

A Tool for Enhancing Quality of Services in Nigerian Universities Using Strategic Planning

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ABSTRACT

This study is designed to investigate how strategic planning can be used to enhance the quality of services rendered in the Nigerian university system. The need for this study arose from the excellent performance of the University of Ibadan at the World University ranking, which was guided by a well-drawn strategic plan. Thus, the paper seeks to explain the concept and objectives of strategic planning as well as provide an overview into how the Nigerian university system was established. More so, the paper highlighted how the university management can incorporate strategic planning into their structure with the full knowledge of the SWOT analysis, which refers to the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. If properly managed, SWOT analysis can help Nigerian universities achieve their set mission. One major recommendation of this paper is that the university management must first be willing to adopt a strategic planning procedure; partner with all the university stakeholders for success to be recorded in its implementation.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Quality, Nigerian University, SWOT analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria today, there have been a lot of societal vices that have brought much embarrassment to the nation. Some of these could be attributed to the declining state of our educational system because it is expected that the right socio-cultural, ethnic, moral and national values should have been passed on to the students who have become the perpetrators of these problems. The failure of our educational system is so evident that its progress has been crippled by different forms of malpractices such as the lack of funding, misappropriation of funds, poor facilities, obsolete teaching, lack of teaching aids and various forms of atrocities among its personnel, favouritism in its employment and admission process, and constant breaks in the form of lecturers' strike. These have derailed significant improvement that education ought to have had on the nation's economy since her independence in 1960. These failures have also affected the quality of graduates produced by Nigerian Universities as questions have been raised on whether these graduates were actually taught the rudiments that would enable them succeed in their various fields of specialization.

There have also been scenarios where engineering, science and technology graduates that were trained in Nigerian Universities were unable to operate simple machines, while some could not even identify the type or functions of these machines or equipment placed before them. As a result of these lapses, some well-known and rich Nigerians, especially public office holders have decided to send their child/children abroad for further studies leaving the middle and low income Nigerians to struggle with the educational system they have left in disarray. In addition to these problems, no Nigeria University was ever ranked among the best universities in the world since the ranking began in 2011.

Only until recently, when Cletus Ukpong (2015) in his column for the Premium Times reported on the 2nd of October that the University of Ibadan (the first university in Nigeria) was the only Nigerian University that was ranked among the world's top 800 universities in the world by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2015/2016, which was released on the 30th of September 2015. These rankings were judged on the basis of the quality of teaching, research, citation, knowledge transfer and international outlook. Also in relation to this, the University of Ibadan which is the best in Nigeria during that period was down to 8th in Africa beneath South Africa Universities, which had about five different universities in the same ranking reported by Ukpong (2015).

The achievement of the University of Ibadan in the world ranking can be traced to the efforts of the University council and administration put in developing a strategic plan to overcome the numerous socio-political and economy problems in Nigeria and the effects of the Globalization of world economy; in which only countries that has a large industrial base can successfully prevail over the challenges that lay ahead. As the Vice Chancellor, Prof O. A. Bamiro puts it in his note;

“The Premier University thus embarks on its own to help build local economies by working to support and also to create locally owned enterprises that can help to sustain harvest and produce jobs and the goods and services that people need (p. iii).”

Technological innovation and development are also part of the ways in which the University contributes towards improving the services they render to the general populace. The success recorded so far by the University of Ibadan can thus be traced to effective strategic planning which has been put in place for over a decade ago. According to Professor Uvah, a former Director of Academic Planning and Research unit of the National Universities Commission (NUC), in his preface speech in the Manual on Strategic Planning, he pointed out that the Nigerian University System was first affected by the declining economic fortunes of the nation in the 1970s to the 1980s and a reduction in government's funding of the system that led to the inability of the universities to attract and retain staff, acquire and maintain facilities and equipment as well as maintain stability in their academic calendars.

These problems led to the various clamours from stakeholders in education for the NUC to identify ways of reversing the declining fortunes of the system. This has consequently resulted in the identification of Strategic Planning measures, as a means of improving the management of human and material resources available to Nigerian Universities for the maximum attainment of their institutional goals.

The National University Commission, which is the body in charge of all Universities in Nigeria, was established in 1962 as an advisory agency in the Cabinet office; and subsequently made a statutory body in 1974 to focus on developing and managing the University education in Nigeria. It is charged with the responsibility of granting academic programme approval, establishing degree programmes, ensuring the quality of programmes offered by the universities, and channelling external support to Universities in Nigeria.

The commission currently has fourteen (14) different departments, in which the Department of Academic Planning and Resource, that has the responsibility of establishing strategic planning guidelines for all the universities in Nigeria is inclusive and headed by a Director. Other significant roles that the Academic Planning department of any university performs are quality assurance and strategic planning.

Quality Assurance on its own is centred on promoting the quality of teaching, learning and research in the university through periodic evaluation of academic activities within the university. Strategic planning on the other hand, involves coordinating all the activities of the universities to ensure that every aspect of the university community is represented in the decision making process. Strategic planning is thus drafted into a document that is used to represent the aspirations of the University community.

In relation to this, the National Universities Commission (NUC) always checkmates the affairs of the universities through its accreditation process to ensure that the quality of services rendered at these universities meet up with its required academic standards. During the accreditation exercise, the NUC always checks for the academic content, relevance and quality of academic staff, the ratio of academic staff to non-academic staff, the student per teacher ratio, adequacy and the currency of the school's library and laboratory resources where necessary, including the health facilities and the staff mix to the set minimal standards. Thus, this study seeks to elucidate on how Universities in Nigeria can adopt a solid strategic plan process to help them meet the demands of the 21st century and position them among the world leading elite universities in the world.

2. CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

According to the Manual on Strategic Planning (2006) published by the National Universities Commission (NUC), strategic planning is defined as a process of setting measurable medium to long-term goals for an organization, and designing strategies based on its internal strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats in its environment to achieve the goals. Abdulkareem, Akinnubi and Oyeniran (2008) also opined that 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. Billingham (2016) also explained it as the process of setting goals, deciding on actions to achieving those goals and mobilizing the resources needed to take those actions. This implies that strategic planning is a way by which a university predicts and plans its future by maximizing its potentials and minimizing the inadequacies that may be from within the institution or from its community.

Snyder in Babandi (2019) defined strategic planning as those activities which are concerned specifically with determining in advance what actions and human and physical resources are required to reach a goal. These activities include identifying alternatives, analyzing the alternatives, and selecting the best option. Mohd, Muhammad, Akhmad and Roskifzan (2019) averred that strategic planning at school is not an accident, but can also be viewed as an effort or process towards achieving educational goals. From all the definitions above, it could be deduced that strategic planning involves the process of designing a plan that has a timeline on the kinds of goals that an organization, whether an educational institution or a business, wants to achieve within the set time frame. The ways by which the objectives and goals will be achieved through the available resources are therefore stated clearly in the strategic plan.

2.1 Objectives of Strategic Planning

As the manual on Strategic planning by NUC (2006) puts it, the objectives of strategic planning include the following;

- i. to build a sustainable long term future within a continuously changing environment;
- ii. to achieve a balance between the institution and its turbulent environment and ensure peace and harmony in the system;
- iii. to help the institution absorb pressure, attract funds from allied sources, demonstrate competence, reduce unpredictability and remain in business even in the face of uncertainties;
- iv. to identify priorities, set out objectives at various levels and ensure best and prudent management of limited resources;
- v. to make innovations and achieve organizational change through awareness and opportunities for participation

2.2 Benefits of Strategic Planning

Organizations that engage in corporate planning are generally believed to grow and make more profits than those without it. To this end, the benefits of strategic planning on organization performance cannot be overemphasized. Maleka (2014); Olanipon, Olumuyiwa and Akinola (2018) and Babandi (2019) described the following as benefits of strategic planning to any organisation;

- a) It helps to define an organisation's vision, mission and future goals.
- b) It helps to identify the suitable strategies to achieve the goals.
- c) It helps to strengthen the firm's performance.
- d) It helps to improve awareness of the external and internal environments, and clearly identifies the competitive advantage.
- e) It helps to increase managers' commitment to achieving the organisation's objectives.
- f) It helps to improve the coordination of activities and achieve a more efficient allocation of organisation's resources.
- g) It helps to foster better communication between managers of the different levels and functional areas.
- h) It helps to reduce resistance to change by informing the employees of the changes and their consequences.

3. AN OVERVIEW ON THE RISE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN EDUCATION

Strategic Planning in the ancient military sense is related to the science of warfare, where military battles are fought on large scale attack to engage the enemy; in which a lot of strategies would have been examined to alienate the enemy beforehand. In modern administrative and management context, strategic planning is seen as the means of overcoming the unforeseen obstacles that lie ahead on the path of the organization's progress and success.

However, the usage of this term "strategic planning" in an organization can be traced to the mid-19th century when the US Department of Defence, was trying to look for different avenue of establishing achievable long term goals in a cost effective way. Adetowubo-King (2018) reported that this led to the advent of the Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS) which blossomed into several series of varying strategic Planning and budgeting systems and as always, many departments, states and organizations began to use strategic planning approach as new adaptations came into being.

Hinton (2012) explained the emergence of strategic planning in American higher education which coincided with the difficulties experienced in all of education in the 1970s and 1980s. As enrolments began to fluctuate, student demographics started to change, and funding became inconsistent. At this point, researches and the rise of technology-enabled data collection and analysis pointed the way to strategic planning as one solution for developing a proactive stance in the environment of changing demands and declining resources. At its beginning, the strategic plan in post-secondary education was viewed as a tool to articulate institutional mission and vision help prioritize resources, and promote organizational focus. As a result, many of the early strategic planning efforts produced documents that described the institution, but did little to motivate a process.

During this period, strategic planning was beginning to gain some acceptance in higher education, federal and state governments, and the major accrediting commissions began to respond to external demands for accountability through the development of standards for assessment and learning outcomes measures. To tighten the standards, the accreditation commissions began to insist that institutions have a strategic plan and an assessment plan in order to meet accrediting requirements Hinton (2012). Sofoluwe (2002) in Abdulkareem, Akinnubi & Oyeniran (2008) also points out that the progress witnessed by American higher institutions warrant the Association of African Universities (AAU) to commission a study in 1990 and 1991 on the cost effectiveness and cost efficiency in African Universities.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) adopted the findings of the AAU and directed all universities in Nigeria to embark on strategic planning. As a result of the directive, the concept of strategic planning received wide attention in organizational behaviour literature on education in the country. Thus, this led to the full introduction and use of Strategic Planning in the educational setting that involves imaging a preferred future, as well as developing and directing its resources to achieve it.

3.1 A Brief History of the Nigerian University System

Apart from the Yaba Higher College that was set up in 1934 by the British Colonial government of Nigeria, the University of Ibadan remains the first Nigerian university college, which was founded with the name "University College, Ibadan in 1948, as an affiliate of the University of London. In 1959, the Ashby Commission made recommendations on the criteria for student enrolment and admission, flexibility of university courses and the proposed establishment of four universities to count but a few, and these influenced the establishment of the following universities in different regional parts of the nation; the University of Lagos in 1962, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ABU) both in 1962. That year 1962, the University of Ibadan was disassociated from the University of London and became a self-governing university that could award certificates to its students. The University of Benin was also created in 1970 after the creation of the mid-western state.

Onwudinjo (2010) presented in his speech that the six universities established during this period 1960-1970 are still referred to as "first generation universities" and from 1975 to 1980, when there was a significant rise in the income generated from oil and a high demand for higher education', Government established seven universities and took over the four regional universities. These were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Bayero University, Kano all known as "second generation universities". The quest of the Federal Government to advance technological development in Nigeria, led to the establishment of seven Universities of Technology at Akure, Bauchi, Owerri, Minna, Yola, Makurdi and Abeokuta.

These institutions were later merged with some conventional Universities in 1984. Subsequently in 1988, they were de-merged with two converted to Universities of Agriculture, Makurdi and Abeokuta, in the early 1980's. A third University of Agriculture was established at Umudike in 1993. Taking advantage of the 1979 constitution which placed education on the concurrent list, some states established universities. Fourteen state universities were established between 1980 and 1992 bringing the number of universities to a total of forty in the Country at the time.

After the return of the Nigerian government to civilian rule by General Abdulsalam Abubakar in 1999, there has been quite a significant degree of development in university education in Nigeria. These started with the establishment of more state universities as well as the introduction of the private sector into education which gave room to the establishment of private universities, which are mostly owned by Nigerian churches. In 2010, the Federal Government of Nigeria approved the bill that initiated the establishment of federal universities in all the states that had no federal university presence, thereby summing it up to 117, consisting of 36 federal universities, 36 state universities and 45 private universities in Nigeria today.

3.2 Concept of Quality in Education

The quality of anything is gotten from its nature which means; naturally it has to be part of the thing. The concept of quality concerns all the sectors of an organization which is designed to help increase the whole system's efficiency in delivering its set out goals. The quality of education has generally been a major concern of many academic institutions; be it locally in Nigeria or any other nation of the world. In most developed countries of the world today, the significant economic development and growth, they are witnessing today has been made possible through the help and support that has been provided by their higher institution's efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.

Quality in education has no one definition, as there have been many diverse definitions by different authors or researchers. Some have defined or explained it to mean "fitness for purpose, value for money, exceptional or outstanding, excellence or maintaining the highest standards"; they are all still referring to the nature of the education on offer. From the phrases earlier mentioned, we can deduce that quality in education refers to an educational process, whereby educational administrators and facilitators try to create quality product through pre-defined minimal standards. With respect to how the quality of education is defined, it is generally assumed that its place is in the result and not a form of action that has to be performed; but it must strongly be noted that quality of education is an unending process.

As higher education institutions have a prominent obligation to help produce the best manpower for its nation's work force through its education, research and diverse services. It is essential then that their performance should be at their utmost as this has a return on the individual and the society. Not forgetting that, tertiary institutions always benefit from a large proportion of the educational budgets more than the other levels of the Nigerian educational system. Therefore, assuring their performance quality is an undeniable requirement to prevent the human and material resources from being wasted and also to foster competitiveness for the future world, which is the most important factor for the survival of any organization (be it business organization or an educational institution). In promoting the quality of education in any educational institution, the end users must first be identified as they are the ones who are on the receiving end of any high or low quality service. Verma and Prasad (2012) rightly agreed with this by suggesting that "one of the best sources of evidence for assessment and evaluation of the quality of educational services is the views of the students who are at the receiving end of these services".

So, before taking steps to improve or develop quality improvement programs in an educational institution, the expectations and perceptions of the kind of quality desired by the customers (i.e. the students and the society) must first be known.

3.3 Reasons why Universities need Strategic Planning

Any university with a mission to succeed in the best educational interests of their students must have a plan to get there. A strategic plan helps a university define what it intends to achieve when it comes to their student success objectives and organizational goals (Ong, 2016). A combination of good planning and communication will ensure that all stakeholders including lecturers, administrators, senate members, the governing council and community are all striving for the same goals. Successful strategic plan implementation requires proper management of budgetary and time resources (Adetowubo-King, 2018).

Ong (2016) stated the following as reasons why strategic planning for schools is so critical:

1. *A strategic plan articulates a shared vision, mission and values:* This enables all stakeholders to work towards a common vision. A leading cause of employee discontent (for businesses, non-profits, and even universities) is that employees don't understand how the work they're doing helps their organization. With a *well communicated and executed strategic plan*, everyone is informed of their university's goals and how their actions are contributing to the achievement of these goals.
2. *A strategic plan effectively organizes universities and their staff:* The plan encourages commitment by showing staff members that their work is an essential part of a larger strategy to help their university succeed.
3. *A strategic plan defines how success is measured:* In order to achieve success, it's important to know what success means. A university with a strategy can monitor its progress toward key outcomes and evaluate where and how it may have gotten off track. Using strategy implementation software like Envisio can help (Ong, 2016).
4. *A strategic plan aids a university's board with governance decisions and provides direction for the future:* With a plan in place, the board has a roadmap which it can track, evaluate and modify to facilitate better governance decisions and provide direction for the future of the university.
5. *A strategic plan increases communication and engagement:* In the university system, communication is critical so that everyone understands his or her responsibilities and departments are effective in coordinating their efforts. As an additional benefit, the plan helps with fundraising, as well. Donors such as TET Fund and other non-governmental organisations are more likely to support a university that has a clear vision and a strategy to make it happen.
6. A well implemented and communicated plan holds all staff accountable for their actions and encourages collaboration.
7. Best of all, strategic planning provides a framework so that the most important priority of the university – students' educational achievement is taken care of.

3.4 How Nigerian Universities can use Strategic Planning to enhance their Quality

Before any step is taken, the management of the university must first be convinced that there is need for strategic planning before venturing into any process. This is because the strategic planning process involves a lot of activities that are geared towards achieving a successfully planned target by any organization or educational institution. The development of a strategic plan facilitates strategic thinking which gives a platform developing a meaningful strategic plan (Babandi, 2019).

The National Universities Commission in its manual for Strategic Planning, drafted out three major phases of implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases before a strategic plan can be formulated. These three major phases could be summarized into ten steps as Bryson (2004) provides a simple structure for the strategic planning process by tagging them the ABC's of strategic planning. According to Bryson, A is where you are, B is where you want to be and C is how you get there. The vision, mission, and goals of the organization help it move from point A to B. Strategy formulation connects A to C and strategy implementation connects B to C. Bryson's more complex planning process is a 10 steps "strategy change cycle".

These 10 steps include:

- i. Initiate and agree on a strategic planning process.
- ii. Identify organizational mandates.
- iii. Clarify organizational mission and values.
- iv. Assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- v. Identify the strategic issues facing the organization.
- vi. Formulate strategies to manage issues.
- vii. Review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan.
- viii. Establish an effective organizational vision.
- ix. Develop an effective implementation process.
- x. Reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process.

The manual also suggested that once the school administrators that is the top management are convinced that there is need to set up a strategic planning process, a committee could be set up to help sensitize the community and the stakeholders. These committees could have sub-committees who are in work groups to plan a schedule of meetings, organize seminars and workshops for the sensitization and help map out policy issues that would be developed into guidelines for the departments and the units as they participate in drafting the plans. The strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the institution must be inclusive. After this, a compilation should be done, where similarities can be collated into a broad category. This would help ease the bulk of the work and what would be left are five key questions that would help the higher institution define its strategic plan.

3.5 Environmental Scanning in Strategic Planning

Environmental scanning is a phrase that has been coined into strategic planning and it cannot do without it because it helps the institution or organization to relate its proposed or target achievement to the influences that could occur as a result of changes that emanate from its surroundings. Environmental scanning according to the National Universities commission (NUC)'s (2006) Manual on Strategic Planning requires the University to scrutinize its external context, where it operates to identify and understand what opportunities and threats exist and to which it must respond, as well as internal self-analysis to determine the institution's strengths and weaknesses. With regard to this, the manual illustrated further that at the stage of environmental scanning, activities must be aimed at identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) related to the subject institution.

The SWOT analysis enables the institution to:

- a. Highlight its areas of strength and weaknesses in terms of academic programmes, physical facilities, library space and holdings, teacher/student ratio for each programme and the quality (that is, qualification, experience and competence) of academic and technical staff.

- b. Indicate the prevailing opportunities and threats (constraints) such as alternative sources of revenue, linkages and collaborative research, operational constraints etc.
- c. Identify the amendments to its vision and mission statement in the light of the outcome of the SWOT analysis.

In the course of the SWOT analysis, the manual further suggested that planners must document details on the following as they affect the institution;

- a. Identify Strengths
 - i. Indicate the main strength
 - ii. Identify
 - How to enhance it
 - How to protect it
 - How to use it advantageously
- b. Identify Weaknesses
 - i. Indicate the particular weakness
 - ii. Identify:
 - How to eliminate it
 - How to disguise it
 - What keeps the institution from achieving it
- c. Identify Opportunities
 - i. Indicate the particular opportunity
 - ii. State the problems associated with each identified opportunity
 - iii. Identify strategies required and
 - iv. Indicate probable duration of the chosen strategy
- d. Identify Threats
 - i. Indicate the particular threat
 - ii. State problems associated with the threat
 - iii. Identify strategies for eliminating or minimizing the threats
 - iv. Indicate probable duration of the chosen strategy

In recognition of the above, it will be difficult to have a strategic plan without conducting a proper environmental scanning because the information above has shown that environmental scanning shouldn't be referred to as a process of strategic planning. Rather it should be seen as the building block upon which the successful strategic planning of any organization must be built. This helps the university to be fully prepared for any eventuality.

3.6 PESTEL Analysis in Strategic Planning

The term 'PESTEL' refers to these domains: Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Environmental and Legal; and often serves as a complementary tool to SWOT, expands on the analysis of external context by looking in detail at specific types of issues that frequently have an impact on implementation of project/ initiatives. (Mullerbeck, 2015). Morrison (2016) also stated that the PESTEL analysis is a tool that can provide prompt to management and staff involved in the analysis of the changes in the school environment that could impact future finance, planning and management decisions. Although, PESTEL analysis is more common among commercial organisations; it can also be used by educational institutions especially environment scanning.

Mullerbeck (2015) further stated that PESTEL analysis helps to complement SWOT by identifying specific relevant factors (such as economic trends, social attitudes, technological developments, etc.) that are significant for the project being considered and SWOT then classifies them as either Opportunities or Threats. The more complex a university's context or operating environment is, the more value PESTEL can offer, by identifying factors that would be missed by SWOT alone. These could be:

- P - **Political factors** such as stability of the government, privatization plans, government regulations, stakeholder needs or demands, lobbying/campaigning by interest groups, or even health and environmental issues
- E - **Economic factors** such as phases of school business cycle, financial situation of key partners or other relevant entities, economic growth, inflation, labour costs and unemployment rates
- S - **Socio-cultural factors** such as population, access to essential services, management style, staff attitudes, organizational culture, lifestyles & changes in consumer (i.e. students and parents) tastes & values
- T - **Technological factors** like new discoveries, better production methods & communications, technology transfer, access, licensing issues, other issues related to intellectual property rights
- E - **Environmental factors** include climatic change, geographical location, shortage of water & discovery of new supplies of energy or raw materials
- L - Legal factors include changes in law that concerns employment, companies or businesses, human rights (including but not limited to child rights and gender rights), ethical issues.

The PESTEL tool is a powerful technique for analyzing a university's environment but it should represent just one component of a comprehensive strategic planning process. The SWOT analysis preferably does better, since it determines both the major internal and external features of the organisation

4. DRAWBACK IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

As strategic planning begins to grow and become a regular part of an organization's activity, there are bound to be criticisms and opposing views that may bring about some drawbacks for such an organization. Educational institutions must remember that a strategic plan is just a procedure or a set of concepts and tools that require administrators, managers and educational planners to carefully tailor the process to the desired state of their institution or organization. Williams (1994) stated seven signs of trouble in the strategic planning process that could also bring about conflicts within an organization:

1. The organization waits to implement anything until the full plan is completed.
2. A consultant is hired to write the plan.
3. The plan is developed piecemeal by separate groups.
4. Planners and leaders are far more enthusiastic about the plan than others.
5. Most people in the organization can't think of anything to do differently as a result of the plan.
6. New resources or structural changes are required to carry out key elements of the plan.
7. The plan is developed separately by different groups.

Maleka (2014) also stated that if a strategic plan is completed in individual functional areas, the plan may work for individual departments, but is likely to sub-optimize the whole organisation. If assigned to a planning group, the result is often not truly embraced and endorsed by senior leadership, thus facing the following challenges:

- a. Senior management does not set aside the time to develop the strategic plan as a collective team work product.
- b. The organisation does not understand what a strategic plan is actually designed to provide. Therefore, the strategic plan is a tactical business plan with multiple year extrapolations. There is very little about it that addresses actual strategic direction.
- c. Senior management does not follow a defined process or methodology that will result in a strategic plan.
- d. The plan is developed but there is no process by which to communicate it throughout the organisation and build an organisation-wide alignment for its implementation.
- e. The plan is developed with no implementation guidelines at all. At best, it is implemented in pieces. At worst, it is unfunded and ignored.
- f. This does not have to become the reality. Strategic plans can be developed in an efficient and timely manner as long as the senior management team of an organisation is committed to meeting and working together over a period of several months to develop it.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the numerous issues that have been bewitching the Nigerian University system over the years, it is essential that the management of Nigerian universities begin to draw up ways of aligning their set missions and goals. This could best be done through the process of establishing a strategic plan that could help the school system eliminate all the various weaknesses and threats that surround its progress and at the same time, capitalize on its strengths and build on the opportunities around them. Strategic Planning is not just a plan but a guide to action that could result in the fast development of any educational institution.

Considering the role that strategic planning can play in enhancing the quality of services rendered in any Nigerian University and the success therein, the following are thus recommended:

1. The university management must first be willing to set up a strategic plan for their university; and as such set up a committee with the responsibility of formulating the plan, which must comprise all stakeholders in the institution.
2. The service of a well experienced and qualified educational planner should be contracted to help develop the university's strategic plan along with the key personnel in the different faculties of the school
3. All staff, both academic or non-academic personnel and other members of the university community must be carried along in the planning process.
4. The strategic goals must be derived from the university's vision and mission in order to be in alignment with the objectives of the university.
5. The planning process must be drawn towards a specific motivation, which could be internal or external. Internal motivation may involve the institutional values so that it could run efficiently and effectively while external motivation may result from competitors.
6. Environmental scanning must be done with all carefulness with focus placed on the strategic plan's broad goals.
7. The university resources must be aligned with the strategic plan,
8. According to the NUC's manual, the three stages which include the identification, implementation and evaluation must strictly be followed.
9. The strategic planning unit must be fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan that will be regularly evaluating the process, which will help to sustain the university strategic plan

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