

## **GOOD LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING IS A PANACEA TO IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY OF WORKERS**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study ascertains that good leadership, planning and decision making is a panacea to improved productivity of workers. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. Using a simple random sampling techniques, 100 workers were selected to form the sample size of the study. Data gathered through questionnaires was analyzed using mean scores. The findings of the study revealed that organizations that have good leadership, planning and decision-making processes, make available the right tools for work performance, record and acknowledged the improved productivity of workers. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made: Having discussed the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made. Organizations and other employers of labour who have not created enabling working environment should create one in other to enhance productivity. The job situation must be good/clearly communicated and merits must be fairly compensated. Employers should develop a family kind of relationship within and among their workers so that they can get the best out of the workers. Provide proper motivation that would leads to better working habits and increased productivity. In conclusion, organizations that set relevant goals and objectives should communicate same to the workers in clear terms, and provide modern technologies for job performance to achieve maximum productivity.*

**KEYWORDS:** Leadership, Planning, Decision-Making, Productivity.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's business environment, leaders and decision-makers are the main link between the organization's goals and the workers who are responsible for the daily activities that make those goals a reality. Because of their necessary and integral role, leaders, planners and decision-makers are 'KEY' to the success of any organization. The many daily decisions required within this role affect profits, productivity, and service levels as well as attitudes and workers morale. The role of leadership, planning and decision-making to an organization is very important. We cannot run away from planning and decision-making because one who refuses to plan and make the right decision, already plans to fail. That is why organizations which strive to be successful and make viable progress never ceases to plan for now and the future. Planning, however, must be made in a rational, responsible manner, without bias or pre-conceived ideas. It should also consider the emotional intelligence element in decision-making that takes into account the human aspect, long-term consideration and understanding emotion as a powerful tool in decision-making. You plan, and then make decision of a choice.

Decision-making is to consider alternatives choices and taken action to better performance and increase productivity. It is therefore a process which can be more or less rational or irrational and can be based on explicit knowledge or tacit knowledge. Decision-making and problem solving are ongoing processes of evaluating situations or problems, considering alternatives, making choices, and following them up with the necessary actions. Organizations operate by

people making decisions. A manager (leader) plans, organizes, staffs, leads, and controls her team by executing decisions. The effectiveness and quality of those decisions determine how successful a manager (leader) will be. Decision-making is an accepted part of everyday human life – (Cole 1996).

Buchanan and O' Connel (2006) in Harvard Business Review gave a brief history of decision-making. In their presentation, they said Chester Barnard and advances in technology that support and mimic cognitive processes have improved decision making in many situations. According to them, the history of decision-making strategies is not one of unalloyed progress toward perfect rationalism. In fact, over the years we have steadily been coming to terms with constraints both contextual and psychological on our ability to make optimal choices. Complex circumstances, limited time, and inadequate mental computational power reduce decision makers to a state of "bounded rational," argues Simon. While Simon suggests that people would make economically rational decisions if only they could gather enough information, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky identify factors that cause people to decide against their economic interest even when they know better.

In their conclusion, they said faced with the imperfectability of decision-making, theorists have sought ways to achieve, if not optimal outcomes, at least acceptable ones. GerdGigerenzer urges us to make a virtue of our limited time and knowledge by mastering simple heuristics, an approach he calls "fast and frugal" reasoning.

The leaders are the ones making the planning and decisions that would be followed by the workers. Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007). According to Cyprus (2015) the leadership process is the ongoing relationship between leaders and followers to accomplish company goals. Leadership is basically the influence of a leader in achieving shared goals through followers. The process of leaders and followers working together is different for businesses. Cyprus (2015) says the concept of a team is extremely important in the leadership process, as the focus should be on the followers as well as the leader.

### **Statement of the problem**

In today's business organizations, leadership, planning and decision-making are the propelling forces for success. But where plans are not clearly defined by the leaders, and the purpose of the organization not made known to the workforce, problems are bound to creep up. Where, as a result of poor leadership, plans and the decisions for achieving goals and objectives are not communicated clearly to the organization's constituents, there is a problem. Workers may not know what is required of them by the organization. In such a situation, there is the tendency for attitudinal problems, high costs, low productivity, poor individual and corporate results etc. Poor leadership, planning and decision-making have led some organizations to indebtedness, inefficiency and ineffectiveness thereby decreasing productivity.

### **Purpose of the study**

The general purpose of this study was to use good leadership, planning and decision-making successes to address the incessant problems of bad leadership which leads to poor plans and wrong decisions taken that have jeopardized the aspirations of the workers and the goals of an organization, thereby causing low workers morale and low productivity. The followings are the specific purposes for carrying out this study.

1. To determine the way and extent organizations communicate goals and objectives to their workers to enable increased productivity.
2. To ascertain the extent effective use can be made of the organizations' resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.
3. To what extent can increased productivity from increased efficiency and effectiveness be obtained and sustained?
4. To find out ways to provide clearer focus of organizations, producing more efficiently and effectively.

### **Research questions.**

1. Since the past four years, to what extent have you had any improvement in the way you do your work ?
2. Are you aware of the goals and objectives of your company and your role in achieving them?
3. What efforts made by your organization have improved your productivity or made you to be more productive?
4. To what extent are you empowered to do your job without interference?

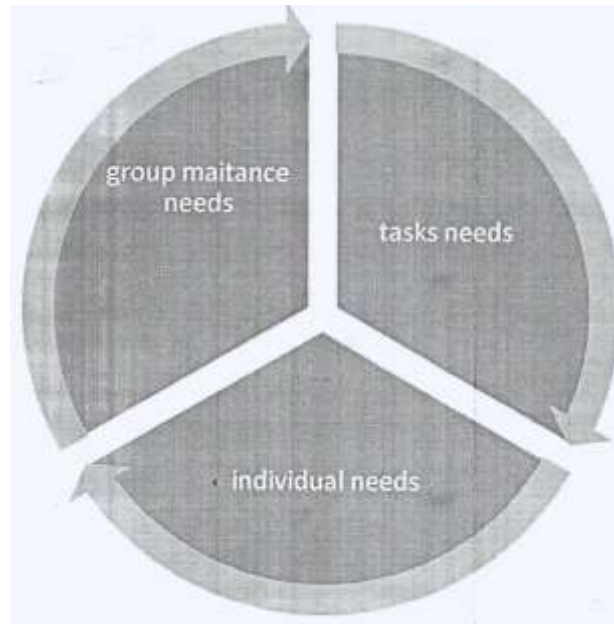
### **What is Leadership, Planning and Decision-Making?**

Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals - Robbins (1999). To Cole (2002) Leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals.

Armstrong, (2010) asserts that leadership is the process of setting the direction and ensuring that the members of the leader's organization or team give of their best to achieve the desired result. He further states that leaders have three essential roles. These roles are as follows:

- i. Define the task - they make it quite clear what the group is expected to do.
- ii. Achieve the task - leaders ensure that the group's purpose is fulfilled. If it is not, the result is frustration, disharmony, criticism, and eventually perhaps disintegration of the group.
- iii. Maintain effective relationships - between themselves and the members of the group. These relationships are effective if they contribute to achieving the task. They can be divided into those concerned with the team and its morale and sense of common purpose, and those concerned with individuals and how they are motivated - Armstrong (2010).

### The Three Circle Model Of Leadership Needs



**Source:** Armstrong (2010) Leadership Needs.

According to Armstrong this model suggests that the task, individual and group needs are interdependent. Satisfying task needs will also satisfy group and individual needs. Task needs, he said, however, cannot be met unless attention is paid to individual and group needs and vice versa. There is a danger in becoming so task - oriented that you ignore individual and group or team needs. It is just as dangerous to be too people - oriented, focusing on meeting individual or group needs at the expense of the task. The best leaders are those who keep these three needs satisfied and in balance according to the demands of the situation.

Leadership as an organizational process can positively or negatively affect the performance of an employee if not properly checked. The employee's performance depends on the actions and inactions of the leader. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr. (2009) asserts that leadership is the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of group members.

Mullins (2008) asserts that an essential part of management is coordinating the activities of people and guiding their efforts towards the goals and objectives of the organization. This involves the process of leadership and the choice of an appropriate form of action and behaviour. Leadership is a central feature of organizational performance. The manager needs to understand the nature of leadership influence, factors that determine relationships with other people and the effectiveness of the leadership relationship.

Planning (Longman Dictionary 2003) is thinking carefully about something you want to do now or in the future and decide exactly how you will do it . decision, on the hand, is a choice or judgment that you make after a period of discussion or thought. Decision-making is the process of thinking about a problem, an idea etc and then making a choice or judgment. Planning requires a state of mind that has space for the future, is versatile enough to perceive different possible scenes and creative to think out new solutions for possible problems and issues that may arise. Leadership, planning and decision-making are essential and very important skills in the business tool kit of managers in the 21 century.

According to Cole (1996) "planning is about taking steps (making plans) to agree on the means by which aims and objectives will be fulfilled. This is much concerned with decision-making processes as with provision of resources and the allocation of time schedules". Planning is a key aspect of the management process. Basically, it is a decision-making process by which an organization decides what it wants to achieve, how it intends to achieve it and what manner. Every decision we make, in the business organization or in life is bound by just two options. Like switch with ON or OFF indicators. We either make one or the other - there are no variances to this but sometimes, mistakes are made because we see it as choice. In the business environment, there are many complex situations in which one must understand in order to maximize or increase the benefits of success. Complex solutions are a way that management planners and decision-makers can understand changes in their businesses. If the understanding starts with the complex solutions, then success is achieved. Human beings are very complex and they constitute a major aspect of every organization's resources. Information, facilities, materials, finance, machinery equipment supplies are supporting nonhuman resources that complement workers in their quests to fulfill the organization's goals and objectives. The value placed on the human beings and non human resources affect the organization's environment. Leaders need to adopt to change as a way of life, often resulting in economic uncertainty in which their responsibility is to make the kind of decisions that build trust and confidence in their workers and clients. This a crucial key to improved productivity and stability.

### **The extent to which leadership, planning and decision-making can lead to improved productivity.**

Kanter (2008) Leadership is not about the leader, it is about how he or she builds the confidence of everyone else. Leaders are responsible for both the big structures that serve as the cornerstone of confidence, and for the human touches that shape a positive emotional climate to inspire and motivate people. Leaders deliver confidence by espousing high standards in their messages, exemplifying these standards in the conduct they model and establishing formal mechanisms to provide a structure for acting on those standards. In the workplace, a leader can no longer depend entirely on the use of his position in the hierarchical structure as a way of exercising the functions of leadership. A leader must acknowledge the needs of the employee and encourage high morale, cooperation, willingness to work, commitment to the expected results of performance. Employees would work effectively for leaders who regard them as contributors to the overall goal achievement. Planning involves how an output can be produced in a specified period of time. Productivity is measured with this formula: Productivity = quantity of goods and services produced / 100

$$\frac{\text{amount of resources used}}{\text{output}} \times 100$$

Productivity is measured by the ratio of output to input. An increase in the ratio indicates an increase in productivity. While a decrease in the output to input indicates a decline in productivity time. Productivity is the relationship between production of an output to one or all the resources inputs used in accomplishing the assigned task. It is measured as a ratio of output per unit of input over time. It is a measure of efficiency and time. Adebayo (2001) as cited in Etekpe (2012), asserts that productivity is usually associated with efficiency, as "a ratio between input and output, effort and result, expenditure and income, cost and the resulting pleasure".

Rouse (2014) asserts that employee productivity (sometimes referred to as workforce productivity) is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. Productivity may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. Typically, the productivity of a given worker will be assessed relative to an average for employees doing similar work. Because much of the success of any organization relies upon the productivity of its workforce, employees productivity is an important consideration for organizations. Employees' productivity depends on the amount of time an individual is physically present at his job and also the degree to which he is mentally present or efficiently functioning while present at his job. In order to maintain high employees' productivity, organizations must address both of these issues. Strategies that could focus/boost employees' health, morale and satisfaction can be applied. Management is the process of efficiently getting work done with and through other people. People differ not only in their appearance but also in their capabilities, depending on their training, background and experience. It will be disastrous for management to ignore to appropriately handle employees' productivity issues timely. When employees' are not well managed, it portends danger for the organization. An organization cannot be efficient if the human resource is not recognized. Organizational processes are meant to provide life to an organization. These organizational activities or behavioural processes that contribute to effective or ineffective employees' productivity include communication, decision-making, and leadership processes. Productivity of the employee is the driving force behind an organization's growth and profitability. Productivity is the relationship between output of goods and services of the workers of the organization and input of resources, human and non-human, used in the production process. The higher the numerical value of this ratio, the greater the productivity (Onah, 2008). Thus, productivity can be applied at any level, whether for individuals, for work unit, for the organization. Productivity has been defined as the accomplishment of a set result. It is reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources. Ikeanyibe (2009) opines that when employees' are unproductive, they take longer time to complete projects, which cost employers more money due to the time lost.

Productivity has to do with the amount of output produced based on the amount of resources (money and time) that go into production. Efficiency is also considered here. An organization that plans to use modern technology will increase output in the long run with fewer inputs. For example, a secretary that used to type with a manual typewriter who uses a computer will produce more results with less stress in a day. That is improved productivity. Through good leadership and good planning coupled with right choices, organizations improve productivity in a number of ways. One of the ways is the automation and computerization which minimize the tasks that has to be done by workers. Offices are well designed and workers' comfort is considered. An employee that is comfortable is likely to produce more than another employee who struggles to do his job. Improved productivity can affect society more widely, by improving living standards, and generating income. Multinational organizations are more sensitive to training needs of their employees now more than ever. None productive employee is shown the way out. This has made other employees to be more serious with their jobs. We are in a global setting and the potential benefits of higher outputs and growth, economic efficiency and availability of better products and services far outweigh the costs involved. Also the quest for competitiveness is a positive push towards improved productivity of workers.

Through good leadership, planning and decision-making, there is also the increasing acknowledgement that competitiveness based on productivity improvement is a great benefit that would avert cancan wars in conditions of service. Planning is one of the essential things

one needs to do to stay above board. Planning entails analysis, examinations, actions etc. An organization may engage in planning for a variety of reasons - to identify a common vision, clarify direction, solve problems, achieve goals etc. The role planning plays is that (i) it allows organizations to keep pace with changing client needs, funding, and program priorities. (ii) it allows organizations to improve on communication within and outside, properly facilitate coordination of programs, and also heighten corporate involvement. (iii) it allows organizations to understand their markets better, thus improving the financial stability of every program. (iv) it allows organizations to enhance funding levels and increase legitimacy with corporate and government entities. (v) it enables managers to enhance their ability to control resources critical to the survival and sustenance of the organization. This improved productivity can be obtained through persistent product and process innovation, steady improvement of organization of work, human resources development, being flexible to adapt to the constantly changing environment, total quality orientation, focusing on the markets and customers' need. In every society, workers are the key actors at any level in the pursuit of improved productivity. Fortunately, most organizations and leaders are embracing active participation of workers and teamwork that empowerment entails. And with proper guidance, and commitment from the employees of the organization, reduced costs, more innovation, improved customer service etc would be gained. Also response time may improve, because information and decisions need not be transmitted up and down the hierarchy. All these are benefits of adequate leadership and planning which could lead to improved productivity of workers. It is important to empower employees because they are closer to the daily problems to be solved or even the customer to serve can make the necessary decisions more easily than a leader who is far from the scene.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design** - The study used the survey research design.

**Population of the study** - The population of the study comprised 200 workers in the two organizations studied in Port Harcourt.

**Sample size for the study** - A simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 workers to form the sample size of the study. This represents 50% of the total population.

**Research Instrument** - The instrument used for the study is a self designed questionnaire structured in such a way as to elicit the desired responses from the respondents. The questions covered the beliefs, attitude and aspirations of the workers. The research questions consist of 20 items based on a four scale response scale, ranging from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). A criterion norm was used to accept or reject the findings thus:

1.00 - 1.50

1.51 - 2.50

2.51 - 3.50

3.51 - and above.

To get the mean score, the total response item, that exceeds 2.50 is accepted while below 2.50 were rejected.

## Data Collection

A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed through the aid of a research assistant to the sample size. The retrieval was done four days after and 90 duly completed copies were retrieved. The remaining 10 copies were discarded due to wrong completion.

## RESULTS

The responses were analyzed and presented in tables based on the research questions posited.

**Research Question One:** Since the past four years, to what extent have you had any improvement in the way you do your work ?

**Table one: a general description of good leadership and planning benefits.**

S/N	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL SCORES	MEAN SCORES
1.	There is tremendous improvement in the way task is performed.	320	3.55
2.	As a result of the improvement, output has increased.	320	3.55
3.	Stress is reduced as a result of appropriate working tools.	320	3.55
4.	Work is smooth as a result of clear information.	320	3.55
5.	With all the improvements, work is still frustrating.	200	2.22

Table one above reveals that a total score of 320 (3.55 MS) of the respondents indicated that there is tremendous improvement in the way task is performed. The reason is that appropriate working tools are provided by the organization. Therefore output has increased, and stress is also reduced to the barest minimum. A total score of 200 (2.22 MS) respondents indicated that with all the improvements, work is still frustrating. The analysis from table one indicated that good leadership and planning is a sure way to better productivity.

**Research Question Two:** Are you aware of the goals and objectives of your company and your role in achieving them?

**Table two: Organizations' communicate goals and objectives and the employee's role in achieving them.**

S/N	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL SCORES	MEAN SCORES
6.	The goals and objectives of the organization are communicated to me and my role in achieving them.	320	3.55
7.	As a result of the organization's openness, it has produced more efficiency and effectiveness on the part of the workers.	320	3.55
8.	It is that improved results and productivity which begin to develop the positive attitudes that govern the workers' behaviour.	320	3.55
9.	Leaders who are people oriented bring out the best in their workers.	320	3.55
10.	The flow of communication is swift and steady in the organization.	320	3.55



Table two above reveals that a total score of 320 (3.55 MS) of the respondents indicated that they are aware of the organization's goals and their roles are made clear to them. All the respondents in table two strongly agreed that their organization has been fair to them. Their organization is open to them and carries them along. As a result they have experienced efficiency and effectiveness. They have right attitude and behaviour toward their work.

**Research Three:** What efforts made by your organization have improved your productivity or made you to be more productive?

**Table three: Efforts made by the organization for improved productivity.**

S/N	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL SCORES	MEAN SCORES
11.	My organization uses automation and computerization which have made the job stress free.	320	3.55
12.	Workers' comfort is considered and offices are well designed.	320	3.55
13.	The right tools and funds are readily made available.	320	3.55
14.	The leadership create room for regular training for the workers.	320	3.55
15.	There is the culture of regular maintenance of equipment in my organization.	320	3.55

Table three above reveals that all the respondents in the table strongly agreed that their work environment is comfortable, tools and funds are readily made available and they use modern technology to do their jobs. Regular training for deserving workers are available and regular maintenance of equipment.

**Research Question Four:** To what extent are you empowered to do your job without interference?

**Table Four: Workers' empowerment.**

S/N	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL SCORES	MEAN SCORES
16.	My organization allows me to make decisions that affects my job	251	2.79
17.	There is greater commitment on the part of staff because their organization empowers them.	320	3.55
18.	Information and decision need not necessarily be transmitted up and down the hierarchy which has improved response time.	254	2.82
19.	I am given opportunity to use my skills and abilities to the fullest capacity.	320	3.55
20.	I do have clear and concise delegation of task.	320	3.55

Table Four above revealed that a total score of 251 (2.79 MS) of the respondents indicated that they are often allowed to make decisions that affect their jobs. 320 (3.55 MS) said they have greater commitment because they are empowered. 320 (3.55 MS) all agreed that they are given

opportunities to use their skills to the fullest. And also have clear and concise delegation of work.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

In relation to research question 1 which attempted to examine the extent workers had any improvement in the way they do their work, the findings revealed that there is tremendous improvement in the way task is performed. The reason is that appropriate working tools are provided by the organization. Therefore output has increased, and stress is also reduced to the barest minimum. The analysis from table one indicated that good leadership and planning is a sure way to better productivity. Productivity of the employee as we know is the driving force behind an organization's growth and profitability. Productivity is the relationship between output of goods and services of the workers of the organization and input of resources, human and non-human, used in the production process. The higher the numerical value of this ratio, the greater the productivity (Onah, 2008). Thus, productivity can be applied at any level, whether for individuals, for work unit, for the organization.

For research question 2, which sought to know the employees awareness of the goals and objectives of company and their roles in achieving them, it was revealed that they are aware of the organization's goals and their roles are made clear to them. Their organizations are open to them and carried them along. As a result they have experienced efficiency and effectiveness. They have the right attitude and behaviour towards their work. This is in line with Rouse (2014) which asserts that employee productivity (sometimes referred to as workforce productivity) is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers.

For research question 3, which sought to know the efforts made by their organizations which have improved their productivity or made them to be more productive, the findings reveals that all the respondents strongly agreed that their work environment is comfortable, tools and funds are readily made available and they use modern technology to do their jobs. Regular training for deserving workers are available and regular maintenance of equipment. This is in line with the view of Kanter (2008) that Leadership is not about the leader, it is about how he or she builds the confidence of everyone else. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr. (2009) also assert that leadership is the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of group members.

For research question 4, which sought to know the extent employees are empowered to do their jobs without interference, it was revealed that revealed that they are often allowed to make decisions that affect their jobs. And that they have greater commitment because they are empowered. They also all agreed that they are given opportunities to use their skills to the fullest. And also have clear and concise delegation of work. This is in line with the view of Armstrong, (2010) who asserts that leadership is the process of setting the direction and ensuring that the members of the leader's organization or team give of their best to achieve the desired result.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the findings, the research notes that leaders have also discovered that right decisions and planning are key to the success of any organization. It is also important to praise workers for hard work and faithfulness. Every superior officer has the opportunity, authority, and duty to praise those who serve or work under him/her when they act in a praise-worthy manner. A successful manager gives praise and guidance to others. Commend and reward praise-worthy actions in workers. It is a complement to the manager as well when workers under him/her are worthy of the rewards. All these are done to improve workers' productivity. Cole (2002) asserts that leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals. Organizations that set goals and objectives should communicate same to the workers in clear terms, and provide modern technologies for job performance to achieve maximum productivity.

### **Implications of the study**

The first implication of this study is that in any organization where the people at the top of the hierarchy (leaders) fail to make appropriate plans and make decisive and appropriate choices, that organization is definitely heading for destruction (fold-up) in no time. Another implication is that, most times organizations fail to properly communicate and implement the good plans and the right decisions agreed upon. This means that the organization will encounter serious problems. Our plans and decisions shape our lives and the organization. Whether made consciously or unconsciously, with good or bad consequences, they represent the fundamental tool we use in facing the opportunities, the challenges, and the uncertainties of life. Sometimes we make plans and decisions too quickly, or too slowly, or too arbitrarily. The result: a mediocre choice, dependent on luck for success. It's only afterwards that we realize we could have made a smarter choice and by then it's too late.

This study is especially timely in the sense that it would address the above-mentioned implications if the study is adhered to.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having discussed the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Organizations and other employers of labour who have not created an enabling working environment should create one in order to enhance productivity.
2. The job situation must be good/clearly communicated and merits must be fairly compensated.
3. Employers should develop a family-kind of relationship within and among their workers so that they can get the best out of the workers.
4. Provide proper motivation that would lead to better working habits and increased productivity.

### Contribution to Knowledge

It is true that a study on leadership, planning and decision-making are not new as is evidenced in the reviews, but to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, none so far has specifically studied good leadership, planning and decision-making as a panacea to improved productivity of workers. Again, the present study has confirmed existing knowledge on leadership, planning and decision-making and how it relates to employees' productivity. It has also shown that most often employees are ready to give their best if the leadership provides appropriate plans and make right decision choices that will bring a win-win situation. This is the contribution of the study to knowledge. Therefore, this study has added to the existing body of literature on the studied subject matter.

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