



ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATAGIC  
PLANNING FOR THE GROWTH OF ORGANIZATION: THE CASE OF  
WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

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**Title:** ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE GROWTH OF ORGANIZATION

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## ABSTRACT

*To survive, organizations must respond and adjust to the social, economic, political, and environmental changes that occur. Unfortunately, in most organizations especially in the higher educational institutions, even strategic plans are carried out they are not implemented properly due to lack of appreciation and knowledge of the effective implementation of strategic planning on organization growth. The study sought to examine the effective implementation of strategic planning in the higher educational institutions. Organizations operate in constantly changing and competitive environment.*

*To achieve the objectives 90 questionnaires were administered to 90 management staff of the University administration, randomly selected from the administration office of the University. Microsoft Excel and simple statistical methods like frequency distribution tables and charts were used to analyze the data that were collected by the questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that, in the country the higher educational institutions have seen the need to formulate and implement strategic plans. The process of formulation and implementation of strategic plans in the higher educational institution is similar to the existing process of setting objectives, scanning, selecting strategies, implementation and evaluation in the private sector. The study found that the higher educational institutions face challenges in the implementation of their strategies due to long processes of approval by the approving authorities, the delay in release of funds, the shortage of skilled staff in some specialized areas, and the lack of commitment from officials. The findings of the study thus, lead to the overriding conclusion that strategic planning was effective and had a positive impact on the growth of organizations in the higher educational institutions.*

**Key word:**

- *Strategies*
- *Planning*
- *Vision*
- *Mission*
- *Goal*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of The Study

Every organization wants to survive and grow in a constantly changing and competitive environment. To do so, it must respond and adjust itself to the social, economic and political environmental changes that occur.

The environments of public organizations according to (Bryson, 2004) have become not only increasingly uncertain in recent years but also more tightly interconnected; thus, changes anywhere in the system reverberate unpredictably, and often chaotically and dangerously throughout the environment. This increased uncertainty and interconnectedness requires a Fivefold response from public organizations. First, these organizations must think strategically as never before. Second, they must translate their insights into effective strategies to cope with their changing circumstances. Third, they must develop the rationale necessary to lay the groundwork for the adoption and implementation of their strategies. Fourth, they must build coalitions that are large enough and strong enough to adopt desirable strategies and protect themselves during implementation. Finally, they must build capacity for ongoing management of the strategic change.

Strategic planning can help leaders and managers of higher educational institutions to think, learn and act strategically. The idea of strategic planning emerged in corporations that wanted to have a strategy as to how to maximize their profits. Today, the motivation is manifold and differs according to the type of organization.

The need for an organization proactively respond to environmental challenges has now become imperative, as it offers the organization a competitive edge in today's business world. Thus, every organization regardless of its size must have some form of a strategic plan.

The higher educational institutions, in developing countries, can no longer approach developmental issues as before, especially, given the advancements in business management made in the world and the expected fast growths needed for quicker transformation in their economies. As a result, various development experts have now resolved to impress on

governments to strategically plan and roll out a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to harness their business potential as a pivot for growth.

In recent times, Government of Ethiopia has embarked on the higher educational institutions management reforms with the view to improving their operations and creating value for their operations.

Wolkite University, one of Ethiopian higher educational institution has over the years adopted strategic planning, to give it direction for growth & development. Currently the University states its vision in the statement “ is to be among the leading applied science universities in Ethiopia, focusing on quality education, research, and community engagement to produce competent professionals and entrepreneurs. ”

Generally, for an organization to achieve its long-term vision it should formulate the right strategy & implement it correctly. That is why this study is concerned in assessing strategic planning practice and its impact on the organization.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In view of the many challenges that organizations are exposed to, it is imperative for them, both profit and nonprofit organizations, to anticipate challenges, identify their strengths to meet anticipated challenges and take control of available opportunities to obtain maximum productivity.

Some public organizations do not attach any importance to strategic planning and therefore do not have strategic plans for their organizations. Unfortunately, in most organizations, especially in the higher educational institutions, even strategic plans are carried out they will not implement properly. This could be borne out of lack of appreciation and knowledge of the effective implementation of strategic planning to organizational growth.

In an attempt to address this unfortunate development, there is the need to critically assess the effective implementation of strategic planning in the higher educational institutions to enable management appreciate its worth in gaining competitive advantage at the market place. Some common gaps or problems in the implementation of strategic plans in higher education institutions may include:

1. *Lack of stakeholder engagement:* Higher educational institutions often have multiple stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Failure to

engage these stakeholders in the development and implementation of strategic plans can result in resistance, lack of buy-in, and poor execution.

2. *Limited resources:* Higher educational institutions may face budget constraints, limited staff capacity, and competing priorities that can hinder the implementation of strategic plans.

3. *Resistance to change:* The academic culture in higher education institutions can be resistant to change, making it challenging to implement new initiatives or strategies.

4. *Lack of alignment:* Strategic plans may not be aligned with the institution's mission, vision, or values, resulting in a lack of clarity and direction for the organization.

### **1.3 Basic Research Questions**

1. What is the existing practice regarding strategic planning in the university administration?

2. How much is strategic planning effective to the growth of the University?

3. What are the challenges in the implementation of strategic plans in the University?

4. How does the University administration formulate and implement its strategic plans?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General objective:**

The general objective of the study is to assess critically the effective implementation of strategic planning in the higher educational institutions with particular reference to the University.

#### **1.4.2 Specific objectives:**

Specific objectives of this study are to

- To assess the practices of organizations with regard to strategic planning using the university administration
- To assess the effective implementation of strategic planning on the growth of higher educational institutions
- To assess the challenges in the implementation of strategic plans and ways of meeting the challenges

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The thrust of the study is aimed at contributing to knowledge with regard to strategic planning and its effective implementation on organizational growth in the higher educational institutions.

The findings of this study would be of great value to management and staff of University administration and its stakeholders, and by extension other organizations in the higher educational institutions, as it would be assess the practice of strategic planning in higher educational institutions & its effective implementation on organizational growth, clarify the challenges and the ways to meet them.

Student researchers in related areas would be also find the study a useful literature for reference. The study would be Contribute in that regard to encourage managers in higher educational institutions to adopt strategic planning in the management of their entities in order to have competitive advantages in their industry.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The higher educational institutions in Ethiopia are many. It comprises all governmental and private colleges and Universities. However, because of limited time, lack of resources, and access to information, the study is limited to the University administration. This means that the research would be benefit much from primary information from other institutions. In spite of this, the thorough work with the University administration would be give a clear view of what is happening in other related organizations.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

The study was restricted to administrative management staffs of the University administration. The study constrained by some major challenges. One challenge the researcher encountered was the slow rate of response from many respondents who during the period were in the field for other official assignments, whiles some were on leave

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study Comprises five chapters. Chapter one: deals with introduction and gives an overview of the study, which serves as an introductory chapter to the entire research. Chapter Two: covers a review of effective literature on the research topic. It deals with thorough discussions of existing literature and research effective to the study and therefore provides the conceptual framework for this research. Chapter Three: explains the research methodology and discusses the data collection methods and justification of selected research techniques. Chapter Four: presents, analysis and evaluation of collected data. Chapter Five: the final chapter draws information from previous chapters to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers a review of effective literature, which acts as a foundation to the rest of the study. It explores areas that are pertinent to the study. It provides the conceptual framework for this study to guide readers to understand the concepts and principles of strategic planning and other related concepts.

##### 2.1.2 Strategic Planning

The term strategic planning according to Thompson and Strickland (2003) refers to the managerial process of forming a strategic vision, setting objectives, crafting a strategy, implementing and executing the strategy, and then over time initiating whatever corrective adjustment in the vision, objectives, strategy, and execution are deemed appropriate.

Daft (1993) defines strategic planning as the set of decisions and actions used to formulate and implement strategies that will provide a competitively superior fit between the organization and its environment so as to achieve organizational objective.

Taylor et al (2005) define strategic planning as consisting of the analysis, decisions, and actions an organization undertakes in order to create and sustain competitive advantage. This definition according to Taylor and others captures two main elements that go to the heart of the field of strategic planning. First, the strategic planning of an organization entails three ongoing processes: analysis, decisions, and actions. That is strategic planning is concerned with the analysis of strategic goals (vision, mission, and strategic objectives) along with the analysis of internal and external environment of the organization. Second, the essence of strategic planning is the study of why some firms outperform others. Thus, managers need to determine how a firm is to compete so that it can obtain advantages that are sustainable over a lengthy period.

### 2.1.3 Strategy

There are many definitions of strategy as there are experts and commentators in the field. Some definitions of strategy by various authors are given below:

A company's strategy according to Thompson and Strickland (2003) consists of the competitive efforts and business approaches that managers employ to please customers, compete successfully, and achieve organizational objectives. Strategy are potential action that require top management decision and large amount of the firm resource (Fred R David)

### 2.1.4 Organizational Strategy

According to Wheelen and Hunger (2004), organizational strategy is a systematic plan of action adopted by organizations and/or individuals to achieve defined goals and objectives. Four levels of strategy may be isolated. These include corporate level, Business level, Functional level, and operational level. The corporate level is the highest of these levels gives direction to corporate values, corporate culture, corporate goals and corporate mission.

- Corporate Level Strategy
- Business Level Strategy
- Functional Level Strategy
- Operational Level Strategy

### 2.1.5 Corporate Level Strategy

Corporations are responsible for creating value through their businesses. They however, do so by developing corporate strategies for managing their portfolio of businesses, ensuring that the businesses are successful over the long-term, developing business units, and ensuring that each business is compatible with others in the portfolio. (Wheelen& Hunger 2004)

Corporate strategy therefore, involves the direction an organization takes with the objective of achieving business success in the long term. Corporate level strategy is fundamentally concerned with the selection of businesses in which the company should compete and the development and coordination of that portfolio of businesses (wheelen&hunger 2006)

According to Wheelen and Hunger (2006), corporate strategies deal with three key issues facing the corporation as a whole:

- The firm's overall orientation toward growth, stability, or retrenchment (directional strategy)

- The industries or markets in which the firm competes through its products and business units (portfolio strategy)
- The manner in which management coordinates activities and transfers resources and cultivates capabilities among product lines and business units (parenting strategy) For the purpose of this study, emphasis was on the firm's overall orientation towards Growth, Stability, and Retrenchment (directional strategies).

### 2.1.6 Corporate Strategy Formation

According to Gohnson G Schools K and FreryF (2002), corporate strategy formation involves a combination of three main processes, which are as follows:

- Performing a situation analysis, self-evaluation and competitor analysis: both internal and external; both micro-environmental and macro-environmental
- Defining overall organizational direction: This involves constructing vision statements (long-term view of a possible future), mission statements (the role that the organization gives itself in society), overall corporate objectives (both financial and strategic), strategic business unit objectives (both financial and strategic), and tactical objectives.
- Developing a strategic plan in the light of the overall organizational direction, the plan provides the details of how to achieve the objectives.

### 2.1.7 Strategy Implementation and Execution

Strategy implementation according to Arthur Thompson A and Strickland A.J(2003) concerns the managerial exercise of putting a freshly chosen strategy into place, while strategy execution deals with the managerial exercise of supervising the ongoing pursuit of strategy, making it work, improving the competence with which it is executed, and showing measurable progress in achieving the targeted results. Managing the strategy execution process as indicated by Thompson and Strickland is primarily a hands-on, close-to the scene administrative task that includes the following principal aspects:

1. Building an organization capable of carrying out the strategy successfully;
2. Allocating company resources so that organizational units charged with performing strategy-critical activities and implementing new strategic initiatives have sufficient people and funds to do their work successfully;

3. Establishing strategy-supportive policies and operating procedures;
4. Motivating people in ways that induce them to pursue the target objectives energetically and, if need be, modifying their duties and job behavior to better fit the strategy requirements of successful execution;
5. Tying the reward structure to the achievement of targeted results;
6. Creating a company culture and work climate conducive to successful strategy implementation and execution;
7. Installing information, communication, and operating a system that enable company personnel to carry out their strategic roles effectively day in, day out;
8. Instituting best s and programs for continuous improvement and;
9. Exerting the internal leadership needed to drive implementation forward and to keep improving on how the strategy is being executed.

### 2.1.8 Corporate Strategy Evaluation

Johnson et al (2008) also stated that, corporate strategy can be evaluated based on the following three key success criteria:

**Suitability.** which deals with the overall rationale of the strategy, the key point to consider is whether the strategy would address the key strategic issues underlined by the organization's strategic position. Tools that can be used to evaluate suitability include:

- Ranking strategic options
- Decision trees

**Feasibility.** which is concerned with whether the resources required to implement the strategy are available, can be developed or obtained. Resources include funding, people, time and information. Tools that can be used to evaluate feasibility include:

Cash flow analysis and forecasting

Break-even analysis

Resource deployment analysis

**Acceptability.** which is concerned with the expectations of the identified stakeholders (mainly shareholders, employees and customers) with the expected performance outcomes, which can be returns, risk and stakeholder reactions. Returns, deals with the benefits expected by the stakeholders, Risk, deals with the probability and consequences of failure of a strategy (financial

and non-financial), and Stakeholder Reactions, involves anticipating the likely reaction of stakeholders.

### 2.1.9 Challenges in The Implementation of Strategic Plan

According to a study by Pierce John A. and Robinson Richard. B (2000) p:490-509 Eisenstat, published in the summer 2000 issue of "Sloan Management Review," the six silent killers of strategy implementation are top-down or complacent upper management, unclear strategy and conflicting priorities, ineffective senior management team, poor vertical communication and coordination across the enterprise and inadequate middle-manager and supervisor management skills.

Pierce and Robinson (2000) contend that, implementing business strategy is difficult and challenging. Various obstacles have been discussed by these authors to alert higher educational institution managers to the level of difficulty involved in operating programs in a result-oriented fashion. By recognizing the complexity and magnitude of business strategy implementation, managers can approach the challenge with realistic expectations. According to Pierce and Robinson, there are significant challenges that could inhibit success unless dealt with aggressively and effectively. They include cultural issues, pessimism and skepticism, false support, passive resistance, retirement disengagement, mismatches between strategy and structure, lack of funds, information technology constraints, communication gaps, and influence of unions and organized labor. Success requires senior management sincerity, support, and involvement. Without these critical ingredients, ambitious goals are unlikely to be achieved. It also requires involvement of all managers at all levels to work effectively (Pierce and Robinson 2000).

### 2.10 Effective Implementation / Benefits of Strategic Planning

While there are a number of potential benefits associated with strategic planning, a number of arguments or criticisms have been leveled against it. Notable among the critics are Peters and Waterman (1982) in the USA, and Stacey (1991) in the United Kingdom (UK). Despite some criticisms, some other authors like (Byars, et al, 1996) have argued the need for strategic planning. Bartol and Martin, (1998), and other scholars also agree that strategic planning has been effective for organizations. Some benefits or Effective of strategic planning as advanced by Bryson (2004), are as follows:

First, strategic planning enables management, staff, and other stakeholders to reflect on the nature of the organization, the present and future needs of its customers, and possible changes in the environment including technology, social trends, and economic forces. A systematic and objective assessment of the forces enables management to come to terms with unique strength of the organization. In this regard, the required strategic decisions can be taken.

Second, strategic planning can provide opportunity to involve the various levels of management in the process. As different levels of management participate in strategy formulation, they get a clearer sense of where the organization wants to go. This largely facilitates the integration of employees and management to the goal and objectives of the organization thereby assuring higher performance.

Third, strategic planning ensures that all the different units of the organization work together towards achieving the same objectives. Without a strategic plan, the organic units of the organization will slew off track. Strategic planning therefore provides an integrative mechanism for all organizational units to work together.

Fourth, through strategic planning, an organization is able to have a sense of direction or „road map’ that enables it to clearly see where it is going and where the future will lead it. Without a sense of direction, an organization will spend its time reacting to problems thus, taking hasty and uninformed decisions that may be very costly.

Fifth, strategic planning enables organizations to understand how the expectations of stakeholders (e.g. government, customers, shareholders and employees) and the environmental forces that affect it (e.g. political-legal, economic, socio-cultural, and technological) affect the organization’s growth in the changing world.

Sixth, strategic planning also nurtures in management the habit of periodically appraising the competitive position of their organizations. This compels management to be more proactive and conscious of the environment in which their organizations are operating.

Seventh, strategic planning clearly defines the purpose of the organization and establishes realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined period within the organization’s capacity for implementation.

Eighth, strategic planning enables management to communicate the organization’s goals and objectives to the organization’s constituents. There is the need to get employees informed or

oriented about the mission, goal, and objectives of the organization in order to encourage them to work towards achieving the goal of the organization.

Ninth, strategic planning develops a sense of ownership of the plan and therefore ensures the most effective use is made of the organization's resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.

Finally, strategic planning Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change when needed.

## **2.2 Strategic Planning In Higher Educational Institution**

According to Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2017), strategic planning in higher educational institutions is becoming increasingly important due to the changing landscape of higher education. With the rise of online learning and the increasing competition for students and funding, universities and colleges need to have a clear vision and plan for the future.

One key aspect of strategic planning in higher education is the need to align the institution's mission and goals with the needs of its stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community. This involves engaging in a process of data analysis and stakeholder input to identify key priorities and opportunities for growth and improvement.

Another important element of strategic planning in higher education is the need to focus on innovation and adaptability. This includes exploring new models of teaching and learning, leveraging technology to enhance the student experience, and developing partnerships with industry and other organizations to support research and innovation.

Finally, effective strategic planning in higher education requires strong leadership and collaboration across all levels of the institution. This involves engaging faculty, staff, and students in the planning process, communicating the plan effectively, and providing ongoing support and resources to ensure its successful implementation.

Overall, strategic planning is essential for higher educational institutions to remain competitive and relevant in today's rapidly evolving landscape. By focusing on alignment, innovation, and collaboration, universities and colleges can develop a clear vision for the future and achieve their goals for success. External factors such as economic conditions, regulatory changes, technological advancements, and demographic shifts can impact the implementation of a

strategic plan in higher educational institutions. To address these challenges, institutions should be proactive in monitoring external trends and adapting their plans accordingly. They should also seek out partnerships with external organizations to leverage resources and expertise

### **2.3 Why Higher Educational Institution Needs Strategic Planning**

Universities are driven to engage in a strategic planning process by a variety of forces. These include: increasing demand for higher education concurrent with a decline in government funding, changing student demographics, and a need to compete with the emerging models of higher education while keeping the essence of a traditional comprehensive university. A strategic planning process can help prepare a university to face these emerging challenges. According to Benjamin & Carroll (1998, p.3), “if current trends continue, more than one third of the Californians seeking to enroll in a state university will be unable to do so by the year 2015.” Consequently, to avoid such outcomes, universities need to “make major structural changes in their decision-making systems ... and reallocate scarce resources” (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998, p.21). Universities should also “pursue greater mission differentiation to streamline their services and better respond to the changing needs of their constituencies” (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998, p. 22-23). Strategic planning can aid the university in accomplishing these tasks.

At least one demographic impact will be positive. Institutions will be compelled to become more introspective and analytical, to undertake long- range planning, something they did not have to do in good times. They will be forced to set priorities and develop strategies, overcome institutional inertia and make long-overdue choices-for example, to identify areas of growing student interest and create new programs to replace those for which demand may have fallen off. A consumer orientation will benefit higher education. (Stewart, 1979. p. 23)

If colleges and universities are to survive in the troubled years ahead, a strong emphasis on planning is essential. The type of planning that appears to be most appropriate for the future is "strategic" market planning. It is one of the most revolutionary commercial sector developments in the last ten years and promises to be a potent tool for use in nonprofit organizations. (Kotler and Patrick, 1981)

### **2.4 Challenges Facing Higher Educational Institutions**

Recent years have brought many changes to higher educational institutions. Following is a brief description of these challenges.

### *Decrease in state government funding*

Public universities' share of the state budget is plummeting; according to David Breneman, it will decline to 1% in 2002 (from 12% in 1994). At the same time, according to Benjamin & Carroll (1998) the operating costs per student in higher education are raising.

### *Increase in demand for higher education*

Demand for higher education is expected to increase sharply in the next decade. According to former CSU chancellor Barry Munitz, university enrollment in California will increase to 2.7 million in 2010, a 50% increase over 1.8 million in 1994. For CSU, this translates into an additional 100,000 full-time equivalent students (FTE) annually by 2010 (Cornerstones, p.2). In addition to the expected population growth, the proportion of the population that will attend universities will increase. According to Benjamin & Carroll (1998, p. 9), "only college graduates will be able to hold their own economically" by 2015. As more and more people recognize that a college degree is essential to their economic wellbeing, demand for higher education will increase.

### *Changing demographics*

Students' demographic makeup is changing. In addition, the average age of the student population will increase, as more "older" students return to universities to get undergraduate degrees. Seeking "the best conditions for success of all its diverse students," universities need to provide education that will allow graduates to "fully participate in a diverse society committed to democratic values" (Cornerstones, p 3).

### *New models of higher education*

New models of providing higher education have emerged in recent years. According to some researchers, a gap between what the public wants and what traditional universities provide is growing (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997). Changes in the educational needs (i.e. a need for more specific, applied education), unmet by the existing system of higher education, have prompted emergence of for-profit, "convenience" universities. Adapting to the needs of the consumer-driven market (Traub, 1997), they view the student as a customer, target specific functions (based on the market need), and offer schedules convenient for students. Thus "traditional" universities must find ways to deal with this new competition.

### *Keeping elements of a "traditional" model*

“Universities can’t move completely away from a provider-driven model to a consumer driven form of higher education. The quest for new knowledge, the analysis of theories and practices, and the free exchange of ideas would suffer if colleges and universities only offered what was popular” (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997, p. 54). Eliminating disciplines because they are currently not in demand is contrary to the mission of a comprehensive university. Yet to some degree all campuses must consider student preferences for applied education and the larger labor market.

### *Economic transformation*

The major economic growth areas, high-tech and high-tech based industries, will employ well educated individuals, able to move easily among careers and employers. Who lack adequate education and competencies useful across career lines, especially those without at least a college degree, will be at a disadvantage, in terms of employment opportunities, earning capacity, and higher unemployment rates (Cornerstones, appendix, p. 2).

## **2.5 Need for Strategic Planning in Higher Education**

Strategic planning is one of the major steps the universities can take to address these challenges. Strategy is a tool for the university to find its competitive advantage and place within the environment.

Universities must bring about the needed institutional redesign and devise an effective strategic plan for developing countries’ human resources. By pursuing a greater mission differentiation and reallocation of resources they will better respond to the changing needs of their constituencies (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998).

The present lack of effective strategic planning has leads to dire predictions from many observers. According to Benjamin & Carroll (1998, p.1), “the present course of higher education in the state – in which student demand, tuition, and costs are rising much faster than public funding - is unsustainable. Unless significant steps are taken to address the situation, hundreds of thousands of students will be denied access to higher education within the next 20 years.” “That is a serious, sobering, economic, political, and social catastrophe, and there is nothing in the framework of a current situation that is likely to prevent that from occurring” (Breneman, 1995).

“Institutions of higher education that do not rethink their roles, responsibilities, and structures ... can expect a very difficult time in the next decade and the next generation. Some will not survive. Most will be expected to do much more with far less” (Glassman & Rossy, n.d.).

## **2.6 Impact of Strategic Planning on Organizational Growth: A Critique**

During the period between 1960 and early 1970, a number of researchers set out to investigate whether or not planning pays. Most of the studies were conducted in the United States of America (USA) using a sample of American companies. Indeed, strategies of organizations at the time were merely mathematical computations of past performance. However, factors such as deregulation, increasing technological change and globalization made meaningless this approach to long-range planning. Organizations were therefore compelled to put in place a systematic approach of proactively dealing with environmental threat and opportunities as related to organizations weaknesses and strengths. Thus, organizations recognized the importance of strategic thinking and planning (Hart, et al, 1994:251-269).

Ansoff and his colleagues (Ansoff, et al, 1970) published a study of 93 manufacturing firms in the United States of America. In the study, it was realized that firms engaging in acquisition activity in a “systematic Planned” way achieved high performance and growth.

In 1975, Malik and Karger also undertook a study on the relationship between strategic planning and business growth on sampled American firms and concluded that, there is a favorable relationship.

In a 1986 study of small firms in a 'stable, mature environment': Bracker and Pearce found that, higher growth performance (in terms of sales volumes and return on equity) was associated with those firms that had a strategic plan.

## **2.7 Empirical Literature**

This empirical literature review aims to explore the implementation of strategic plans in higher educational institutions and the factors that influence their success. According to a study by Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2017), strategic planning is essential for higher education institutions to achieve their goals and objectives. The authors argue that strategic planning provides a framework for decision making, resource allocation, and performance evaluation. The study also highlights the importance of involving all stakeholders in the strategic planning process,

including faculty, staff, students, and external partners. By involving all stakeholders, the authors suggest that the strategic plan will be more comprehensive, realistic, and achievable.

Another study by Schuh et al. (2018) examines the factors that influence the successful implementation of strategic plans in higher education institutions. The authors suggest that effective leadership is critical for the success of a strategic plan. They argue that leaders should be committed to the plan, communicate its goals and objectives clearly, and provide the necessary resources and support for its implementation. The study also highlights the importance of having a shared vision among all stakeholders and aligning the plan with the institution's mission and values.

In a study by Bowen et al. (2017), the authors explore the challenges of implementing strategic plans in higher education institutions. The study identifies several barriers to successful implementation, including resistance to change, lack of resources, inadequate communication, and insufficient leadership. The authors suggest that these challenges can be addressed by involving all stakeholders in the planning process, providing adequate training and support, and creating a culture of collaboration and accountability.

A study by Kim and Park (2019) examines the impact of strategic planning on organizational performance in higher education institutions. The authors suggest that strategic planning positively affects organizational performance by improving resource allocation, enhancing communication and collaboration, and increasing accountability. The study also highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan to ensure its effectiveness.

Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the implementation of strategic plans in various organizations. The following is a summary of some of the empirical reviews on this topic:

1. A study by Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) found that successful implementation of strategic plans requires clear communication of goals and objectives, allocation of resources, and involvement of key stakeholders. The study also found that organizations that regularly monitor and adapt their plans are more likely to achieve their goals.

2. In a study by Bryson et al. (2011), it was found that effective implementation of strategic plans requires leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, and a focus on results. The study also highlighted the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation of the plan to ensure progress towards the desired outcomes.

3. A study by Hofer and Schendel (1978) found that successful implementation of strategic plans requires a clear understanding of the organization's capabilities and limitations, as well as a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. The study also emphasized the importance of aligning the plan with the organization's culture and values.

4. In a study by Kaplan and Norton (2008), it was found that successful implementation of strategic plans requires a focus on execution, including clear communication of objectives, alignment of incentives with goals, and the use of performance metrics to track progress.

Overall, these studies suggest that successful implementation of strategic plans requires a combination of factors, including clear communication, stakeholder engagement, leadership commitment, regular monitoring and evaluation, and a focus on execution. Organizations that prioritize these factors are more likely to achieve their desired outcomes.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

According to Hill and Jones (2008) the conceptual framework for the implementation of a strategic plan in higher educational institutions includes several key components. These components include:

1. Stakeholder involvement: The involvement of all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, is critical for the success of a strategic plan. By involving all stakeholders in the planning process, the plan will be more comprehensive, realistic, and achievable.

2. Effective leadership: Effective leadership is essential for the success of a strategic plan. Leaders should be committed to the plan, communicate its goals and objectives clearly, and provide the necessary resources and support for its implementation.

3. Alignment with mission and values: The strategic plan should be aligned with the institution's mission and values to ensure that it supports the overall direction of the institution.

4. Adequate resources and support: Adequate resources and support are necessary for the successful implementation of a strategic plan. This includes financial resources, human resources, and technological resources.

5. Culture of collaboration and accountability: Creating a culture of collaboration and accountability is essential for addressing the challenges of implementing a strategic plan. This involves promoting open communication, fostering teamwork, and holding individuals and teams accountable for their actions.

6. Monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan is critical to ensure its effectiveness. This involves tracking progress towards goals, identifying areas for improvement, and making necessary adjustments to the plan. By addressing these key components, higher educational institutions can successfully implement a strategic plan that guides their operations towards achieving their goals and objectives

For both Hill and Jones (2008), the organizational design is the heart of implementing strategies effectively. Organizations motivate and coordinate its employees and members through the use of organizational structure, control systems and culture to work towards achieving the desired results by developing the competitive advantage. They also believed that organizational structure, control systems and culture directly affect the behavior, values and attitudes of people and also help them in implementing the organization business model and strategies.

Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskinson (2013), also developed their conceptual framework; they share with Brenes et al (2008), the important role of corporate governance in strategy implementation success. According to Hitt et al. (2013) effective corporate governance, organizational structure and strategic entrepreneurship are necessary for successful implementation of strategies. Corporate governance is a relationship among stakeholders and helps determining the direction of firms and also controls its performance.

Hitt et al (2013) believes that organization structure specifies the accomplishment of given tasks whereas organizational control provides alignment to these tasks according to the strategic intent and also suggests improvements in performance when it falls below expectations

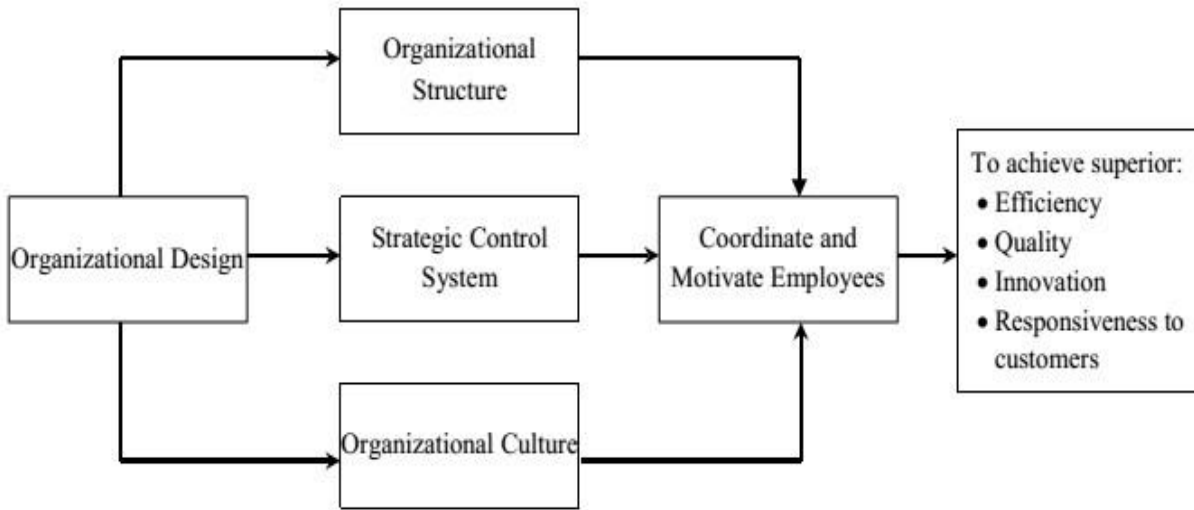


Figure 5. The Hill and Jones conceptual framework (2008)

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology or procedures that were used in the study. The chapter consists of the following: the sources of data for the study, sample methods, sample population, data analysis and measurement of the study. The research methodology are also outlined.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The researcher used descriptive method for the research purpose since this method enables to assess the state of affairs of a phenomenon. In this research a single approach was used, that was the survey research, which is one of the most common types of quantitative in social science research. Survey research is a method used to obtain information needed by giving out questionnaires to the related population.

#### 3.2 Sources of Data

The study collected data from both primary and secondary sources.

*a) primary data*

Primary data were collected through the distribution of questionnaire to (90) staffs of University administration.

*b) secondary sources*

Secondary sources of information were collected from various Journals on Strategic Planning, Strategic management and Corporate Strategy. Some effective handouts and course books were also consulted as well as Journals of the University and its official websites

#### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The staff of University administration constituted a population is 1226 in Academic Administrators and 879 administrative staff. From that population a researcher Use simple random sampling technique. Then the researcher Take a total population of 879 from administrative staff but the researcher Used 90 employees from Administrative staff from the main Campus of the university as a sample using scientific formula of yamen (1967) formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{879}{1 + 879(0.1)^2}$$

$$\underline{\underline{n=90}}$$

where  
n= sample size  
N=total population  
e= margin of error (10%)

### **3.4 Methods of Data Gathering Instruments**

To achieve the objective of the study, structured questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection. For easy understanding and reading, the questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part of questionnaire took into consideration the demo-graphic data of respondents. The second part of the questionnaire looked at background and practice of strategic planning in the University Administration. The third part looked at the effective implementation of strategic planning on organizational growth in higher educational institutions. The instrument contained 15 questions. Ninety questionnaires were distributed to all 90 respondents. The questionnaire includes closed ended questions / quantitative (yes/no, multiple choice) and open ended/ qualitative ( short text and descriptive) questions making it easier for respondents to understand and answer. Besides, it facilitated the interpretation of data.

### **3.3 Analysis and Presentation of Data**

Data for the analysis were extracted from the field survey. Each specific statement on the questionnaires was scored. Simple statistical methods like the frequency distribution table, and charts were used to analyze each statement. After determining the absolute figure for the various responses, percentage scores were also determined for each statement.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the structured questionnaire responded to by the 90 members sample size from University Administration. It presents details of the data collected from the study as well as the effective discussion there on. The data is categorized under three constructs: the demographic characteristics of respondents; strategic planning in University Administration; and assessment of the effective implementation of strategic planning in the University Administration. After presenting the tables and graphs on the responses, a brief interpretation or discussion is provided to facilitate an understanding of the data.

The response or non-response rate in the field survey is expressed as Follows, from 90 questionnaires 85 set of questionnaires were collected giving a response rate of 94%. This is impressive considering the busy schedules of most management staff at the time of the study. This therefore demonstrates a high level of commitment and importance the staff of University Administration associated with the study.

Table 4.1: **Response and Non-Response Rate**

Response	85	94%
Non-Response	5	6%
Total	90	100%

Source: survey , 2025

## 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This is concerned with characteristics of respondents. It covers areas such as sex, level of education, current department and current position. The tables below illustrate the demographic characteristics of respondents:

Table 4.2: Sex Composition of Respondents

Male	60	71
Female	25	29
Total	85	100%

Source: survey , 2025

Table 4.2 above, shows the sex composition of respondents. From the foregoing, the gender composition of the sample is somewhat unbalanced. Male, who constituted over 60 (71%) of the sample, dominates it, a small number 25 (29%) of females were also included. This reflects the unbalanced proportion of female management staffs in University Administration.

Table 4.3: Educational Level of Respondents

Diploma	5	6
Degree	50	59
Higher degree	30	35
Total	85	100%

Source: survey , 2025

Table 4.3 above shows the educational levels of respondents. Out of the 85 respondents, none had qualification below first degree. From the data, over 59% of the respondents had a minimum of First Degree. This clearly demonstrates University Administration has highly qualified and educated staff which greatly affected the study. In a study of this nature, especially with respect to strategic planning, a certain level of thinking is required from respondents. To this end, the respondents' level of education was quite useful.

Table 4.4 Data on Respondents Current Position

Director	20	23
Deputy director	10	11
Manager	35	41
Other	20	25
Total	85	100%

Source: survey , 2025

From the above table, 23% of the respondents were Directors; while 11% were Deputy Directors. These two categories of staffs were quite effective since they constitute the policy formulators of the organization. Their peculiar role in leading the strategy formulation affects the implementation process as they also supervise that process.

The 11% of management staff who were captured in the sample was quite effective to the study particularly because of their peculiar roles in strategy formulation and implementation.

### 4.3 Strategic Planning in your University

This sub-section presents data on the effective implementation of strategic planning in University Administration. Specific questions asked including whether strategic planning was effective in University Administration; whether formulation and implementation of strategic plans was effective in University Administration; whether the University Administration had a strategic plan and if so, whether staff had access or copies of the Administration's strategic plan document; and the challenges in the implementation of strategic plans in the University Administration.

Table 4.5: Response to whether staff had access to or copies of the strategic plan

Yes	80	94
No	5	6
Total	85	100.0

Source: survey , 2025

From table 4.5 above, as much as 94% of the respondents affirmed that they had access and copies of the Administration's strategic plan document. Management of the University

Administration recognizes that, allowing staff to have access to the Administration’s Plan document and having personal copies was effective, as it would serve as a guide and a reference material to all staff. This ensures commitment and motivation from staff in the plan implementation.

Table 4.6: Response to whether the strategic plan of University was effective

Yes	82	96
No	3	4
Total	85	100.0

Source: survey , 2025

Table 4.6 above shows that, 82 or (96%) respondents answered ‘YES’ in response to whether the implementation of the University Administration’s strategic plan was effective. The 93% affirmation indicates the University Administration’s commitment to ensuring effective program implementation. The Administration through the implementation of its strategic plan was able to achieve its objectives of improving on its service delivery by avoiding delays with quality. All these were concurrently achieved because of the formulation and implementation of the plan.

#### **4.4 Response to the challenges in the implementation of strategic plans, in the University administration**

Regarding the question on the challenges faced by the University Administration in implementing its strategic plans, the following were some of the challenges identified.

##### **4.4.1 The Effective Implementation of Strategic Planning in the Growth of University**

This sub-section presents responses on the effective of strategic planning in the growth of University Administration. Various charts were used in the illustrations as outlined below:

Table 4.7 Response to whether strategic plan ensures co-operation towards a common goal

7	Yes	80	94
8	No	5	6
9	Total	85	100

Source ; survey, 2025

The table above shows that, 80 representing 94% of the respondents affirmed that strategic plan ensures that staff of the Wolkite University Administration work towards a common goal. In the Administration’s plan for instance, the goals and objectives for the period are outlined of which all staff is made aware. Because the plan has its stated goals and objectives and of which staff was aware, it saw the co-operation from staff as they rallied behind the implementation of the plans and projects having in mind their common goal. This co-operation for instance from management and staff in providing the necessary resources that is, financial and material, contributed to the successful implementation of the plan.

#### 4.4.2 Response to whether through a strategic plan of University Administration can ensure better decision making at all levels within the Administration:

The chart below shows that, 82 or 96% of respondents agree that the Administration can ensure better decision making through their strategic plan while 2 or 4% disagreed.

The overwhelming endorsement on the ability of a strategic plan to ensure better decision making also indicates the level of involvement of the staff of the Wolkite University Administration in the implementation of the organization’s strategic plan. The plan for instance has stated goals and objectives and a purpose and therefore guides management such that decisions at any level are not taken outside the focus of the plan.

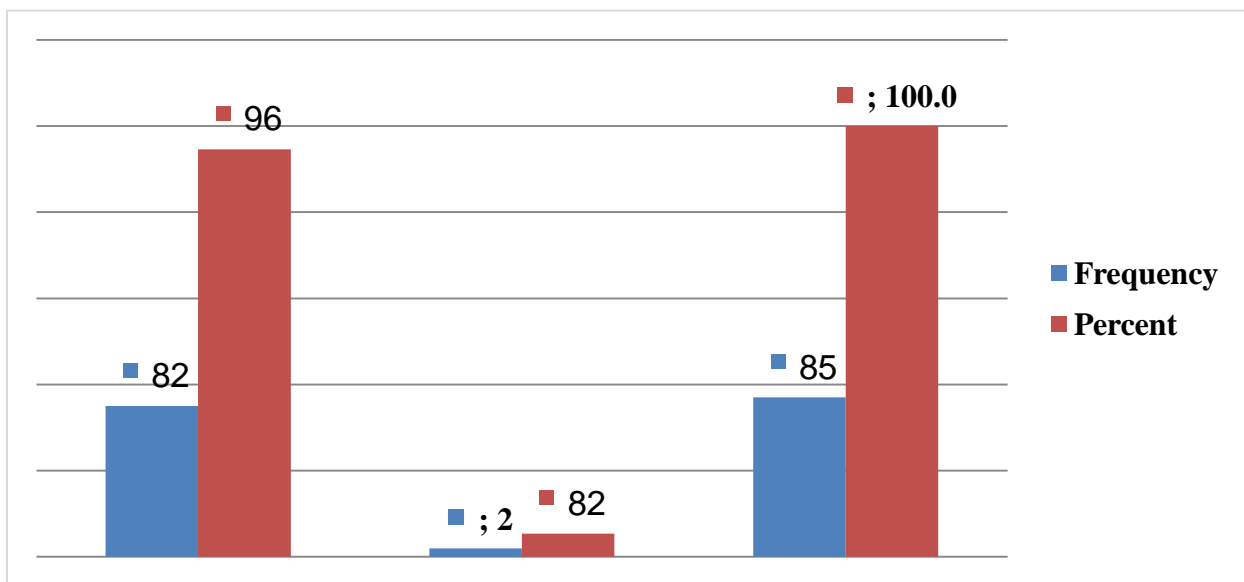


Fig: 4-1: Response to whether through a strategic plan of University Administration can ensure better decision making at all levels within the Administration

#### 4.4.3 Response to whether effective communication may be derived through the implementation of the Administration strategic plan:

The chart below shows that, 85 or 100% of respondents confirm that, effective communication can be derived through the implementation of an organization's strategic plan whiles none disagreed.

All respondents indicated that a strategic plan enhances effective communication within the organization. The Administration's plan document itself is a communication tool since it catalogues clearly, what is to be done. Management uses it to explain or educate stakeholders about the Administration's goals and objectives as well as its planned activities. Effective communication involves sending out the right information through the right medium at the right time and for the right purpose. This undoubtedly promotes effective participation and co-operation during the implementation of the strategic plan

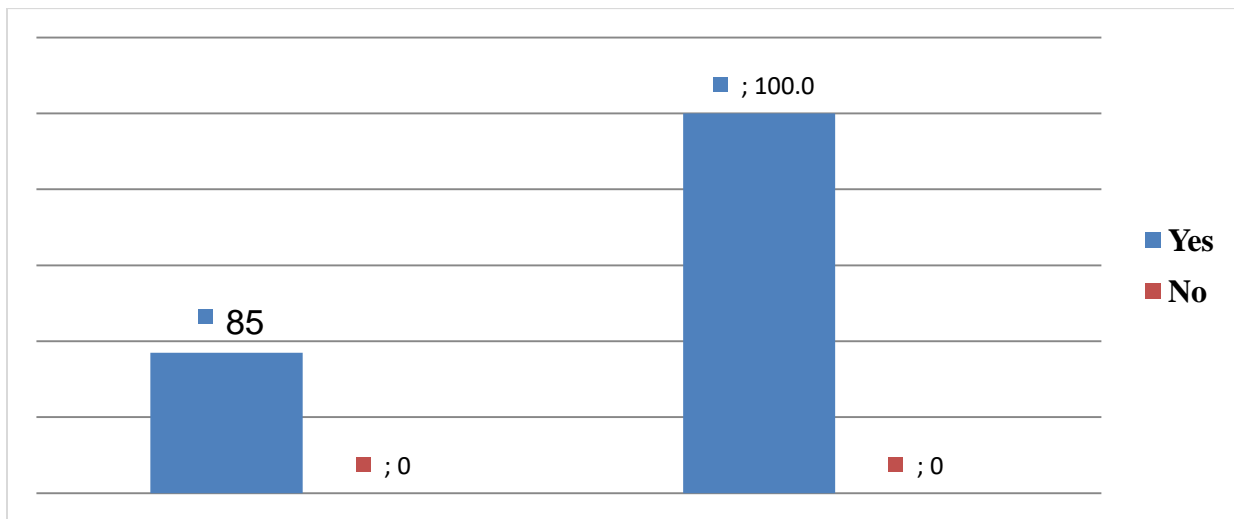
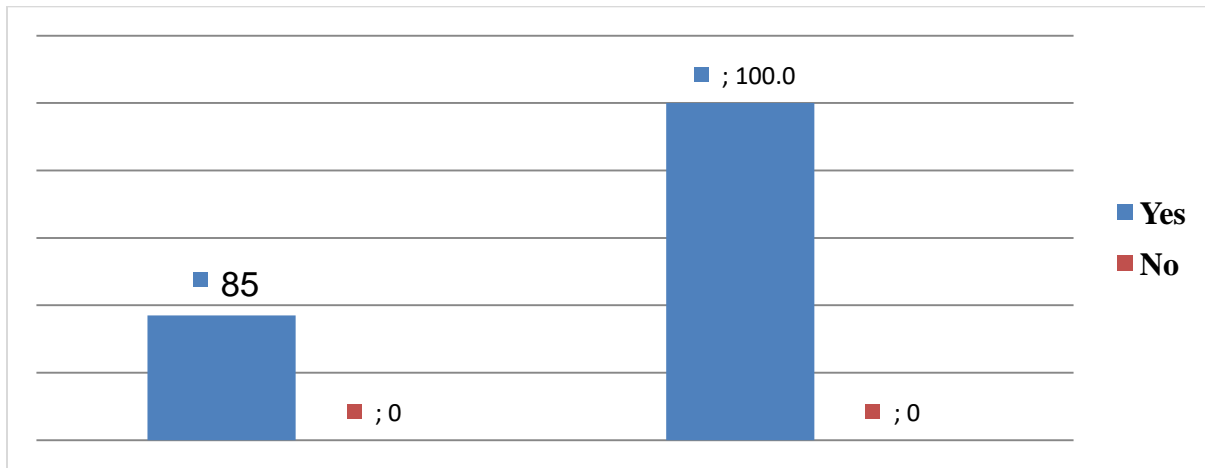


Fig 4-2: Response to whether effective communication may be derived through the implementation of the Administration strategic plan:

#### 4.4.4. Response to whether strategic planning guides priority use of resources in the University

The chart below shows that, all 85 or 100% of respondents affirmed that, strategic planning guides priority use of resources in the University Administration, while none disagreed. Management understands that resources are scarce and limited. The plan allows for sound and pointed allocation of resources –human, financial and material. Indeed, material, financial and human resources are strategically matched in order to ensure effective implementation of the plan



**Fig 4-3:** Response to whether strategic planning guides priority use of resources in the University

4.4.5. Response to whether growth can be achieved through the implementation of the strategic plan of the Administration:

Figure 4.5 below shows response on whether growth can be achieved through the implementation of the Administration's strategic plan.

Overall, all 85 or 100% of the respondents have affirmed that in doing and implementing the strategic plan the Administration can attain growth in a planned and easy way. The University Administration has been able achieve effective use of resources, organizational expansion, growth in service quality, and fulfillment of facilities through its strategic plan.

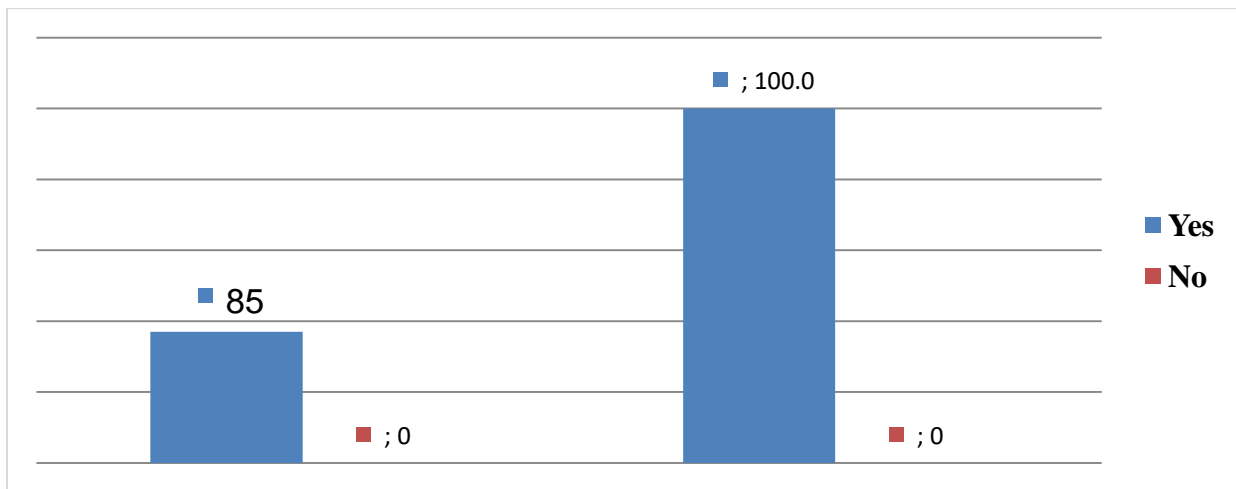


Fig 4-4: Response to whether strategic planning guides priority use of resources in the University

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter outlines the findings of the study, draws conclusions and made recommendations for future research.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

After a thorough study of the operations of the University Administration, the following findings were made that:

In the country, higher educational institutions have seen the need to formulate and implement strategic plans. The process of formulation and implementation of strategic plans is similar to the existing process of setting objectives, scanning, selecting strategies, implementation and evaluation.

The study revealed that highly qualified staff makes it easier for the formulation and implementation of strategic plan and demands commitment and sacrifices from management and staff. The involvement of staff facilitates easy implementation of the plan. Success requires senior management sincerity, support, and involvement. Without these critical ingredients, goals and objectives are unlikely to be achieved.

Higher educational institutions face challenges in the implementation of their strategic plans due to the long processes of approval, release of funds, shortage of skilled staff in specialized areas, and lack of commitment from officials.

Strategic plan serves as rallying point for all staff and a common guide for the achievement of goals. It ensures that all the different units of the organization work together towards achieving the same goal. Without a strategic plan the organic units of the organization will slew off track and strategic planning therefore provides an integrative mechanism for all organizational units to work together.

Strategic plans involve allocation of resources and occur at all levels of the organization. Thus, it ensures the most effective use is made of the organization's resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities. Clarifies the ways of doing things in the organization and provides a common focus. An organization is able to have a sense of direction or 'road map' that enables it to see where it is going and where the future will lead it.

Overall, Strategic planning gives an organization competitive advantage. Organizations operate in constantly changing and competitive markets and in planning strategically, management can periodically appraise the competitive position of the organization compelling them to be more proactive and conscious of the environment in which their organizations are operating.

These findings are in tandem with the aims of strategic planning identified by Koteen (1989) “that Strategic planning provide strategic direction, guide priority use of resources, set standard of excellence, enables organization to cope with environmental uncertainty and change, and provide objective basis for control and evaluation”. The major challenge encountered in this study was respondents have no time to fill questions other than choices. This made some questions not to be clarified more in the analysis stage. This constraint notwithstanding, the study was successfully carried-out.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The Study was conducted with the intention of assessing the effective implementation of strategic planning on organizational growth in the higher educational institutions and the main focus was the University Administration. This was done through the administration of questionnaire to sampled management staff of the University Administration.

What emerges from the findings is that higher educational institutions have realized the need to adopt the ideas of corporate-style or private sector managements in their operations. One conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of the study is that, the strategic planning or planning approaches adopted by public organizations regarding strategic planning formulation processes and implementation approaches are not different from the generals in corporate or private sector. The variations probably may be in the challenges public organizations face due to inadequate funds to implement strategies, long processes of approval as well as delays in implementation due to strict adherence to procurement processes.

The overriding conclusion is that, Strategic Planning is effective and positively affects the growth of higher educational institutions in the university. The effective implementation of strategic planning on the growth of an organization in this regard includes ensures co-operation towards a common goal; build strong teams; make better decisions; ensures effective communication; clarifies strategic roles especially during implementation; a source of motivation

and commitment for organization members; priority use of resources; ensuring an effective human resource management; and overall, ensures growth of the organization. This supports the assertion by authors like Glad-well and others that, “Doing strategic planning has become accepted and indeed when done well, is an intelligent”.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the University Administration and key stakeholders institutionalize a culture of strategic planning by aligning all operations with structured, long-term goals through a participatory approach that combines both bottom-up and top-down methods to engage academic staff, administrative personnel, and students, thereby fostering ownership and commitment, while the Government and Governing Council should actively support this process by ensuring timely approval and release of resources; additionally, the University must invest in capacity-building initiatives such as training programs and workshops to equip staff with strategic planning skills, ensure all objectives meet SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) for clarity and feasibility, establish a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track progress and ensure compliance, regularly orient staff on strategic plan principles to maintain alignment with institutional vision, and conduct periodic reviews to adapt to evolving educational, technological, and socio-economic trends, all of which will enhance strategic planning processes and promote sustainable growth and institutional excellence.

### **5.4 Directions for Future Research**

Many recommendations could be made for future research relating to the effective implementation of strategic planning on organizational growth in the public and private organizations. Different organizations adopt different approaches or tactics in their strategic planning processes and many researchers have based their studies on the effective implementation of strategic planning on organizational growth in the public or private sector and not based on comparative studies. There is the need to compare the approaches and tactics adopted by different organizations in the public and private sectors and therefore, comparative research of the effective of strategic planning on organizational growth in the public and private sector would be useful for organizations and stakeholders implementing management systems.

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WOLIKITE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

TOPIC: ASSESSMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: IN CASE OF UNIVERSITY

Dear respondent

I am BETHLEHEM DEMISSIE .Student of wolikite university department of management

The aim of this questionnaire is to examine the effective implementation of strategic planning of the University Administration. To achieve this objective relevant information is needed. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire with care and attention.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (Tick Appropriately)

1. Gender: Male  Female

2. What is your level of Education?

a. Pres-university  b. Diploma  c. Degree.  Higher Degree (Postgraduate/Masters/PhD)

3. What is your current position or level?

a. Director  b. Deputy Director  C. Manager

d. Senior officer  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

PART II: STRATEGIC PLANNING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. Do you have access to or copies of the administration strategic plan document?

YES

NO

2. Do you think strategic planning is effective in your University Administration?

YES  NO

3. What are some of the challenges faced by the Administration in implementing its strategic plan?

.....  
.....  
.....

PART III: THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE GROWTH OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. Do you think a strategic plan can ensure that staff of the organization work towards a common goal? YES  NO

2. Can the Administration through its strategic plan ensure better decision making at all levels within the organization? YES  NO

3. Is it possible that, effective communication can be derived from the Administration's strategic plan? YES  NO

4. Do you think a Strategic plan can guide priority use and allocations of resources (human, financial, or material) in the Administration? YES  NO

5. Overall, do you think strategic planning or the Administration's strategic plan can help the organization to attain growth? YES  NO

6. Who participated in the development of Strategic Plans?

-- University leadership (e.g., President, Vice-Chancellor)

-- Deans/Department Heads

-- Faculty members

--Administrative staff

7. *What resources are necessary for successful implementation of a strategic plan in higher educational institutions?*

- Adequate financial funding
- Skilled human resources (staff/faculty)
- Technological infrastructure (e.g., software, IT systems)
- Training/Professional development programs

8. How do implementation of a strategic plan in higher educational institutions, and how can these challenges be addressed?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. How can effective communication be ensured during the implementation of a strategic plan in higher educational Institution?

- Regular updates via email/newsletters
- Dedicated digital platforms (e.g., intranet, portals)
- Town hall meetings/Open forums
- Feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, suggestion boxes)