



The Influence of Organizational Resources on Implementing Strategic Plan in the Tanzanian Public Universities

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Abstract

Organization resources allocated for the implementation of strategic plan (SP) has made Public sectors to make good use of the precious information depicted in the SP document. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of organizational resources in implementing strategic plan (SP) in Tanzanian public universities with reference to financial, human and physical resources. The study employed descriptive statistics whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. The data collection method used were questionnaire and in depth interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. The study finding revealed that lack of organizational resources acts as an obstacle towards the implementation of SP no matter how good SP it is. To ensure the implementation of SP in public universities specifically at the University of Dodoma (UDOM) it is recommended that more funds should be injected to implement university activities, sufficient infrastructures should be expanded and university should always focus in hiring and motivating human resources for the better attainment of SP objectives.

Keywords: *Organizational Resource; Strategic Plan; Public University*

1. Introduction

SP is a comprehensive plan for achieving the organization's mission and future direction. The major goal of a SP is to enable an organization to be proactive rather than reactive. It gives an organization a strategic approach to management. SP is also designed to meet specific need of the organization by entailing organizations' executives to react to challenges caused by the internal, immediate and remote environments. Public sectors have an obligation to o effectively implement SP by translating their strategies into actions.

Tanzania public universities are required to have five years SP, however its implementation is not effective as per audit report for four consecutive years as reported by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) for financial years 2015/2016; 2016/2017; 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. The report revealed that, implementation of SP in public universities was ineffective with indication of poor linkage of budgets and

SP, lack of clarity and inadequate monitoring and evaluation. This implies that poor implementation of SP in public universities may result to non-implementation of the intended strategies and targets. The problem of implementation of SP in public universities is mostly seen in transforming the SP into actions. Despite the efforts to formulate and implement SP in public universities there is still fruitless implementation of targets and strategies. Therefore, the objective of the study was to examine the influence of organizational resources in implementing SP.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Strategic Plan

In today's organization environment, the success of organizations depends mainly on effective implementation of SP. Strategic Plan is the match between an organization's resources, skills, environmental opportunities as well as the risks it faces and the purposes it wishes to accomplish (Barney, 2008). Such match should illustrate the steps taken by an organization in achieving its objectives and mission. The organization's SP is expected to be a guiding document for the organization.

Schroeder (2002) stated that, SP provides an operational framework that allows organizations to cope with changes and gain a competitive edge. This statement can be construed to mean that Tanzanian public universities always planned however the planning has always been the traditional one that followed the government's five year planning cycle. It is common known that government's five year planning cycles mostly involved adjusting SP for political changes specially to accommodate the whims of the ruling regime. This makes some difficulties for public universities to find its competitive advantage within the ever turbulent operating environments.

Despite the efforts made by Tanzanian public universities to implement SP, implementation has been ineffective since SP document ends up collecting dust on a shelf. The organization fails to make good use of the precious information depicted in the SP document due to shortage of organization resources and weak human resources practices. Study by Herbiniak (2006) see that strategy formulation is difficult, making strategy work and implementing it is even more difficult. Similarly, Cater and Pucko (2010) concluded that while 80% of firms have the right strategies, only 14% have managed to implement them well. Though implementation of SP in Public universities has been extensively studied, there remains a difference in SP implementation across different countries.

2.2 Organization Resources

Organizational resources as all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, organization attributes, information, and knowledge controlled by organization which lead it to consider and execute strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 2008).

(Hill-Mcshane, 2009) the resources of organization are the assets that managers have to work within their quest to improve the performance of the organization. They include both tangible and intangible resources. Wheelmen and Hunger (2008) assert that resources are organizations assets and are the basic building blocks of an organization. Tangible resources are physical assets such as land, buildings, equipment, inventory, and money while Intangible resources are non-physical assets that are a creation of managers and other employees such as brand names and reputation of the company. Therefore, implementation of SP always considered allocations of resources on how it influences execution of strategies.

2.3 Public University

A public university is a university which is mainly funded by public means through a national government. Tuition fee is much cheaper than that of a private university. It is subject to government rules and regulations (<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/public-university>)

2.4 Empirical Studies on Organizational Resources

Abok, Gakure, Waititu and Ragui (2013) conducted a study on the factors influencing the implementation of strategic plans in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The study revealed that organizations with available resources and supportive environment were successful in incorporating culture that stimulated togetherness, teamwork spirit and willingness to share and implement organization objectives or goals.

Deogratus (2009) in his study of the effectiveness of strategic planning implementation in higher learning institutions with a case study of Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College established that universities in Tanzania have not been able to effectively and efficiently accomplish strategic plans due to stringent budgets allocated for the implementation purpose.

2.5 Resource Based View Theory

The Resource Based View Theory states that, organization resources are the determining factor of improving performance in the organization (Barney et al., 2001). The theory put emphasis on the importance of resources in the organization in implementing organizational objectives. It states that organization performance is driven by availability of resources that are needed by a particular industry (Singh & Mahmood, 2014). The Resource Based Theory helps in defining the resources available within the organization and link with the capabilities of the organization (Colbert, 2004). Hart (1995) argues that the technology capacity, human resources, raw materials, loyalty of the customers and financial supports are the most important resources needed by the organizations. Other resources that facilitate the implementation of the organization strategies are internal assets, organizational processes, capabilities, knowledge, information (Okioga, 2012). Therefore, in this study financial resource, human resource and physical resource were studied to see how they influence implementation of SP in UDOM.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The underlying assumption for the study is that the SP which is influenced by the availability of organizational resources is regarded as dependent variable while financial resource, human resource and physical resource were regarded as independent variable of the study.

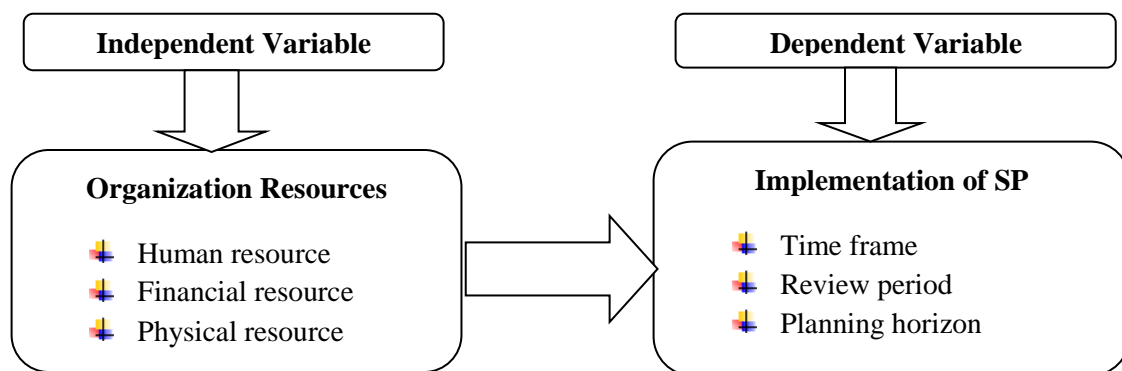


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Research Methods

3.1 Area of the Study

This study was conducted at the University of Dodoma. UDOM is a public university in central Tanzania located in Dodoma, the country's capital. Building is taking place on a 6,000-hectare site in the Chimwaga area about 8 kilometers (5.0 mi) east of downtown Dodoma. The area was proposed because the organization portrays a significant problem of SP implementation. Despite the fact that various policies exist such as health policy, human resource policy still they are not well implemented hence this fact made the place an interesting area to conduct this study.

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study population comprised 256 employees from the University of Dodoma which is obligated with responsibility of providing teaching, research and consultancy services to the people. A sample size of 78 respondents was used in this study. Slovin formula developed by Robert Slovin was used to calculate the sample size of the study. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants such as two (02) College principals, five (05) School Deans, fifty-two (52) employees, sixteen (16) Heads of Departments and three (03) Directors who were part of the in-depth interview. The key informants were selected because they had information on SP and Organization resources. Simple random sampling was used to select employees of the University.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Fifty-two (52) questionnaires were administered to the employee of the university and the information elicited from the questionnaire focused on the human resource, financial resource and physical resource and implementation of SP at UDOM. Human resource was measured on the extent to which the available human resource positively affects the implementation process of SP. Financial resource focused to what extent it affects achievement of strategic objective in an organization and physical resource focused to what extent adequate and valuable material resources affect implementation process of SP. In depth interview was used to extract the views of College Principals, School Deans, Heads of Department and Directors. The interview with key informants intended to get information on human, financial and physical resource on implementation of SP.

Descriptive approaches were used to analyze the frequency and percentage of response on the extent to which the available of human resource, financial resource and physical resource affect the implementation of SP. Likert scale measurement with a coded number such as 1 - Very Great Extent, 2 – Great Extent, 3 - Moderate Extent, 4 – Less Extent and 5 – Not at All were used. It was assumed that SP implementation needs sufficient human, financial and physical, resources investment at the university. Analysis of data in the study was performed by using software of IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 to give frequencies and percentages.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Human Resource

In respect to human resources, respondents were asked to what extent human resources positively affect implementation process of SP. The finding indicated that out of 61 respondents, the 47.5% (29) affirmed that human resources positively affect implementation process of SP to the very great extent, 36.1% (22) great extent, 6.6% (04) moderate extent, and 3.3% (02) less extent and 6.6% (04) not at all.

Table 1. Extent to which human resources positively affect SP implementation

Extent to which human resources positively affect SP implementation	Frequency	Response (%)
Very great extent	29	47.5
Great extent	22	36.1
Moderate extent	4	6.6
Less extent	2	3.3
Not at all	4	6.6
Total	61	100

This finding implies that human resources positively affect implementation process of SP in the university due to the tendency of recruiting, training and retaining adequate number of staff to cope with the expanding enrolment. This makes the academic programmes of UDOM marketable and acceptable throughout the country. Further, the finding implies that it is significant for the university to instill confidence among the employees about their future and future career growth as an incentive for SP implementation in the organisation. One of the interviewee said;

“Presence of many skilled and expertise human resources in various university positions affect positively the implementation of a previous strategic plan since the nature of work in the university is very tedious. It is clear that the university always focuses in hiring and motivating human resources for the better attainment of SP objectives”

A study by Nyakeriga (2015) also indicated similar results where human resources have fundamental position in the implementation of any strategy (SP).

4.2 Financial Resource

The study investigated why financial resource affects achievement of strategic objectives of the university. Finding indicated that 80.0% see financial resources affect achievement of strategic objectives in the university due to the lack financial support from various donors while 8.9% see delay of fund due to poor organization being a reason and 11.1% see absence of financial goals and mission being a reason. The results suggest that UDOM should try to find out other sources of revenue to finance the execution of SP activities and increasing the level of the university’s contribution to its recurrent budget. In order to achieve this, university should establish investments and resources mobilization units.

Regarding the extent to which financial resource resources affect achievement of strategic objectives in an organization, the findings indicated that 65.0% (39) of the respondent’s very great extent, 21.7% (13) great extent, (8.3% (05) moderate extent and 05.0% (03) not at all. Besides; no one (0.0%) said financial resources affect achievement of strategic objectives in an organization to the less extent.

Table 2. Extent to which financial resources affect achievement of strategic objectives

Extent to which financial resources affect achievement of strategic objectives	Frequency	Response (%)
Very great extent	39	65.0
Great extent	13	21.7
Moderate extent	5	8.3
Not at all	3	5.0
Total	60	100

The finding implies that financial resource in the university is directly linked to the activities of SP in which cost cutting strategies are used to ensure efficient use of attained funds. This strategy (cost cutting) minimized dependence of government support with consideration that the government has many

financial commitments. These finding support findings by Derogations (2009) who argued that effectively and efficiently implementation of strategic plan relies on the stringent budgets allocated.

4.3 Physical Resource

The study also intended to know to what extent adequate and valuable physical resources affect implementation process of SP. Finding shows that 44.6% (25) of the respondent's very great extent, 26.8% (15) great extent, 17.9% (10) moderate extent, and 10.7% (06) not at all. Moreover, no one 0.0% said adequate and valuable material resources affect implementation process of SP to the less extent.

Table 3. Extent to which physical resources affect implementation process of SP

Extent to which material resources affect implementation process of SP	Frequency	Response (%)
Very great extent	25	44.6
Great extent	15	26.8
Moderate extent	10	17.9
Not at all	6	10.7
Total	56	100

This finding suggest that adequate and valuable physical resources affect implementation process of SP through sufficient infrastructures such as lecture rooms, office spaces and accommodation facilities which accommodate diversity groups. Despite the presence of these infrastructures still the university lack specially designed outdoor spaces for students learning and limited outdoor, wireless and reliable internet access. Directorate of Human Resources Management and Administration said;

“Physical resources such as building and teaching facilities affect implementation of previous strategic plan whereby the enrolment of students increased due to the availability of enough accommodation. The university still focuses on the accomplishment of construction phase for the improvement of learning as well working environment”

Likewise, the study investigated how adequate and valuable physical resources affect implementation process of SP. The finding indicated that 86.1% see that adequate and valuable material resources affect implementation process of SP through the availability of quality materials (tools and equipment) while 05.6% see that material resources help human resources to implement their objectives and 08.4% see that adequate and valuable material resources reduce unnecessary expenses (financial expenditure). These finding implies that SP implementation is very demanding and without adequate and valuable material resources it is difficult to implement and may end up putting it aside. Wasike (2010) came with similar findings which argued that implementation of some SP fail since enough physical resources were not allocated to ensure successfully and smoothly implementation. It can be concluded that, the university management should ensure the availability of different resources to make a formulated strategy into reality.

Conclusion

This study examined human, financial and physical resource of UDOM on SP Implementation. The finding indicated that human, financial and physical resource may influence successful implementation of SP. The study concludes that UDOM should invest on human, financial and physical resource for effective implementation of SP. The study recommends that the government of Tanzania should allocate adequate resources and budgets to the university to enhance smoothly implementation of SP. UDOM should develop a policy to appraise themselves on the extent of their SP implementations. This will encourage university to transform their plans into action by showing evidence of what has been

achieved in the time period that was proposed under SP for effective utilization of the scarce resources available. Furthermore, subsequent comparative studies on how SP are implemented in both public and private sectors should be conducted and establish the similarities and differences between those two sectors.

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