CHAPTER FIVE

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT RATIONALITIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Stakeholders' changing expectations and increasing concern for improved teaching and learning in educational institutions in recent times calls for rethinking education planning and management. For the tertiary education environment, deploying the ideas of strategic management becomes necessary. However, there appears a lack of clarity about how tertiary education managers can appreciate and operationalize strategic management in its educational progarmmes, align its programmes to the environment and ultimately achieve success in educational service delivery. In this paper, there is an overview of management as well as education planning and management which offers insights into the basic elements inherent in the management process and what education planners and managers do in their various institutions. In response to the challenges currently being faced by tertiary education institutions reflecting the changing times and expectations, key strategic management rationalities are presented to guide managers of these institutions in effectively responding to the demands of the time. In particular, the paper suggests a modeling of academic programmes in the tertiary education institution using SWOT analysis that throws up the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the institution; determining the mission, vision and objectives of the institution, formulating education strategy and its implementation; in particular, the paper emphasized the need for SMART objectives and the need for education strategy evaluation and control which is useful in determining the effectiveness of such education strategy and taking corrective actions whenever required in order to position the institution towards realizing set educational goals.

KEYWORDS: Strategic management, Rationalities, Tertiary Education, Planning management.

OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

In management literature, there exist a number of definitions on management. Each of these definitions reflects the author's conceptualization of what the concept entails. However, the variants of definition on the concept notwithstanding, the various authors are in united that management is primarily concerned with setting organizational goals and formulation of policies and ensuring that goals are achieved. Therefore, management involves the process of planning, organizing, implementation and controlling which are the basic elements which are inherent in the management process Keban, Aritin and Wahyono (2019). Educational management is concerning with the process of managing collaborative efforts by a group or members of an educational institution with the aim of achieving pre-

determined educational goals through the use of its resources and managerial functions effectively and efficiently (Kristiawan, 2017). When applied to educational institutions, management is concerned with establishing education objectives and how to realize them. Given that managers are expected to creatively solve their problems, they are to follow in an integrated manner, the principles of management, namely, planning, organizing, directing and controlling. For a tertiary education institution, planning is concerned with setting institutional objectives as well as determining how the objectives are to be realized. In order to effectively plan for their institutions, educational managers/administrators are supposed to be aware of its environment and the key variables that impact its programmes. Such knowledge would empower them to be decision makers who are informed by prevailing environmental realities in its decision-making.

Organizing is concerned with the development of institutional structure and the allocation of resources which facilitate goal attainment. The structure in question refers to the framework upon which the activities of the institution are being coordinated. Therefore, effective leaders are needed to occupy different institutional positions.

Directing deals with influencing organizational members towards realization of goals. Hence, in order to successfully direct, managers have to communicate well with its subordinates train them, motivate them and provide effective supervision. Controlling involves three major steps, namely determining performance standards, comprising performance standards and actual performance and taking necessary corrective actions where applicable.

Educational managers at tertiary educational institutions such as vice chancellors, provosts and reactors who manage activities in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics respectively are the most strategic managers in the aforementioned institutions. These strategic managers are saddled with the responsibility of managing their institutions, they provide the needed direction for quality education delivery; they are expected to formulate mission statements, develop goals, prioritize programmes and direct resources to be in sync with priority programmes of the institutions. The reality in present day situation, makes new and challenging demands on institutional managers that are markedly different from experiences of the past. Today, managers of tertiary institutions are overwhelmed by the inevitable dynamism of the environment, characterized by the ever changing tastes and lifestyles of stakeholders, new governmental policies, advances in technology, evolving economic realities, circumstances and the like (Paloma, 2011; Bueno, 2015).

Therefore, what is required in the current circumstances is strategic alignment between tertiary educational institutions and its environment in order to maintain strategic consistency (Arieu, 2007). Such reasoning requires that tertiary institutions in pursuit of excellence should look beyond its accustomed approach to managing its programmes. This is where strategic management rationalities come in handy.

EMERGING ISSUES BEYOND TRADITIONAL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Similar to other sectors of an economy, the education sector and in particular, tertiary education is currently facing issues and challenges which reflect the present time. For instance, stakeholders especially sponsors and students are demanding for a system that reduces wastage of resources and one that provides optimal value; more accountability is being required of institutional managers even as funding sources deplete by the day; there has been a heightened level of competition which indicate a response by tertiary educational institutions to the changing needs of its various demographic profiles of students. In addition, with globalization, internationalization of multidimensional forms has been made

possible and increasingly inevitable. There is also an increasing demand for knowledge markers who are capable of driving the emerging knowledge economy. Aritia and Antia (2015) observed that in the modern time, the tertiary education institutions are facing challenges that reflect the changing times and expectations.

Further, Gilbels, Watering, Dochy and Van den Bossche (2005) are of the view that with robots and other devices taking over more and more routinized jobs, the challenge the tertiary education now faces is defining higher order and complex problem-solving skills thus underscoring the importance of a structured knowledge base for imparting these skills. Arguably, therefore, the changed and evolving operating environment of tertiary educational institutions requires a model that can guide managers of the institutions in effectively responding to demands of the current period; therefore, strategic management rationalities should be considered in pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning in tertiary education. Such alignment between educational programmes and strategic management rationalities many promote the realization of education goals in the face of changing circumstances. Schloss and Gragg (2013) opine that decision education mangers should align with the goals set in the institutions' strategic plans and supported by other key management activities.

In modeling strategic management in the tertiary education institution usually, environmental analysis is conducted using various models. These may include, SWOT analysis, PESTLE analysis, Scenario Planning, `Porter's Five Forces, among others. PESTLE involves an analysis of political, economic, social-cultural, technological, legal and environmental variables. The SWOT analysis represents the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as it relates to the organization. Following proper analysis of the environment, strategic planning is carried out to determine the mission, vision and objectives of the organization. What follows subsequently is strategy implementation which involves the process of turning strategic plan into action in order to reach a desired outcome. Then comes strategy evaluation and control which is the process of determining the effectiveness of a given strategy in achieving set objective and taking corrective action whenever required. This results in improved teaching and learning.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Mintberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (2009) describe strategy as the plan to achieve results which are consistent with established goals of the organization. Peace and Robinson (2007) posit that strategic management models the actions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling when applied in formulation and implementation of strategies in organizations. A typical strategic management process that is applicable to tertiary education is presented in Fig 1

Fig 1: Strategic Management in Educational Institution
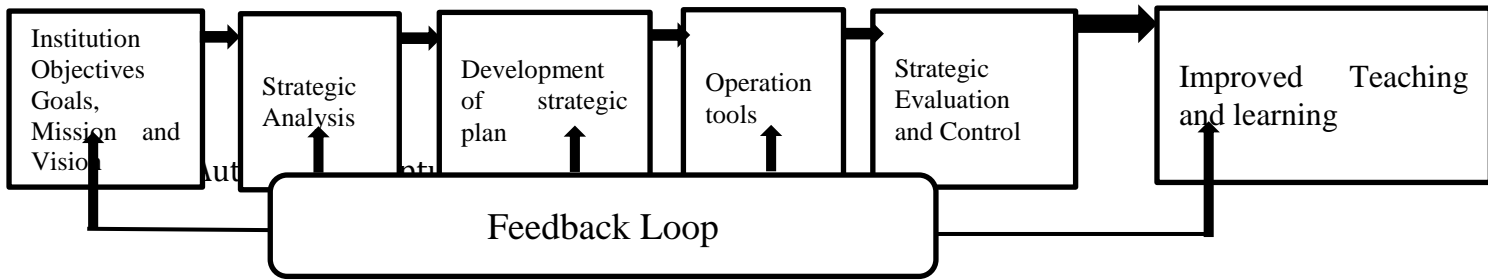
INSTITUTION GOALS, MISSION AND VISION

Institution goals capture what the institution has set out to achieve. However, it is only when the institution delivers on its mission that goals are attained. The institution mission is the purpose for which the institution was set up- the educational service to its stakeholders. The mission statement should be clear enough to showcase an institution's underlying values and philosophy, the stakeholders and market. The institutional vision indicates where the institution desires to be in future and is usually captured in the vision statement. It is also important for the tertiary education institution to set its objectives. In the strategic management space, objectives should be SMART implying objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. Having SMART objectives facilitates an evaluation of the extent to which the tertiary education institution has been able to achieve its goals.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Strategic analysis involves conducting an analysis on the educational institution environment. Educational institutions can apply strategic analysis in determining how the institution functions and whether its goals and objectives are realizable. Through strategic analysis, the tertiary educational institution is able to analysis its internal and external environment, assess its strategic position currently, generate as well as evaluate the most relevant strategic alternatives given its circumstance. Strategic analysis is important because it offers important information about the evaluation and development of the institution's environment both internally and externally (Papulova and Gazova, 2016).

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN

Tertiary education institutions that adapt strategic management are supposed to develop its strategic plans which documents it vision, goals, objectives and the sequence which they should be achieved to empower it to reach its vision. Strategic plans outline the tertiary education institution's direction and identifies how resources are to be allocated to enable the institution achieve its desired future state even as it positions itself to deal with competition among others. The institution's strategic plan should follow a structured process, align the institution and its environment and facilitate continuous improvement. Ultimately, the developed strategic plan of a tertiary education institution should be used to communicate the institution's goals, the appropriate actions needed to realize these goals and other critical elements that were developed during the planning exercise. Smith (2023) observed that strategic plan of an educational institution is the road map that guides the institution to achieve its mission, goals and vision as it aligns the actions, resources and stakeholders of the educational institution with its desired outcomes using applicable

operative tools.

At the disposal of tertiary educational institutions, are operative instruments that may be used in operationalizing strategic management. SWOT analysis, operational scorecard, value chain analysis and Risk Management. SWOT analysis can be used by the tertiary educational institutions to analysis its internal and external environments and its implications to its educational strategy implementation. Operational scorecard, otherwise referred to as balanced scorecard can be used by the institution in tracking its performance and the progress made by institution's objective in four areas, namely financial perspective, customer perspective, internal perspective and learning and growth perspective. Value chain analysis can be employed by the tertiary educational institution to evaluate its efficiency and cost effectiveness in its operations toward service delivery. Risk management can be deployed by tertiary educational institutions in identifying its various risks with a view to implementing appropriate risk management strategies capable of addressing such risks. Operative tools support strategic management initiatives of institutions and ensures that individuals run their routine tasks as efficiently as possible.

STRATEGY EVALUATION AND CONTROL

It is necessary that tertiary education institutions track the performance of its strategy. This will enable the institution to detect any problems arising in the implementation of its strategy, or any changes in its underlying premises that would require some adjustment. Therefore, carrying out strategy evaluation and control will entail setting performance standards, monitoring performance and comparing results with set performance standards and taking necessary actions that will help the institution to remain focused towards achieving its goals. For a tertiary education institution, efforts should be geared toward developing an effective strategy evaluation and control system for it's to be of use. For such system to be useful, it should be linked to institutional structure, report deviations promptly, be flexible to accommodate changes and points to the corrective actions needed to address lapses (Onuoha, 2011). For the tertiary education system, an effective strategic management effort should have SMART objectives for ease of evaluating and controlling the education strategies formulated (Smith, 2023).

SUMMARY

This chapter shows that educational management at the tertiary level is currently facing increased challenges compared to what it used to be in the past. The heightened environmental volatility faced by tertiary education institutions requires rethinking the approach to its management in order to achieve educational goals in an increasingly competitive and difficult operating environment. Subjecting tertiary education institutions to its routine yearly planning devoid of critical analysis of its environment and the development of strategies informed and guided by such strategic efforts may not guarantee appreciable success in education planning and management. A focus on strategic management rationalities in tertiary education planning and management becomes strategic. Managers and administrators of tertiary education institutions should therefore, embrace strategic thinking, build their capacities and ultimately apply strategic management principles with a view to improving teaching and learning in their institutions.

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