

**STRATEGIC THINKING AND THE FORMATION OF FUTURE
LEADERS IN NIGERIAN NAVAL INSTITUTIONS: A
THEORETICAL INQUIRY**

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ABSTRACT: This paper theoretically examines strategic thinking and the development of future leaders in Nigerian naval institutions, with a focus on Accounts, Budget, and allied naval offices. The objectives of the study include to determine the link between analytical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; investigate the connection between creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; find the nexus between practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; analyse how relational strategic thinking may influence future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions. The study employs the extant literature method. It uses the Cognitive Domain Theory (1956). The research uses both conceptual and empirical literature to address the research objectives. It finds that that analytical strategic thinking is essential for future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; there is a formidable connection between creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; There is a nexus between practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions; relational strategic thinking is a strategic tool for sustainable future leadership in Nigerian naval institutions. The paper concludes that any naval institution that relegates strategic thinking to the background risks weak leadership in the future. It recommends that the Nigerian Navy needs to ensure that future leaders in its institutions demonstrate analytical thinking by being evidential and logical in their financial and allied dealings in the organizations; future leaders in naval institutions, especially accounts, budget and allied leaders, should learn to think outside the box so as to invoke innovativeness in their official assignments consistently; prospective and present leaders in naval institutions, especially accounts, budget and allied leaders, need to be realistic and practical in their efficient use of scarce resources; prospective leaders in naval institutions, especially accounts, budget and allied leaders, need to develop sound human relations and emotional intelligence competences to enhance their relational thinking abilities.

Keywords: Strategic Thinking, Analytical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Naval Institutions.

Introduction

Any public sector entity that desires to groom prospective leaders for sound organizational outcomes may never relegate to the background the power and relevance of strategic thinking. Strategic thinking (cogitatio strategica) has been defined by authorities in the area of Management. Strategic thinking is the process whereby one considers diverse factors and various variables while

considering one's goals and core objectives with a view to developing clear action plans. It entails the setting of very clear but actionable goals in such a way that the achievability of the goals is determined with sound determination of the time frame and in consideration of the possible results or outcomes, challenges or difficulties and even the opportunities that may come up. Adams (2025) maintains that strategic thinking represents a keystone or pillar of intentional thought processes and rational thought processes necessary in navigating the very complexities of business; the very complexities of team dynamics and the complexities of those individual endeavours that require both strategic and critical thinking. It focuses on proactive identification of risks as well as proactive mitigation of risks while capitalising earnestly on the emerging prospects. The foregoing indicates that strategic thinking is strictly anchored on analysing complex situations, anticipating future outcomes and making informed decisions to achieve long-term goals. It seriously emphasises the evaluation of options, the weighing of risks and benefits, as well as the identification of effective action causes for the creation of competitive advantage. It focuses on seeing the big picture; planning ahead, and putting thoughts into action to achieve specific objectives. Indeed, Goswami and Haire (2023) assert that strategic thinking delves into the foundation pillars of an organization with the aim of identifying or unearthing the missing element that prohibits the realization of the organization's full potential; it has a lot to do with scrutinizing conventional organizational approaches so as to unlock new perspectives and pathways for success. It therefore involves the capacity to analyse rationally and flexibly or seamlessly navigate through situations that are critical, envision long-term goals while developing step-by-step plans for the realisation or achievement of the goals with a mindset full of agility and dynamism.

There are various indices of strategic thinking. Akpuru-Aja (2017) opines that strategic thinking involves linear and non-linear thinking; symmetrical and asymmetrical thinking; conventional and non-conventional thinking; clockwise and anti-clockwise thinking; common sense and uncommon nonsense thinking; imaginative and unimaginative thinking; better case scenario and worst case scenario thinking; thinking inside the box and thinking outside the box. He recognises that employment of intuitive, critical and systemic approaches is necessary for the achievement of policy objectives. Even Wegwu (2024) recognises cognitive thinking and creative thinking as indices of strategic thinking. Indeed, Olaleye, Akkaya, Emeagwali, Awwad and Hamdan (2020) identify systematic thinking, divergent thought and reflection as components of strategic thinking. These views show that strategic thinking can be analytical, creative, practical, relational, intuitive and systemic.

Havard Business School (2020) reveals that the following ways can improve strategic thinking skills: asking strategic questions, observing and reflecting, considering opposing ideas, embracing formal training, and by doing SWOT analysis. There are also various challenges of strategic thinking for future leaders. They are: lack of strategic expertise, short-term focus, groupthink, inadequate information and data, as well as misalignment with organisational goals (betterboards.net).

In the context of this paper therefore, strategic thinking is the ability of organizational human resources and top management to see and understand the bigger picture of what the organization is, where it needs to go and how it will get there by employing those strategic thinking competences like analytical thinking, creative thinking, practical thinking and relational thinking with a view to

purposefully shaping prospective but sound leaders in the Nigerian Naval institutions. This also agrees with the view of Njoku (2025).

Ideally, shaping future leaders requires the grooming of prospective leaders not only in quantitative or qualitative reasoning but in strategic thinking competencies. Leadership remains the driving force that navigates any organisation to its desired destination at each point in time. It happens at the lower level, middle level and top level wings of any corporate entity. Barney and Pratt (2023) define leadership as “the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers or members of an organisation, society or team”. This indicates that leadership denotes the capacity ‘to influence and guide a group of people towards a common goal’. There are also various leadership styles. The Corporate Finance Institute (CFI) (2025) reveals that leadership styles are the behavioural approaches which leaders use to influence their followers, to motivate them, and to direct them. It is a truism that a leadership style adopted by any leader is usually a blend of his/her personality, experiences in life, degree of emotional intelligence, family characteristics and dynamics as well as the way or pattern of thinking. Leadership usually adopts democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, transformational, transactional, bureaucratic and servant leadership styles. The situational style, however, appears to be most appropriate.

There are various leadership styles. The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) (2025) opines that effective leadership skills are very important in a professional capacity and personal level. They are essential for the facilitation of sound team dynamics, success driving, management of change and the promotion of personal as well as professional development. These skills include relationship building, agility and adaptability, innovation and creativity, employee motivation, decision making, conflict management, negotiation and critical thinking.

This researcher has observed that many prospective leaders in Nigerian organisations find it difficult and are sometimes unable to demonstrate strategic thinking abilities in their current job roles as mid-level or even lower level leaders. This is aggravated by the scarcity of empirical and conceptual literatures on strategic thinking as it affects Nigerian organizations especially the military organizations. This exposes a very wide research gap and training need for organizational members. The identified research gaps constitute the major problem of this study. This paper, therefore, examines the relevance of strategic thinking to the shaping of future leaders in Nigerian Naval institutions. It attempts to establish the nexus between each of the analytical thinking, creative thinking, practical thinking and relational thinking, and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions. This is with a view to bridging research gaps, controlling to knowledge and boosting leadership abilities in naval institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to assess the nexus between strategic thinking and the shaping of future leaders in the Nigerian Naval institutions. The specific objectives include to:

- i) Determine the link between analytical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.

- ii) Investigate the connection between creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.
- iii) Find the nexus between practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.
- iv) Analyse how relational strategic thinking may influence future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Analytical Strategic Thinking and Future Leadership in Nigerian Naval Institutions

Unarguably, analytical thinking involves gathering and analyzing data to properly understand the current situation with a view to identifying potential opportunities and challenges. It emphasises the use of logic and evidence to make informed decisions. Cousera (2025) maintains that analytical thinking involves the use of a systematic approach in making decisions or for solving problems. Immediately analytical thinkers identify any problem, such thinkers gather more information; they go ahead developing possible actions while testing them and analysing which one works best. Giving solutions to complex problems always demand analytical reasoning which many a time requires the determination of causation (whether and how a particular event causes another); examination of similarities and both differences and possible relationships; prediction of the next event via the following of sequence; the recognition of trends and patterns and the use of conditional as well as converse, that is, if-then statements. A good example of analytical thinking is saving money by analysing budgets with a view to finding possible ways to cut expenses. Indeed (2025) shows examples of analytical skills to include research skills which allow leaders to find data for forming opinions and for making decisions; forecasting skills for making accurate predictions about a corporate decision; brainstorming skill for creating and contemplating ideas; troubleshooting skills for discovering the cause of a problem – it requires various levels of information. Others are problem-solving skills, decision making skills which helps the leader weigh options over possible choices; financial management skills necessary for analysing budgets and making financial plans; and SWOT analysis.

For Accounts and Budget Officers, analytical skills define the future of their professional competence, relevance and leadership. They must have a strong foundation in financial analysis, which includes the understanding and analysis of financial statements, balance sheets, income statements and cash flow statements. In the past, Accountants were observed to have performed all the manual data-entry and transformation tasks within spreadsheets and then analysed the work. Today, digitized solutions can manage all the data-heavy and repetitive tasks while producing analytical outputs for Accountants to review. Faye (2025) is of the view that analytical skills in accounting mean the ability to assess financial information, identify relationships between data points and draw logical conclusions that support corporate and financial decisions.

The core analytical skills every Accounts and Finance or Budget leader must master include critical thinking, data interpretation, financial modelling and forecasting. Practical steps to develop

analytical skills include learning advanced Excel functions, the use of accounting platforms; exploring data visualization tools, and taking specialised courses. Analytical thinking demands a great focus on evidential expenditures for sound accountability. Future leaders especially financial leaders in Naval institutions must equip themselves with computer-based skills that may expose them to the professional use of various accounting software in a world where digitalization has become a key word. Future leaders in this area who do not equip themselves with digital skills stand to become irrelevant to the profession.

Creative Strategic Thinking and Future Leadership in Nigerian Naval Institutions

Creative thinking typically involves generating new ideas and exploring different possibilities. It entails thinking outside the box (or, more specifically, lateral thinking) and finding innovative solutions. Creative thinking involves generating novel as well as valuable ideas and concepts, and then developing them into reality. This particular ability is very crucial for problem-solving, for innovation, and for adaptation to even new situations. Kaplan (2023) opines that creative thinking otherwise called creative problem-solving entails the development of innovative solutions and approaches to issues or problems. A very valuable soft skill of the rarest breed in the world of strategic thinking, creative thinking is innovation-based.

Creative thinking remains a great tool that must be possessed by those future and even current leaders whose watch-word is sustainable development. The May 29, 2023 removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria by the Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led Federal Government is not only a great index of creative strategic thinking but also a formidable platform for organizations to embrace innovation and green management. Njoku, Dike and Anyanwu (2024) describe fuel subsidy removal as a ‘laudable step for economic rediscovery’ and a boost to organizational agility. It is a basis for green innovations and Liquefied Petroleum Gas conversion as creative responses to the fuel subsidy removal. Future leaderships in Naval institutions have every reason to key into the use of green innovations and flee significantly from the inconveniences of using fossil fuel for administrative operations. Njoku, Udo-Orji and Adioha (2024) reveal that use of solar panels and eco-friendly conferences are germane for stakeholders’ satisfaction in organizations. This is creative thinking!

Another dimension is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Naval institutions. Future leaders must bear in mind that the world has gone so digital that analogue approaches have faded into the 21st Century. In fact, AI has become so critical in the fortification of naval communication networks so as to overcome cyber threats that are sophisticated in nature. The utilisation of cybersecurity systems powered by AI helps to consistently monitor network traffic for the detection of anomalies that may indicate a cyber-attack, and this includes unusual data flows or even unauthorised attempts to gain unlawful access. Future leaders in the naval institutions have every reason to employ AI as a creative measure to advance into using AI-powered Autonomous Vessels which can execute lengthy missions without human crew onboard; AI drives predictive maintenance by analysing data from sensors on critical shipboard systems including engines and electrical setups thereby detecting early signs of wear or failure. It allows for timely maintenance. AI greatly boosts threat detection capabilities of naval defence systems which use advanced AI algorithms to process and analyse data from such sensors like radars and sonars. AI is essential for naval logistic and supply chain optimization by ensuring that resources like fuel, ammunition, and

food are efficiently managed and delivered where and when needed. It boosts the capability of naval intelligence systems by streamlining the processing of vast amounts of data including satellite imagery, signals intelligence and human intelligence. It helps for simulation-based training allowing sailors to experience diverse operational challenges. Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) such as Echo Voyager, are equipped with AI to perform complex tasks like seabed mapping, surveillance and mine detection without human intervention, etc.

Apart from the basic usage of AI in naval operations, this index of creative strategic thinking is very useful to future Accounting, Finance and Budgeting leaders in the Naval institutions. Njoku (2024) reveals that AI reduces human error in financial data analysis while improving efficiency. This is capable of reducing cybersecurity incidents. Njoku also believes that expert systems and neural networks positively influence accounting practice in Nigeria. According to him, AI is also useful for fraud detection. Humans are creatures and must demonstrate creativity in their thinking outcomes.

Practical Strategic Thinking and Future Leadership in Nigerian Naval Institutions

Practical strategic thinking focuses on feasibility and implementation. It involves considering resources and constraints of a situation to ensure that a strategy is both viable and achievable. Also called practical reasoning, it involves using common sense and the application of knowledge to real-world situations to achieve specific goals. It emphasises adaptability and encompasses the use of long-term vision and the capacity to translate that vision into actions. It bridges the gap between the big picture and day-to-day operations.

Since success in the workplace is often a function of strategic thinking (Boyd, 2025), strategic thinkers must be realistic in their thoughts; they must avoid deceptive thinking full of procrastination. Future leaders in naval institutions are expected to plan with the available resources and act to recognise the gap between available and unavailable resources, with the goal of identifying the most feasible options to fill the resource gaps.

Indeed, as the both fishes and bread were multiplied in the by the Saviour of Mankind, Our Lord Jesus Christ as revealed by the Holy Scriptures (The Bible), future leaders in Naval institutions are faced with the task of multiplying scarce resources at their disposal for the good of the nation. Some public sector workers have been observed to have declared that they would not do their further studies like HND and other degree programmes in Nigeria but that it must be in Canada, Australia or anywhere in America, Europe or Asia. In contrast, they practically lack the resources to move to these countries and continents even in the next seven years. In contrast, their income pattern in Nigeria can enable them acquire these academic and even professional qualifications in Nigeria in a very short time. This attitude shows a serious lack of practical strategic thinking among such prospective leaders. They fail to appreciate the realities on the ground and use them to empower themselves for the future. They fail to understand that developing themselves here with the available resources they have may be for them, the ladder they may climb even to other continents of the world. They would have added value to themselves and to the organisations they work for, and this gives a long-lasting impact to both the individual and the organization. This is practical strategic thinking in action! Future leaders are surely those who prepare themselves today

because the word 'luck' does not just exist in the public service, but it only manifests at that very point where opportunity meets preparedness, hence we talk of the equilibrium of luck. Accounting, Finance, Budget Officers and others have ample opportunities today to develop themselves academically and professionally to position themselves for leadership in the future. Time, they say flies and it remains absolutely inelastic.

Relational Strategic Thinking and Future Leadership in Nigerian Naval Institutions

Relational strategic thinking emphasizes the importance of collaboration and building relationships with key stakeholders. It really involves understanding the perspectives of others and working together to achieve common goals. Either as individuals or institutions, it is important to understand that strategic choices are not made in isolation but within a web of inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships. In strategic thinking, people interact and influence each other. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Relational thinking is a synergy-boosting strategic thinking where $2 + 2 = 5$.

In the context of this paper, relational strategic thinking hovers around the power of sound human relations in the workplace, the place of emotional intelligence and the power of various personality types in organisations. Thornton and Hill (2023) maintain that human relations are the interactions that exist within an organisational setting. Gunthner (2023) identifies human relationships as social factors within an organization, and these factors are relevant criteria for organisational success. Future leaders in Naval institutions are expected to exhibit critical human relation skills like active listening, effective communication, conflict resolution and cultural competence skills as indicated by Gunthner (2023).

Emotional intelligence is yet another dimension of relational strategic thinking which this paper assesses. It is the ability of each prospective leader to understand his/her own emotions and the emotions of others. Keiling (2025) states that emotional intelligence is the ability one has to recognize, to understand and to manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Keiling (2025) states that emotional intelligence is the ability one has to recognise, understand and manage one's own emotions while understanding and influencing the emotions of other people. It exposes organizational leaders and members to the fact that behaviours are driven by emotions while impacting people positively or negatively. EI is characterized by its competences like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Prospective leaders who lack these EI competences and who are not ready to take immediate steps to embrace the emotional intelligence characteristics are only planning for failure. This is because EI helps to build sound relationships, which enable organisational leaders to collaborate against fraudulent practices and economic crimes.

Understanding self and others also remains very necessary in the face of having various temperament types in organizations like sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic as posited by Berger and McKay (2023). Future leaders who are conscious of this fact are most likely to perform above board as they will certainly go far in achieving strategic and sustainable goals for their organizations.

Theoretical Review

Cognitive Domain Theory (1956)

Benjamin Bloom, an American Educational Psychologist in 1956, developed the theory. The Indeed Editorial Team (2025) reveal that those that educate others (educators) observe that there are various ways in which students learn. This enables educators to establish various methods of teaching that capture the relative abilities of each student.

The cognitive learning domain concentrates on about six (6) intellectual skills, which Bloom had organised as a function of the sequence or order in which students actually develop the intellectual skills. This is the impact of the concept referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's Taxonomy emphasises various skills which range from what can be called the most basic to most complex skills. The skills include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills.

Also, Marshall and Gray (2023) reveal that this vital domain called cognitive domain emphasizes on ensuring that mental skills are created so that a learner may acquire knowledge. The process of learning takes the form of a structure that is hierarchical in nature in the domain, which entails the processing of information, comprehension, the application of knowledge, the solving of problems (problem solving), as well as the undertaking of research. According to them, Benjamin Bloom created six categories that are distinct in the cognitive domain. They range from knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. He maintains that the aforementioned skills are mainly more relevant to human thinking process. This therefore makes Cognitive Domain theory quite relevant to strategic thinking and leadership.

Empirical Review

A study by Kamau, Ngina and Kyule (2025) handles an empirical survey on the effect of strategic thinking on the performance of agribusiness companies listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange in Kenya. The study employs the survey research method. It embraces the pragmatic paradigm too. It commits data analysis to Cronbach's Alpha, Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression analysis, mean and standard deviation. The study finds that the firms practice strategic thinking to a large extent; strategic thinking is mainly practised in the agribusiness companies listed at the NSE. It recommends policy alignment to promote strategic thinking processes in agribusiness enterprises. Policy makers should create clear regulatory frameworks that promote fair competition, support integration in the value chain and address sectoral challenges like resource constraints and market volatility.

Edewhor and Okoh (2024) investigated 'analysis of the impact of strategic thinking on organizational performance of manufacturing firms in Delta State, Nigeria'. The objectives of the study are to assess the impact of strategic thinking on corporate performance; examine the relationship between strategic thinking and employee productivity, and to examine the relationship between strategic thinking and employee efficiency. Their study adopts a survey research design. It uses linear regression and correlation analysis to handle data analysis. The findings show that

strategic thinking has a significant relationship with each of corporate performance, employee productivity and employee efficiency. The study concludes that strategic thinking is positively significant to organizational performance. The study recommends that organizations should relate with the employees on the importance of strategic thinking for the growth of the organization while imploring the workers to come forward with brilliant ideas for the growth of the organization.

Wegwu (2024) investigates strategic thinking and effective decision-making of the telecommunication industry in Rivers State, Nigeria. It is a survey research. The study uses the Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients (ρ). It was found that a positive and significant relationship exists between strategic thinking and successful decision making, cognitive thinking and successful decision making, and creative thinking and effective decision making. It recommends that telecom companies need to include strategic thinking modules in their training programmes and cultivate an atmosphere that promotes new ideas.

Alzghoul et al. (2023) did a study to investigate the nexus of strategic thinking, knowledge-oriented leadership and employee creativity in higher education institutes. It is a survey research. The study employs the Partial Least Squares- Structural equation modelling. It finds that strategic thinking promotes and increases employee creativity.

Ibodo and Nzewi (2023) investigated strategic thinking and competitive advantage: evidence from the Nigerian Pharmaceutical industry. The study was carried out to find how systems thinking, reflective thinking and creative thinking impact the competitive advantage of pharmaceutical firms. It is a survey research. It commits data analysis to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) technique. The result shows that systems and creative thinking have significant effects on the competitive advantage of pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria. It also shows that reflective thinking is not a significant component of the firms' competitive advantage. Their research concludes that companies in the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry have more attachment to systems thinking and creative thinking than reflective thinking. The study recommends adopting the strategic thinking process of plan, act, observe, reflect and plan again to enhance their competitive advantage in the pharmaceutical industry.

A research by Olota, Ayoola and Balogun (2021) assesses the impact of strategic thinking on organisational performance in a Nigerian mega-supermarket. The study objectives include investigating the impact of vision-driven thinking on corporate performance, assessing the relationship between creative thinking and employee productivity, and examining the effect of market-oriented thinking on employee efficiency. It uses the survey research design. It commits data analysis to regression and correlation analysis. The outcomes show a positive and significant relationship between vision-driven thinking and corporate performance, creative thinking and employee productivity, and market-oriented thinking and employee efficiency. It concludes that strategic thinking positively impacts organizational performance in Nigeria mega-supermarkets. Their study recommends that organisations should stress to their employees, the importance of creativity so as to promote creative thinking.

Obalemo (2021) assesses the nexus between strategic thinking and entrepreneurship development: A conceptual framework. It employs the conceptual research design. It finds that strategic thinking

helps entrepreneurs discover new business opportunities and take advantage of such opportunities to maximize profit in the society. The study recommends that entrepreneurs think strategically about economic factors in order to enhance business innovation.

Gap Identified in Literature

The literatures accessed by the researcher failed to assess the nexus between analytical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; as well as relational strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions. This study attempts to bridge these gaps.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs the extant literature method in x-raying how strategic thinking may be useful in shaping future leaders in Nigerian Naval institutions. The extant literature methodology has been employed in various studies including but not limited to Njoku, Anyanwu and Uzor (2024) and Njoku (2023). The study sources literature from existing empirical studies in reputable journals and other relevant online sources. It selects and utilizes only literature that may help to achieve the objectives of the study.

FINDINGS

After the conceptual, theoretical and empirical reviews, the study finds that:

- i) Analytical strategic thinking is essential for future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.
- ii) There is a formidable connection between creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.
- iii) There is a nexus between practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.
- iv) Relational strategic thinking is a strategic tool for sustainable future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions.

Conclusion

The paper submits that strategic thinking is a formidable tool for shaping future leaders in Nigerian Naval institutions. It manifests in the form of analytical thinking (vertical thinking), creative thinking (horizontal thinking), practical thinking and relational thinking. The researcher further concludes that certain factors like lack of strategic expertise, short-term focus, groupthink, inadequate information and misalignment with organisational goals pose serious challenges to strategic thinking for future leaders.

The paper infers that various techniques such as asking strategic questions, observations, and reflections, considering opposing ideas, SWOT analysis and embracing formal training, may

improve strategic thinking for future leaders. It therefore concludes that any public sector organization, especially any naval institution, that relegates strategic thinking to the background risks weak leadership in the future.

Furthermore, the study does not handle all kinds of strategic thinking competencies available in Management literature. The paper is not also free from typographical errors. The study also uses only the extant literature approach. The study believes that these and other implications for further studies as stated in this paper may be the focus of future researchers.

Recommendations

In line with the objectives and based on the findings from the literature reviews, the paper recommends that:

- i) The Nigerian Navy needs to ensure that future leaders in its institutions demonstrate analytical thinking by being evidential and logical in their financial and allied dealings in the organizations.
- ii) Future leaders in Naval institutions, especially Accounts, Budget and allied leaders, should learn to think outside the box so as to invoke innovativeness in their official assignments consistently.
- iii) Prospective and present leaders in Naval institutions, especially Accounts, Budget and allied leaders, need to be realistic and practical in their efficient use of scarce resources.
- iv) Prospective leaders in Naval institutions, especially Accounts, Budget and allied leaders, need to develop sound human relations and emotional intelligence competencies to enhance their relational thinking abilities.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes to knowledge by bridging the research gaps identified earlier by the researcher. It provides empirical literature on the link between analytical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; creative strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; practical strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions; as well as relational strategic thinking and future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions. This study adds to the existing literature on strategic thinking and leadership in organizations.

Notably, this study, arguably, is the first to examine how strategic thinking influences the shaping of future leaders in the Nigerian naval institutions. It therefore opens the doors for further studies on the nexus between strategic thinking competencies and corporate outcomes in Nigerian Naval establishments and formations.

Implications for Further Research

Geographically, this present study covers the entire Nigerian nation as it theoretically analyses shaping future leaders through strategic thinking in Nigerian Naval institutions. Other researchers

should target particular naval formations or institutions in particular geographical locations within Nigeria. Other studies should also assess strategic thinking and leadership outcomes in other military formations, such as the Army and Air Force, within and outside Nigeria. This present study handles certain dimensions of strategic thinking, namely analytical, creative, practical and relational strategic thinking. It also relates these indices to future leadership in Nigerian Naval institutions. Future studies should determine other proxies of strategic thinking and relate same to leadership outcomes in the Nigerian Army and Nigerian Air Force. The present study employs the extant literature methodology. Future studies should use the survey research method in investigating the same link between strategic thinking and various organisational outcomes in the Nigerian Navy and other institutions. The survey method was also used by Njoku and Uzodimma (2025) and Uzodimma, Njoku and Okpara (2024).

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