A REVIEW ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AS TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

In today's highly competitive environment, organisations must engage in strategic planning and management that clearly defines objectives and assesses both the internal and external situation to formulate strategy, implement the strategy, evaluate the progress, and make adjustments as necessary to stay on track towards the realization of general and specific objectives (Quickmba, 2009). Sustaining, improving performance and challenges in the technological institutions will depend crucially on the ability to attract, re- train and support staff and students of good character and behavior who are

Abstract

Globalization has brought about not only local competition but international competition in the face of which every organization must strategically plan in other to survive. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria performed dismally over the years if compared with its counterpart in other parts of the world. The reason for this is not unconnected with poor strategic planning and implementation in the Nigerian educational sector. This paper attempts to review the degree of strategic planning practices among tertiary institutions in the country with emphasis on formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. The review method was employed to establish the extent of strategic plan application by tertiary institutions in Nigeria through assessment

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*O*f their strategic plan conception, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The paper concluded that while Nigerian Tertiary institutions conceive very good strategic plans as observed in their mission and vision statements, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation receive little attention. It therefore recommends that tertiary institutions in Nigeria must refocus their energy on a holistic strategic planning process for efficient service delivery.

Keywords: *Planning, Educational institutions, Strategic planning, Strategic Thinking,*

Committed to norms, values and guiding principles. This can be achieved through recruitment and admission in a conducive environment (Federal Polytechnic, Bida, 2015).

Society depends on institutions of learning to produce well-adjusted individuals who can fit properly into the environments. The education sector, like the economic sector, needs the use of human, material and financial resources to function. Therefore, strategic planning offers education institution(s) opportunity to identify how it will commit resources over the long term in order to accomplish its mission (Hunt et al, 1997). It Projects forward as little as 3 to 5 years (Barry, 1986). In educational institutions, strategic planning can therefore be described as a process which focuses on the learner and learner outcomes a change process for transforming educational organizations; a method of building consensus and common vision; a way of strategically managing the school, an information-age way of thinking about and solving education problems; an experience which involves all education stakeholders to achieve the preconceived goals and chart new ways. While strategic planning must produce a product, a Strategic Plan document, the primary value comes from the teamwork, vision, commitment to and ownership of organizational success the planners gain through the process of making the decisions the document contains. Strategic planning is a continuous process that does not end with the publication of a plan. In the process of implementation, the school's strategic plan is periodically reviewed depending on the changing circumstances. Strategic planning is people driven unlike other planning approaches which are carried out by a small bureaucratic minority in isolation from the clients and partners,

strategic planning process extensively involves stakeholders within the institution and the community in general. As such, it permeates the whole institution from the top management echelons to the classroom where specific learning outcomes are expected. Strategic planning emphasizes creativity, intuition and innovation seeing planning as both an art and a science. Strategic planning is deep founded not on traditions and normal operations but in the values and its indicators denoting achievement of those values. In strategic planning thus, it is suggestive that, for success to be realized, organizations should be flexible, creative and adaptive rather than being prescriptive, in their actions.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to review the level of strategic plan implementation in the Nigerian Educational Institution and the relationship between strategic plan formulation, implementation and internal efficiency in the educational institution.

METHODOLOGY

As a review study, the researchers adopted secondary source of data collection through textbooks, internet, and records of business owners and the strategic plan document of Federal Polytechnic, Bida 2015-2019 were consulted to provide the much needed theoretical data for the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Strategic planning is a management technique in vogue in organizations. In fact, the concept was developed in the United States of America in the early 1960s, as a framework for long-term decision taking in private and commercial enterprises (Martins & Macsen, 1992).Strategic planning is a process through which an examination of the external and internal factors of an organization results in a set of mission, purpose, objectives, policies, plans and programmes for implementation and strategies to achieve them (Higgins, 1993). Hunt (1998) elucidated that strategic planning provides a mechanism for enhancing communication between various units of an organization on its strengths and weaknesses in the pursuit of a common set of objectives.

In fact, Fehnel (2000) noted that strategic planning is a systematic process in which an organization assesses its basic reason for being (that is, its purpose

or mission), what its strengths and weaknesses are, and what opportunities and threats it might face in the immediate and foreseeable future. The organization then uses this assessment to decide whether or not to make changes in what it does, how it does it, and with whom it interacts in order to fulfill its purpose. Yepwi (2007) concluded that strategic planning is a comprehensive statement of an organization's mission, objectives and strategies, adding that it is a detailed roadmap that an organization intends to follow in conducting its activities. Strategic planning is an exercise of foresight. It is a continuous rolling process of both planning and implementation of plans. It involves reviewing the institution's mission and setting quantified targets in the context of the internal and external environment of the institution. It is also a collective exercise as all stakeholders should be involved in the process for it to succeed.
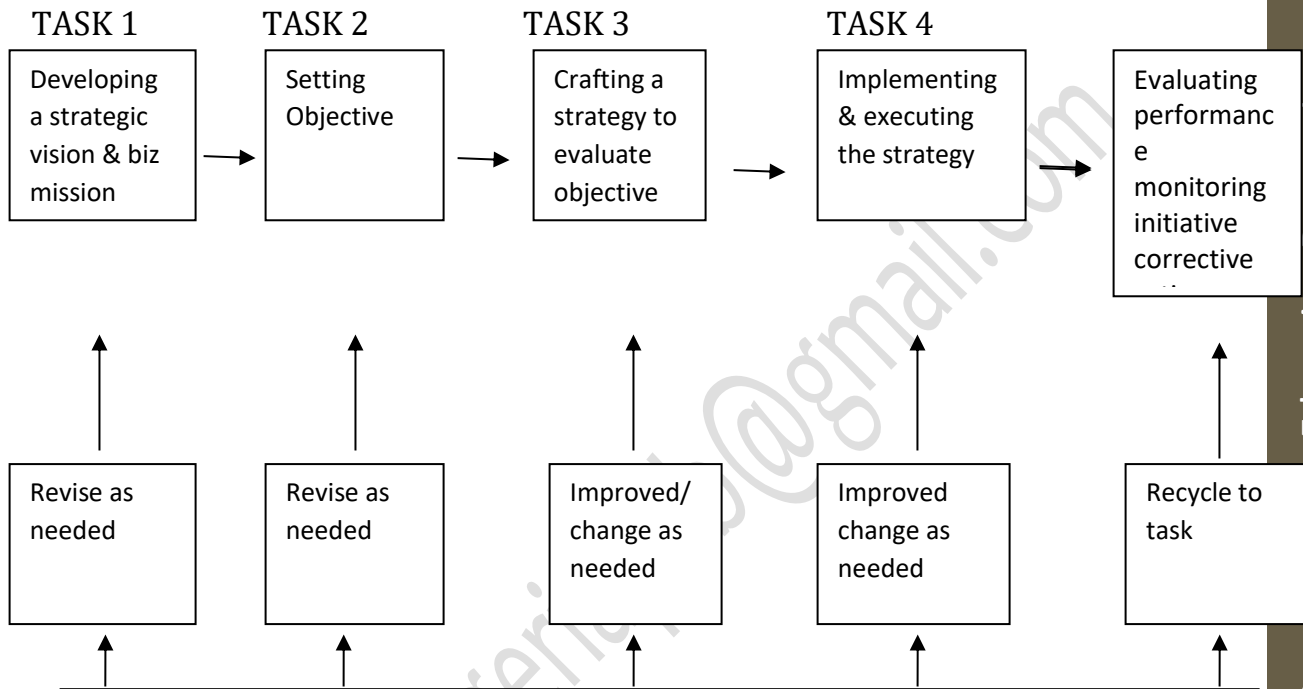
STRATEGIC THINKING

The spirit of strategic planning in many organizations is hampered by several factors some of which include the following: lack of planning skills among staff; lack of strategic thinking; lack of understanding of the process by some staff members; differences in the planning ability of top management officials; non-commitment by the leaders; lack of understanding among board members; lack of resources and poor introduction to strategic planning. The way out of these problems is strategic thinking. According to Saffold (2005), bold, creative, thoughtful strategic vision is at the heart of every successful organization and every effective strategic plan. Strategic thinkers do not plan around the limiting factors mentioned above; rather, they deal with them through proactive planning and actions, turning them into strengths rather than weaknesses.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Strategic Management is the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives (David, 2001). This definition implies that strategic management focuses on integrating all processes in an organization of management, marketing, finance, production/operations, research and development and information systems to achieve organizational goals. Sometimes, the term strategic management is used to refer to the process of

strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation with strategic planning referring to the process of strategy formulation.

6.0.1 FIVE TASKS OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

TASK 1   TASK 2   TASK 3   TASK 4

Developing a strategic vision & biz mission	→	Setting Objective	→	Crafting a strategy to evaluate objective	→	Implementing & executing the strategy	→	Evaluating performance monitoring initiative corrective

Revise as needed	Revise as needed	Improved/ change as needed	Improved change as needed	Recycle to task

Culled from Thompson & Strickland (2001)

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

An educational institution perspective which results from rallying behind a cause, and elimination of conflict and confusion of priorities; increased capacity where stakeholders are focused on what is important and less concerned about what isn't; improved customer satisfaction; better solutions to problems affecting the organization; best human resource management practices; setting; performance measurement and aiding the drawing of work plans to guide the organizational operations.

Strategy formulation

Strategy formulation is concerned with making decisions with regard to defining the organizations guiding philosophy, core values, purpose, mission and goals. It also deals with establishing objectives, to achieve the mission and

selecting the strategies to achieve the objectives and drawing a clear road map on how to implement the strategies.

Guiding Philosophy

An organization's guiding philosophy establishes the values and beliefs of the organization and what is important in both life and business. It details with how business should be conducted, its views about humanity and its role in society, the way the world works and what is to be held inviolate (Brays et al 1996). The philosophy of an organization should establish the relationship between the organization and the stakeholders, suppliers, government and the community at large. Schools as social organizations should evolve philosophies articulating the importance of upholding the importance of humanity and the need to sustain life along with magnifying the very core functions of a school.

Purpose

Organizational purpose defines the fundamental reason why an organization exists. It describes how an organization facilitates the achievement of basic human needs or how it impacts the world. An effective purpose reflects people's idealistic motivations to work for a particular organization. An explicit statement of purpose guides a variety of decisions that insiders and outsiders make regarding their association with, support of and actions for the organization. A statement of purpose is supposed to be straightforward and simple. It determines the organization's direction and commitment. Organizational statements of purpose are determined by an organization by asking itself;

1. *What would the world lose if our organization ceases to exist?*
2. *Why do we dedicate our energies to the organization's effort?*
3. *What does the organization do to fill basic human needs?*
4. *What does our organization do that impact the world?*

Therefore, a purpose statement is a statement of mandate for an organization. The mandate has a source of authority, given to it by a governing body.

Core values

In strategic planning values refer to core leadership values. These are guiding principles which do not require external justification, as they have intrinsic

value and importance to those who are inside the organization (Collins and Porras, 1991). They define what an organization stands for.

Values provide a sense of common direction for all employees and guidelines for their day-today behaviour. Thus as (Newberry, 1992) argues, in a school, administrators should identify the values they stand for because the values will guide administrative behaviour, set predictability, set the tone, and help create the ethos of the school. To develop a purpose and articulate core values, organizations need to ask themselves the following questions:

1. Does the organization have a clearly stated purpose? Is the authority source of the purpose noted?
2. Does the organization filter its decisions according to the stated purpose?
3. Does the process of developing and refining core values exist?
4. Is there a written statement of core leadership values for the organization?
5. Does the core value statement contain an explanation of the intent of the values?
6. Does the organization filter its decisions according to the stated core values?

Mission

Mission is the overall goal of an organization, it is the anchor of an organizational system that provides a sense of direction and a guide to Strategic planning and implementation: An educational institution perspective 39 decision making for all levels of management (Newberry, 1992). It is a strategy or focus for carrying out the purpose of an organization. It's a summary of an institution's identity, what it does, who it serves and where it serves them A mission statement describes the purpose, business and (if required) values of the organization. It is about what the organization is and what it does. Without a clear mission it is impossible for an organization to develop objectives and strategies. Example of mission statement.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, BIDA
In the work of Federal Polytechnic, Bida (2015), *Our Mission Statement is:*
*"To maintain and enhance an enabling Campus Environment and train students in Technology and Management through the earned **"Bida standard"** for*

sustainable development. *The Mission Statement shall motivate staff and students to be focused on achieving our Mission:*

Vision

The intent of a vision statements is to conceptualize the preferred future, give focus to human energy in the context of the overall strategic plan (Newberry, 1992). Whereas vision simply defines what an organization wants to become, Collins and Porras (1991) argue that vision is one of the words used widely but least understood in the language, conjuring up different images for different people. Out of a long period of research, Collins and Porras contend that a well-conceived vision consists of two major components: core ideology and envisioned future. For example, see an example of a vision statement:

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, BIDA

*The motto of the Federal Polytechnic, Bida is **"Technology for Development"**. This statement encapsulates our Vision and Mission Statements. Our **Vision Statement** is:*

"A leading Polytechnic with enviable and excellent academic standard: training students to be technologically skilled, morally sound and entrepreneurial" The Vision Statement shall inspire all stakeholders to aspire to greater efforts toward achieving our Vision.

Environmental Scan.

One way of environmental scanning is carrying out SWOT analysis. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This is an assessment of areas of internal strengths and weaknesses of the institution and areas of opportunities and the threats existing in the external environment.

Gap analysis

At this stage, the planning team evaluates the differences between the current outcome and the desired future, thereby identifying the existing gaps. This analysis defines the direction that the strategy must lead the institution to launch an effective education process.

Bench marking

This entails measuring and comparing the institution's operations, practices and performance against others with best practices. Through an ongoing systematic benchmarking process schools find a reference point for setting their own goals and targets. Then there is the identification of strategic issues. The school determines its strategic issues based on and consistent with its vision and mission, within the framework of environmental and other analyses.

Goals and objectives

Most mission statements are more specific than anyone's thinking, but are hardly concrete directions for action. Just as mission statements try to make a vision more specific, objectives try to make mission statements more concrete. Many authors and managers use the terms goals and objectives interchangeably (Brays et al, 1996). Setting goals and objectives is beneficial to an organization because goals can lead to increased performance; help to clarify expectations; facilitate the controlling function as they provide benchmarks against which progress can be assessed so that corrective action can be taken.

FORMULATION OF STRATEGIES

A strategy is a road map by which an institution moves from a current state of affairs to a future a future desired state. It defines where the institution is, where it is going and how it is going to get there. As such, courses of action or action programs are constructed based on the set goals and objectives with the aim of realizing the mission and vision of the organization.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy implementation is a process where the management of an institution implements the designed strategic plan on a day to day basis with the view of maximizing output within the organization (Scott, 2008). Be that as it may, in many institutions, the process ends abruptly with the written document that strategic planning process produces. The strategic plan then gathers dust in the shelves as years go by. Although the concept of strategic planning resonates well in many organizations, many people remain skeptical about whether it actually works.

FACTORS THAT MAKES STRATEGIC PLANNING A SUCCESS

1. When planning is made a corporate priority. Planning should receive proper attention, effort and support at every level within the institution.

2. Dedicating both physical and human resources to support planning. Strategic planning thrives on empowerment. As such, facilitation and proper training of all the stakeholders cannot be overemphasized.

3. Adequate, updated and accurate data is required. Basically, an institution's strategic plan is only as good as the data its planners are relying on. Make sure to collect information that you can trust before investing time and efforts into a plan.

4. Engage people within and outside the organization both during the planning process and while implementing the strategies. Engaging more people will make it possible to spread the workload. Besides, the people engaged in the implementation will feel more ownership for the plan and the changes that result.

5. Set priorities. Although there are many objectives and strategies in any strategic plan, not all can be implemented and accomplished at the same time. Spread activities out over the life of the plan. Review the strategies and determine the best places to start. This may be influenced by opportunities for quick successes, by a logical ordering of strategies that depend on actions completed in earlier strategies, or by an annual cycle of organizational activities. A matrix that shows when each strategy will be started and how long it will take to complete may be a useful attachment to the plan.

6. Don't copy and paste: Every institution is unique because it operates in and impacted by a unique environment with both internal and external factors. Strategic planning is a process; a journey that is meant to take you. Strategic planning is meant to take you from where you are to where you want to be- a template has no idea where you're starting from.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES

It is essential for periodic monitoring and evaluations of strategies, tactics, and action programs to be carried out. This helps measure the degree of success and evaluates the effects of specific actions on long-term results and on the organization's vision, mission and strategies (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997). Monitoring involve the following essential issues:

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1. Monitoring relates to tracking the performance of the key elements in the strategic plan activities on a regular basis that is, inputs, activities, results and time. Inspection and internal auditing to assess progress and timeliness of activities are crucial monitoring activities.

2. Monitoring and evaluation are critical because they enable an organization to make decisions and recommendations about contingency planning; identify the strengths and weaknesses of a programme and implementation processes, enable judgments to be made on whether the programme and activities are having an impact on desired outcomes and therefore achieving objectives.

3. Monitoring and evaluation also determines whether the interventions are on track lest the organization loses focus.

4. Through monitoring and evaluation also the organization is able get feedback through data collected to support programs and policies.

5. Monitoring evaluation also enables the organization to determine stakeholder and target group satisfaction as well as meeting demands for accountability.

6. Through monitoring and evaluation an organization should measure current performance against previously set expectations, and consider any changes or events that may have impacted the desired course of actions.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN

After assessing the progress of the strategic planning process, the school needs to review the strategic plan, make necessary changes, and adjust its course based on these evaluations. The revised plan must take into consideration emergent strategies, and changes affecting the organization's intended course. Outcomes of strategic planning Strategic planning is a critical activity for institutional managers and administrators. Through this process leaders set the organization's future direction and define the specific outcomes and strategies that will lead to achieving that direction.

CONCLUSION

Strategic planning has become critical for the overall survival of every organization. Globalization has brought about not only local competition but international competition in the face of which every organization must

strategically plan in other to survive. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria must continuously review their strategic plans in other to meet up with global standards of education. The emergence of powerful educational hubs such as Malaysia and Singapore has constituted a major challenge to tertiary institutions around the globe. These countries with a large revenue generation from educational tourists flooding the countries from around the world have set standard for others to follow. To this end, tertiary institutions in Nigeria must plan strategically to compete with these emerging powers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, we recommend that;

1. Ttertiary institutions in Nigeria develop realizable strategic plans;
2. benchmark using top ranking tertiary institutions across the globe;
3. continuously review their strategic plans to ensure they are always on the path of success,
4. provide enabling environment for the realization of the plans; and
5. Monitor and evaluate the strategic plans with a view of improving on them where necessary.

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