address the key issues, challenges, and opportunities identified under the analysis of the education system. The criticism by Martin (2014) that organizations characteristically follow the strategic plan only in the year one of a five-year strategic plan can be an aftermath of the non-participatory nature of the military model inherited, first, by the business world and later transferred to the education sector. Strategic planning, having proved to be a means of achieving cost-effectiveness and results in the private sector, became transferred from the business world to the public sector (although with some technical difficulties). Nigeria eventually reformed her public sector by initiating the 1988 Civil Service Reforms that disaggregated the administrative functions of Ministries into three professional components of Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM), Directorate of Finance and Supply (DFS) and Planning, Research and Statistics (Lawal, 2014). Despite these reforms, the Directorate of Planning Research and Statistics (DPRS) remained highly technical, resource-oriented, and traditionally carried out by experts resulting in disappointment between the 1960s and the 1980s (Wheeler, 1968; Babalola, 2020).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the 1990s, continuous efforts were made to ameliorate the weaknesses of long-term planning at the ministry of education level. As from mid-1990, preparation of a strategic education sector plan became a condition for a developing country like Nigeria to benefit from donor support in education (Chang, 2006; UNESCO, 2010a; Fehnel, 2000; Chang, 2006; UNESCO, 2020a, 2010b; Babalola, 2020). In response to the aforementioned global best practices, and to achieve the long-term strategic plan known as National Vision (NV) 20:2020, Nigeria initiated several national and sectoral medium-term implementation plans (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2010, Lawal, 2014). To this end, UNESCO (2010a) highlighted four organizational arrangements to guide sector planning in education. The first arrangement concerns mobilizing technical expertise with competencies in statistical analysis, use of computerized simulation models, programme design and monitoring as well as costing, budgeting, and financing. The second arrangement deals with involving the whole ministry and departments to carry out the situation analysis, make proposals concerning

the objectives, targets, and priorities; and to design priority programmes. The third arrangement is concerning the participation of stakeholders while the last arrangement concerns ensuring proper coordination and monitoring. As a capacity development tool, the strategic plan preparation is expected to be used by consultants working closely with the national officers to transfer techniques and competencies effectively (UNESCO, 2015; Valentine, 1988). This capacity development approach was expected to be replicated at the State and possibly at school level (Valentine, 1988). Consequently, in 2010, UNICEF provided both technical and financial supports to Bauchi, Jigawa and Niger States to develop education strategic plans (SESP-SESOP I) and build institutional capacity of the ministry of education officials regarding the art and science of strategic planning. In 2011, the project was extended to fifteen more States including all the States in South West Nigeria (Lagos State was excluded because it had earlier developed State education sector strategic and operational plans). The Terms of Reference (Obanya, 2011, p.1) issued out by UNICEF to the consultant (EDSI) of the SESP-SESOP II (including the author) included building institutional capacity for rigorous education sector work in the process through institutionalization and internalization of strategic thinking and strategic planning behaviour (classified into strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application in this study).

Figure 1 is the conceptual framework that was used to manage SESP-SESOP II in the sampled states. UNICEF appointed the Education Strategies International (EDSI) to execute the SESP-SESOP in Nigeria. The EDSI worked in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to draw lessons from the earlier development of the national education sector strategic plan and to ensure strategic alignment between the national and state educational development; thus, ensuring even socio-economic progress in the country. EDSI also appointed a consultant per State to form the technical support team (TST) playing a guidance-support role for the ministry of education officials; otherwise known as the State technical team (STT) who were the real actors for empowerment (by increasing strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application). Nevertheless, there was the need to appoint an Economist as well as a Statistician to serve as the Core Technical Team (CTT) especially, to strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of each State ministry of education to enhance the predictive power of the planning exercise. The Enlarged Technical Team (ETT) comprising EDSI, FME, TST, STT, and CTT periodically assembled under the sentry of UNICEF for review and finalization purposes. Subsequently, a Ten-year (2011-2020) State Education Sector Strategic Plan [SESP] was developed for each of the States with UNICEF's technical and financial supports and through the involvement of all stakeholders with whom the various challenges were identified and solutions proffered without losing focus of the State vision and mission for education. This also informed the State Education Sector Operational Plan [SESOP] which outlines the work programme for the first three years of SESP.
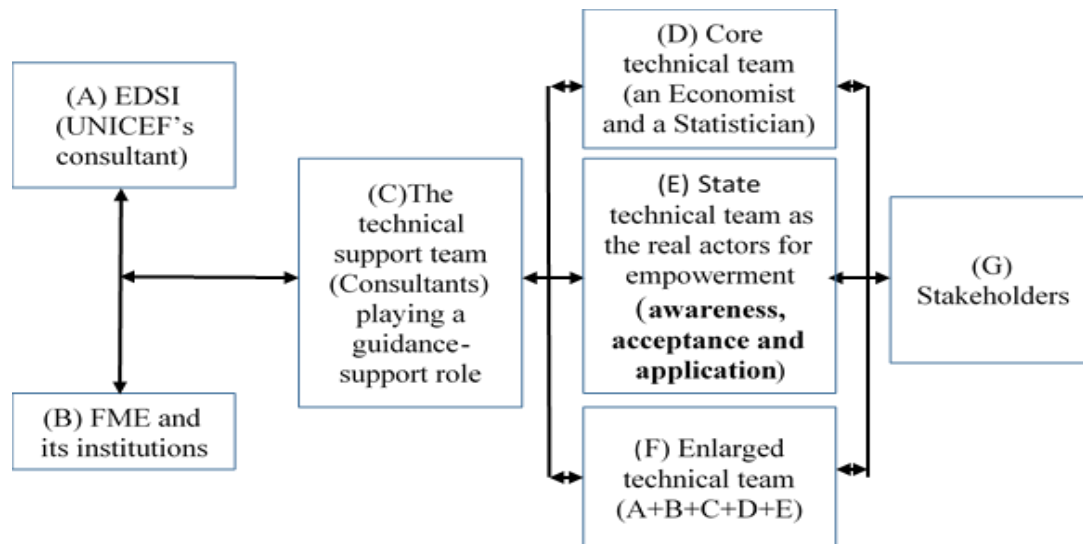
(Figure 1).

Figure 1: The management structure for SESP-SESOP II in South West Nigeria

Research objectives
Based on the above background, the study generally set out to assess the levels of strategic planning awareness, acceptance and application of ministry officials at the close of the first strategic planning experience in Southwest Nigeria. Furthermore, it aimed at examining the influence of strategic planning awareness and acceptance on strategic planning application. Specifically, the study set out to:
1. assess the level of strategic planning awareness of ministry of education officials
2. evaluate the level of strategic planning acceptance of ministry of education officials
3. examine the level of strategic planning application among ministry of education officials
4. measure interstate variations in strategic awareness, acceptance and application among sampled states
5. examine the amount of influence exerted on strategic planning application by strategic planning awareness and acceptance

Research questions
Based on the research objectives, five specific research questions were raised to guide this study as follows:
1. How aware are the State ministry of education officials about strategic planning?
2. How acceptable is the strategic planning among the ministry of education officials?
3. How applicable is strategic planning among the ministry of education DPRS officials?
4. What are the interstate variations in strategic planning awareness, acceptance and application among the sampled States?
5. How much influence do strategic planning awareness and acceptance exert on its application?

Research hypothesis

Question 5 has been transformed to the following research hypothesis:

$H_0 1$: There is no significant influence of strategic planning awareness and acceptance on its application

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an expo-facto research design to survey views of the Ministry of Education officials, especially, those who are responsible for planning, research, statistics, and monitoring of education policies, projects, and programmes regarding strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application. The study covered Directors, Deputy Directors, and other Officers in the Ministry of Education in each of the States in the Southwest geopolitical zone that is considered to be the most educationally advanced of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Five states were purposefully selected (Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo). Lagos State was excluded because it was not among the states that participated in SESP-SESOP II. From each of the five states, 12 top policymakers and technical planners in the Ministry of Education were randomly selected for the study. Since 4 (6.67%) of the participants failed to return their questionnaires, the study utilized 56 instead of 60 respondents.

The research instrument (a questionnaire) used for data collection activities was developed and titled "Perception of Ministry of Education officials on Strategic Planning". The instrument was sub-scaled into four sections; namely: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents, Strategic Planning Awareness, Strategic Planning Acceptance, and Strategic Planning Application. The instrument was validated and yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of $\alpha=.74$. The validated questionnaire was administered among the sampled respondents and data were analysed using descriptive statistics while multiple regression (inferential statistics) was used to know the contributions of awareness and acceptance of strategic planning to its application by the ministry officials.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study assessed the levels of awareness, acceptance, and applicability of strategic planning among the ministry of education officials. Also, it examined the joint and combined influence of awareness and acceptance on the strategic planning application among sampled officials.

Demographic profile of respondents
This section focused on the profile of the ministry of education officials who responded to the questionnaire. The male to female percentage distribution of respondents was 58.9% to 41.1% respectively. Furthermore, a majority (81.1%) of the respondents were DPRS' Directors (8.9%), Deputy Directors (26.8%) and other officials (64.3%) who were not only highly experienced having spent more than 10 years in the service but were also highly educated with 96.4%, of them possessing first and second degrees. Experience aside, the majority (67.9%) of them were 41 years and above.

Descriptive analysis

1. How aware are the state ministry of education officials about strategic planning?

Table 1: Strategic planning awareness among the ministry of education officials

S/N		SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$
1	Strategic planning is different from traditional planning	32 57.1%	22 39.3%	1 1.8%	1 1.8%	3.52
2	Strategic planning is result-oriented rather than being resource-oriented	36 64.3%	20 35.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3.64
3	Strategic planning involves establishing a direction by assessing both where education is now and where it is going to be in the next five to ten years.	7 12.5%	10 17.9%	31 55.4%	8 14.3%	2.29
4	Strategic planning involves the technocrats, other public servants who are not technocrats and politicians in the education sector	18 32.1%	27 48.3%	6 10.7%	5 8.9%	3.04
5	A well-written strategic plan that tells how best to respond to environmental changes can play a key role in the development of the state's education.	31 55.3%	20 35.7%	3 5.4%	2 3.6%	3.43
6	The education strategic plan contains education purpose, vision and ideals, long-standing goals and the operational plans	12 21.4%	27 48.2%	14 25.0%	3 5.4%	2.86
7	Strategic planners mobilize and involve all other stakeholders outside the education sector in arriving at the desired activities to be implemented in the next three to five years.	25 44.6%	29 51.8%	1 1.8%	1 1.8%	3.39
8	Educational planners are strategic planners	27 48.2%	26 46.4%	3 5.4%	0 0.0%	3.43
	Average Mean Response	**3.20**				

Notes: (a) SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D =Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1), $\bar{X}$ = Mean. (b) Figures inside parentheses are weights assigned to each response

Table 1 showed that 96.4% of the respondents agreed that strategic planning is different from traditional planning while 2.8% disagreed (Mean=3.52). Again, entire sampled respondents (100.0%) agreed that strategic planning is result-oriented rather than being resource-oriented (Mean=3.64). Also, 30.4% of the respondents believe that Strategic planning involves establishing a direction by assessing both where education is, now, and where it is going to be in the next five to ten years while 69.6% disagreed (Mean=2.29). Moreover, 80.4% of the respondents agreed that strategic planning involves the technocrats, other public servants who are not technocrats and politicians in the education sector, while 19.6% disagreed (Mean=3.04). Furthermore, 91.0% of the respondents agreed that a well-written strategic plan that tells how best to respond to changes enhances the State's education development, while 9.0% disagreed

(Mean=3.43). Moreover, 69.6% of the respondents agreed that an education strategic plan contains education mission, vision, ideals, goals, and plans of action while 96.4% of the respondents agreed that strategic planners in their States mobilize and involve all others stakeholders outside the education sector in arriving at the desired activities to be implemented. Generally, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents were highly aware in South West Nigeria (mean = 3.20 > 2.50).Strategic planning awareness is used to capture the level of strategic learning embodied in ministry officials following the introduction of the education sector strategic planning process in South West Nigeria. This study found that the level of strategic planning awareness (learning) was moderately high (or medium) in South West Nigeria. Siren & Kohtamaki (2016) analysed the potential performance benefits of the interface between strategic planning and strategic learning and found that strategic learning positively moderates the relationship between strategic planning and performance. Moreover, the study revealed that the moderating effect of strategic learning is an inverted U-shape indicating that low to medium levels of learning enhances performance benefits; while, higher levels of learning diminishes performance benefits, suggesting possible negative effect of knowledge overload. Thus, given the medium level of knowledge reported in this study, it is expected that benefits of strategic planning would be high in South West Nigeria.   This study further found a striking similarity in the level of strategic awareness displayed across the five States involved in the study. As earlier said, the level of strategic planning awareness varied from 3.10 to 3.35 across the five States involved in the study.

2. How acceptable is the strategic planning model among the ministry of education officials?

Table 2: Strategic planning acceptance among the ministry of education officials

S/N	Acceptance	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$
9	The education planners believe in introducing flexibility into educational plans to absorb future eventuality	17 30.4%	31 55.3%	8 14.3%	0 0.0%	3.16
10	The education planners are interested in being flexible in the process of plan implementation.	12 21.4%	30 53.6%	12 21.4%	2 3.6%	2.93
11	The education planners are unfavorable to the use of compliance monitoring in the education sector	9 16.1%	32 57.1%	12 21.4%	3 5.4%	2.84
12	The education planners are in favor of performance monitoring of planned activities	25 44.6%	27 48.2%	0 0.0%	4 7.2%	3.30
13	The education planners encourage team efforts among the DPRS staff, teachers, students, publishers, and the entire public during the state education plan formulation.	13 23.2%	20 35.7%	20 35.7%	3 5.4%	2.77
14	The education planners believe the more we engage implementers who are not skillful in planning in the education planning process, the better they will understand the strategy for education	20 35.7%	31 55.4%	5 8.9%	0 0.0%	3.27
15	The education planners believe flexibility may	8	14	27	7	2.41

	lengthen the time to achieve a goal, yet a flexible plan puts the sector in a better position to succeed in this rapidly changing world.	14.3%	25.0%	48.2%	12.5%	
16	The education planners in this state believe more in result-oriented educational planning than resource-oriented planning since more resources might not translate to more results while more activities might not translate to more achievements.	30 53.5%	23 41.1%	2 3.6%	1 1.8%	3.46
	Average Mean response	**3.02**				

Notes: (a) SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D =Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1), $\bar{X}$ = Mean. (b) Figures inside parentheses are weights assigned to each response

Table 2 revealed that 85.7% agreed that the education planners believe in introducing flexibility into educational plans to absorb future eventuality while 14.3% disagreed (Mean=3.16). Also, 75.0% of the respondents agreed that the education planners are interested in being flexible in the process of plan implementation, while 25.0% disagreed (Mean=2.93). Again, 73.2% of the respondents agreed that the education planners are unfavorable to the use of compliance monitoring while 25.8% disagreed (Mean=2.84). On the other hand, 92.8% of the respondents believe that education planners are in favor of performance monitoring, while 7.2% disagreed (Mean=3.30). It could also be observed that the education planners encourage team efforts among the DPRS staff, teachers, students, publishers, and the entire public during the formulation of the State education plan (Mean=2.77); believe the more we engage implementers who are not skillful in planning in the education planning process, the better they will understand the strategy for education (Mean=3.27), believe a flexible plan puts the sector in a better position to succeed in this rapidly changing world (Mean=2.41), believe more in result-oriented educational planning than resource-oriented planning since more resources might not translate to more results while more activities might not translate to more achievements. (Mean=3.46). From the result, it is observed that strategic planning is generally accepted in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria (Mean =3.02 > 2.50).

Strategic planning acceptance has been used in this study as synonymous with strategic planning attitude. Baloglu, Karadag and Karaman (2008), confirmed resistance to strategic planning (as opposed to strategic planning acceptance) as one of five valid and reliable measures of strategic planning attitude. This study found that the level of strategic planning acceptance was high in the South West Nigeria. This implies a high positive attitude to strategic planning process and techniques by the officials.   Kalkan and Buzkurt (2013) similarly found a positive attitude towards strategic planning by managers of Turkish SMEs. They also reported other research reports that established similar positive attitudes to (or acceptance of) strategic planning by the managers of United Kingdom and New Zealand. Ali, Crump and Sudin (2014) compared Malaysia and New Zealand and discovered that respondents from both countries agreed that top management commitment to or acceptance of strategic planning at their organizations was equally high. Thompson (2017) examined the strategic planning attitudes measured by level of strategic planning

meaningfulness to members of faculty and similarly found that 66% of members perceived strategic planning process either as very highly or highly meaningful or acceptable.

3. How applicable is strategic planning among the ministry of education DPRS officials?

Table 3: Strategic planning application among DPRS officials

S/N	Application	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$
17	The DPRS engages technical planners, researchers, statisticians, and other members of staff in the Ministry of Education in planning education	16 28.5%	37 66.1%	2 3.6%	1 1.8%	3.52
18	The DPRS engages other stakeholders in education	31 55.3%	21 37.5%	3 5.4%	1 1.8%	3.64
19	The DPRS staff have easy access to the State Education Strategic Plan document (SESP for 2011 - 2020).	12 21.4%	29 51.8%	12 21.4%	3 5.4%	2.29
20	The DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic Operational Plan (SESOP for 1 to 3 years).	28 49.9%	23 41.1%	2 3.6%	3 5.4%	3.04
21	The DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic and Operation Plan (SESP-SESOP)	15 26.8%	26 46.4%	13 23.2%	2 3.6%	3.43
22	The DPRS uses the performance monitoring plan (PMP) to assess the continuous progress towards achieving the state strategic education objectives of SESP-SESOP	24 42.9%	31 55.4%	1 1.8%	0 0.0%	2.86
23	The DPRS periodically holds review meetings to appraise the progress made in education over time (between 2011 and 2020), and if need be, review education strategies.	10 17.9%	31 55.4%	10 17.9%	5 8.9%	3.39
	Average Mean Response				**3.17**	

Notes: (a) SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D =Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1), $\bar{X}$ = Mean. (b) Figures inside parentheses are weights assigned to each response

Table 3 showed that 94.6% of the respondents agreed that the DPRS engages technical planners, researchers, statisticians, and other members of staff in the Ministry of Education in planning education while 5.4% disagreed (Mean= 3.52). More so, 92.8% of the respondents agreed that the DPRS engages other stakeholders outside the Ministry of Education in planning education while 7.2% disagreed (Mean=3.64).

Furthermore, 73.2% of DPRS staff have the State Education Strategic Plan document (Mean=2.29). Moreover, 91.0% also agreed that The DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic Operational (Action) Plan (SESOP for 1 to 3 years), while 9.0% disagreed (Mean=3.04). DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic Operational (Action) Plan (Mean=3.43), uses the performance monitoring plan (PMP) to assess the continuous progress towards achieving the state strategic education objectives (Mean=2.86) and also periodically holds review meetings to appraise the progress made in education over time, and if need be, review education strategies. (Mean=3.39).

It is generally documented that the application of strategic planning tools is critical in private and public organizations to enhance corporate performance by providing a sense of direction, guiding day-to-day decisions, evaluating progress and changing lines of attack when it becomes necessary (Aldehayyat & Anchor, 2008). Yet, research has established that only few organizations use strategic planning methods in practice due to different reasons (Lisinski. & Saruckij, 2010). To this end, George (2016) used theories of contingency and new institutional management to unravel determinants of strategic planning adoption and application. These include external and internal determinants such as unforeseen events, uncertainties or volatilities. They also include institutional pressures such as coercive, mimetic and normative forces in favour of strategic planning adoption and application. Robertson (2011) drew inspiration from contingency theory, new institutional theory and resource theory to identify resource limitation, uncertainty, lack of general communication, lack of morale or confidence as barriers to strategic planning adoption and application.

4. What are the interstate variations in strategic planning awareness, acceptance and application among the sampled states?

Tables 4-6 provide answers to question 4:

Table 4: Interstate variation in strategic planning awareness among officials

S/N		State				
	Awareness	Ekiti	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
1	Strategic planning is different from traditional planning	3.50	3.56	3.50	3.46	3.60
2	Strategic planning is result-oriented rather than being resource-oriented	3.70	3.50	3.67	3.77	3.60
3	Strategic planning involves establishing a direction by assessing both where education is now and where it is going to be in the next five to ten years.	1.90	2.25	2.08	2.54	3.00
4	Strategic planning involves the technocrats, other public servants who are not technocrats and politicians in the education sector	3.70	2.88	2.75	2.92	3.20
5	A well-written strategic plan that tells how best to respond to environmental changes can play a key role in the development of the state's education.	3.60	3.00	3.75	3.46	3.60

S/N		Ekiti	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
6	The education strategic plan contains education purpose, vision and ideals, long-standing goals and the operational plans	3.00	2.81	2.75	2.77	3.20
7	Strategic planners mobilize and involve all other stakeholders outside the education sector in arriving at the desired activities to be implemented in the next three to five years.	3.70	3.38	3.42	3.15	3.40
8	Educational planners in our state are strategic planners	3.30	3.44	3.50	3.54	3.20
	Average Mean Response	**3.30**	**3.10**	**3.18**	**3.20**	**3.35**

Table 4 revealed a slight interstate variation in strategic planning awareness across South West Nigeria. The level of strategic planning awareness varied from 3.35 in Oyo state to 3.30 in Ekiti state, 3.20 in Osun state, 3.18 in Ondo state and 3.10 in Ogun State. Evidence from Turkey and United Kingdom indicates that significant difference between the strategic planning practices in the two countries emanates from the interaction between strategic knowledge and strategic attitude. Glaister, Dincer, Tatoglu & Demirbag (2009) found that Turkish firms rather than UK firms were more favourably disposed to strategic planning (it appears that Turkey was higher than UK in strategic acceptance) despite the adoption and use of a range of methods by UK firms than by Turkish firms (UK was probably higher in strategic awareness than Turkey).

Table 5: Interstate variation in strategic planning acceptance among officials

S/N	Acceptance	State				
		Ekiti	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
9	The education planners in my state believe in introducing flexibility into educational plans to absorb future eventuality	3.20	3.56	3.17	3.23	3.00
10	The education planners in my state are interested in being flexible in the process of plan implementation.	2.20	3.50	2.75	3.38	3.40
11	The education planners are unfavorable to the use of compliance monitoring in the education sector	3.30	2.25	2.58	2.69	3.40
12	The education planners are in favor of performance monitoring of planned activities	3.60	2.88	3.25	3.69	3.20
13	The education planners encourage team efforts among the DPRS staff, teachers, students, publishers, and the entire public during the state education plan formulation.	3.20	3.00	2.50	2.77	3.20
14	The education planners believe the more we engage implementers who are not skillful in planning in the education planning process, the better they will	3.60	2.81	3.25	3.38	3.60

S/N		Ekiti	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
	understand the strategy for education					
15	The education planners believe flexibility may lengthen the time to achieve a goal, yet a flexible plan puts the sector in a better position to succeed in this rapidly changing world.	2.30	3.38	1.83	2.38	3.00
16	The education planners in this state believe more in result-oriented educational planning than resource-oriented planning since more resources might not translate to more results while more activities might not translate to more achievements.	3.70	3.44	3.58	3.38	3.20
	Average Mean response	**3.14**	**3.10**	**2.86**	**3.11**	**3.25**

Table 5 shows a slight interstate variation in strategic planning acceptance (or positive attitude) by ministry of education officials in South West Nigeria in spite of the general moderately high acceptance of strategic planning across the five States. The acceptance level varied from 3.25 in Oyo State to 3.14 in Ekiti State, 3.11 in Osun State, 3.10 in Osun State and 2.86 in Ondo State. This study found a close interstate variation of between 2.86 and 3.25 in strategic planning acceptance in South West Nigeria. This validates Ali, Crump and Sudin (2014) who found close international variation of between 3.4 and 3.9 in top management commitment to (or acceptance of) strategic planning practices in Malaysia and New Zealand despite their diverse cultural backgrounds.

Table 6: Interstate differences in strategic planning application among officials

S/N	Application	State				
		Ekiti	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
17	The DPRS engages technical planners, researchers, statisticians, and other members of staff in the Ministry of Education in planning education	3.00	3.50	3.17	3.15	3.00
18	The DPRS engages other stakeholders in education	3.40	3.50	3.58	3.54	3.20
19	The DPRS staff have easy access to the State Education Strategic Plan document (SESP for 2011 - 2020).	3.20	3.13	2.58	2.62	3.20
20	The DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic Operational Plan (SESOP for 1 to 3 years).	3.60	2.88	3.50	3.54	3.60
21	The DPRS regularly monitors the compliance with performance indicators or targets as in the State Education Strategic and Operation Plan (SESP-SESOP)	3.30	2.69	3.33	2.54	3.40

22	The DPRS uses the performance monitoring plan (PMP) to assess the continuous progress towards achieving the state strategic education objectives of SESP-SESOP	3.70	3.19	3.50	3.46	3.20
23	The DPRS periodically holds review meetings to appraise the progress made in education over time (between 2011 and 2020), and if need be, review education strategies.	3.20	2.81	2.42	2.77	3.20
	Average Mean Response	**3.34**	**3.10**	**3.15**	**3.09**	**3.26**

Table 6 revealed a striking similarity in the level of strategic planning application in the South West Nigeria. The level of strategic planning application, that was generally moderately high, varied from 3.34 in Ekiti through 3.60 in Oyo State, 3.10 in Ogun State, 3.15 in Ondo State, and 3.09 in Osun State.

Multiple regression analysis

$H_0 1$: There is no significant influence of strategic planning awareness and acceptance on its application

Table 7: Influence of strategic planning awareness and acceptance on its application

Dependent	Predictors	B	T	P	R	R^2	F	P
Application	Awareness	0.059	0.485	>.05	0.581	0.338	13.527	0.00
	Acceptance	0.556	4.598	<.05				

Table 7 shows the relative and joint influence of awareness and acceptance of strategic planning on its application in the Ministry of Education. The result revealed that joint contribution of awareness and acceptance of strategic planning to the application is significant (F=13.527, p=0.00) which is an indication that awareness and acceptance of strategic planning among education planners are germane to its application. The result further revealed an insignificant independent contribution of strategic planning awareness (β=0.059, p>0.05), whereas strategic planning acceptance made a significant contribution to its application (β=0.556, p<0.05). From the result, it could be deduced that it is only acceptance of strategic planning that made a significant contribution to its application in the sample states.

It is striking that the level of strategic planning acceptance is lower than that of strategic planning awareness, despite the significant contribution of awareness to strategic planning application. Nevertheless, studies such as Davis (2019) have explained that low level of acceptance is sometimes associated with change from a transactional method of planning to a transformational model. Transactional planning also known as traditional long-range planning adopts a defensive strategy in which the planner focuses on better use of

resources to achieve organization's objectives without any fundamental changes in the organization. By being cautious to preserve longstanding practices, officials believe they would avert avoidable risks. Nevertheless, by doing so, the organization is likely to become irrelevant over time. Invariably, senior managers and top policymakers usually find transactional planning easily acceptable and applicable. Transformational approach or strategic planning, on the other hand, is an offensive strategy that has known and unknown implications on organizational structure, staff, systems and leadership style (Babalola, Nsibande & Babalola 2019). This is because it is often associated with drastic transformation resulting in moving an organization in a new and unfamiliar direction. Consequently, many senior officials find a strategic planning approach somehow unacceptable and difficult to apply. It is therefore, expected that, since strategic planning was at its infancy in South West Nigeria, high strategic planning awareness might not translate to complementary high strategic planning acceptance. It was with this understanding that SESP-SESOP II adopted the transformational approach to empower the State officials through consultants who would work closely with them to boost culture of change and thereby raise their strategic planning awareness, acceptance and application (Obanya, 2011; UNESCO, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the discussion, the levels of strategic awareness and application are higher than that of strategic planning acceptance; yet, only strategic planning acceptance significantly contribute to the application of strategic planning in sample States. For instance, someone can have strategic planning awareness but fails to accept (thus resist) its application for a reason(s) well known to them. Although both strategic planning awareness and strategic planning acceptance are important in enhancing strategic planning application, if the State education strategic planning application is to be improved in the sampled States, measures to enhance the level of strategic planning acceptance among the ministry of education officials should be prioritized. There is a need for a deliberate cultural shift to nurturing values of creativity and change to make senior civil servants to whole-heartedly accept and apply strategic planning without reverting to their traditional long-term planning practices. There is need to engage in continuous professional development on strategic planning methods within the ministry coupled with institutional pressures to sustain the strategic process.

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