A Framework for Stakeholder Analysis in Higher Education
(A Case Study of the University of Portsmouth_

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Stakeholder identification & Prioritisation in the Higher Education Sector:
A case study of the University of Portsmouth

Abstract

This paper explores the stakeholders of UK universities, focusing on the University of Portsmouth as a case study. The data for the study is collected through interviews with key opinion leaders within the university relating to stakeholder management. Findings explore the stakeholders of the university, their perceived relative level of importance, and the factors affecting these perceptions. The research provides insight into the complex nature of stakeholder management in the university context and highlights three key factors influencing the relative importance of stakeholders upon which a new framework for stakeholder management in the university sector is proposed.

Introduction

The issue of stakeholder identification and management is relatively well understood private sector organisations (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2002; Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 2002; Rutterford, Upton & Kodwani, 2006). Donaldson and Preston (1995) suggest, that "the idea that organisations have stakeholders is now commonplace in the management literature". Indeed stakeholder management is of increasing importance across all developed countries (Maassen, 2000; Wit, 2000; Peters, 1996 & Kettle, 2002), and this is arguably also the case in the university sector. However, whilst stakeholder theory has been advanced in commercial arenas (Donaldson and Preston, 1995), within the area of public and non-profit literatures there is less research (Bryson, 2004), particularly in a university context.

The aim of this paper was to investigate this gap in the literature; namely specific understanding of stakeholders and the nature of stakeholder management for universities. In this context the study focuses on the identification and prioritisation of stakeholders for a UK university, and the exploration of key issues in stakeholder management. In order to explore this issue, the research adopts a case study approach focusing on the University of Portsmouth, a large, modern UK university.

the University of Portsmouth

The University of Portsmouth was established as a Higher Education Institution in 1969 and gained university status in 1992. In the academic year 2005 to 2006 it joined the top fifty largest universities (HESA, 2005), with just over 18,000 students. The University, with over 1900 staff and income of £7.1m (2005) is of clear importance in the Portsmouth area (Harris, 1997).

The University's mission statement is:

"The University of Portsmouth aims for excellence in the creation, interpretation and communication of knowledge."

Literature Review

The Importance of Stakeholder Management

The importance of stakeholder management applies to both public and private sector organisations and is reflected in Nutt & Backoff's (1992) early definition of stakeholders as "all parties who will be affected by or will affect strategy". Identifying stakeholders is a key issue, particularly in a marketing context (Polonsky, 1995). Studies have identified the importance of placing sufficient emphasis on stakeholders including Burby (2003), Margerum (2002), Bryson (1995), Moore (1995), and Baumgartner & Jones (1993), and it is clear that attention to stakeholders can affect the success of organisations (Bryson, 1995), and help to identify problems (Eden & Ackermann 1998).

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders in the commercial arena as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives, showing some congruence with Bryson (2005) who talks of "persons, groups or organisations that must be taken into account…". It is clear that the term stakeholder is relevant to a broad number of groups and stakeholder management can therefore be complex.

Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) consider that defining stakeholders is important in order to identify their impact on the organisation. Bryson (2005) suggests a key output of stakeholder analysis is the identification of what he calls a 'winning coalition'. The identification of stakeholders seemingly underpins the essence of stakeholder management, and is therefore first area of investigation for the study.

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) discuss the need for a theory of stakeholder identification that can reliably separate stakeholders from non-stakeholders, as each group will exist within a complex network of intertwining relationships (Rowley, 1997). Relevant stakeholders therefore need to be represented systematically (Wood, 2008). Whilst it may be possible to promote the common good for a number of stakeholder groups through a particular strategy, the needs of groups may be conflicting (Oliver, 1991). Arguably this might be even more the case in the university setting, as universities are involved in such a variety of activities and have a public responsibility.

Stakeholder Prioritisation

It is evident that organisations generally have a wide variety of stakeholders, and these compete for managerial resources (Neville & Menguc, 2006), leading managers to identify strategies for managing stakeholders (Gomes & Gomes, 2009). Therefore not all stakeholders will be of equal importance (Freeman, 1984) and a key question is the degree to which managers should consider each group when establishing strategies? This issue forms the second main area of investigation for this study. However, the relative importance of each group can vary over time (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997) and because of this the identification of the main factors that affect the level of importance forms a third area of focus for this study.

Classifying Stakeholders

Developing an understanding of how different stakeholder groups vary in their importance is a salient issue as they can be opportunities or threats (Gomes & Liddle, 2009) . However, the variety of approaches to stakeholder analysis has arguably given rise to confusion over what is exactly is meant by this (Reed, Graves, Dandy, Posthumus, Hubacek, Morris, Prell, Quinn and Stringer (2009).Clarkson (1995) classifies stakeholders by making an important distinction between those that are voluntary or involuntary. Mitchell *et al*. (1997) identify three key factors: power, legitimacy, & urgency. Johnson and Scholes (2002) suggest classification of stakeholders in terms of how *interested* each stakeholder is to impress its expectations on the organisation, and whether they have the *power* to do so. Their 'power/ interest matrix' allows classification of stakeholders into groups requiring varying approaches. Reed (2008) discussed the nature of participation of stakeholders as a classification basis. However, whilst these frameworks are clearly of some relevance to the education sector, no studies have as yet explored the factors affecting the importance of a stakeholder group to universities specifically.

Public sector stakeholders

The issue of stakeholders is seemingly well understood for private sector organisations, but although some research has been undertaken in the context of public & non-profit organisations (Bryson, 2005; Gomes & Liddle, 2009; Gomes & Gomes, 2009), there is seemingly a gap in the literature in relation to the higher education sector. Whilst it is likely that some of the stakeholder groups identified for private sector organisations will also be relevant to public sector organisations (including universities), there is a need to further explore this issue. Universities arguably have a particularly complex stakeholder environment and are now operating as quasi-commercial enterprises (Brookes, 2003), therefore examination of their stakeholder environment and management is both pertinent and topical. Whilst the literature may be sparse in this area, it is also worth noting that this gap may reflect what is happening in practice within the higher education sector, as stakeholders may not actually have much influence in universities (Wit *et al.*, 2000).

Research Objectives

Based on the review and analysis of the literature, it was apparent that stakeholder management is of increasing importance. However, much of the literature relates to stakeholders in a commercial context, and although there is a growing body of work that relates to public sector and non-profit stakeholders, there is very little that relates to the specific context of universities. This research attempts to begin to address this gap in the literature by examining four key research areas, to identify:
1. Who are the stakeholders of University of Portsmouth and what is the relevance of each group?
2. Which stakeholders are of the greatest priority to the university?
3. Which factors affect the prioritisation of each stakeholder group overall, and at a particular point in time?
4. What are the key issues in managing the stakeholder groups?

Methodology

Case Study Research

The use of a case study was considered appropriate for this work as it involves detailed and intensive analysis with a view to identifying issues and generating insights (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The investigation of stakeholders in a UK university was conceived primarily as a 'revelatory case' (Yin, 1984) with a predominantly inductive approach. (Bryman and Bell, 2003) that sought to identify stakeholders groups for a UK university; in this case the University of Portsmouth

The authors, whilst seeking to achieve a degree of theoretical generalizability from this research, were mindful of external validity issues - that it is not always possible to identify typical cases that can be used to represent a class of objects or events (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The crucial question, according to Bryman and Bell (2003, p.56) is not "whether the findings can be generalised to a wider universe, but how well the researcher generates theory out of the findings".

Once a case study had been decided on as an appropriate methodology it was important to select an appropriate method of data collection as "a case study approach in its own right will not provide data" (Bryman and Bell, 2003, p32). Case study design exponents often favour qualitative techniques as these are particularly helpful in the generation of an intensive detailed examination (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

Focusing on the University of Portsmouth as a single case

It is not uncommon to select a case for purely practical reasons (Daymon & Holloway, 2004), especially if it is considered that that case has 'intrinsic value' (Stake, 1995) and is appropriate, using a grounded theory methodology, to build theory. In this research the selection of a single case offered the opportunity to undertake deep exploration of an organisation. The focus is one of a reasonably 'holistic analysis' (Yin, 1984) exploring relationships and stakeholder connections across much of the organisation.

The sampling strategy was a 'purposeful' one, and Portsmouth, whilst obviously being convenient and therefore pragmatic, was also selected as it was considered a fairly typical post-1992 UK university in terms of size, structure and courses. Obviously the case cannot be treated as 'a statistical sample of one' and the authors are therefore wary of generalising based on the results, with the intention rather to 'act as test site for theory' (Daymon & Holloway, 2004) in comparing current stakeholder theory to the particular example of UK universities.

Sample Selection

It is accepted that defining what constitutes a stakeholder can be problematic but one valid approach is that of identification by 'experts' utilised in this paper (Reed et al, 2009).

The issue of who to include in the sample was of great importance (Bryson, 2005) and was one of the reasons a two-stage approach was adopted. The first stage of the research involved preliminary interviews with opinion formers within the University of Portsmouth, these were used to:
   • Define the exact research direction
   • Identify key people within the University to be interviewed
   • Refine topics for interviews
   • Initially identify stakeholders

The data collection was explorative in nature, aiming to guide the subsequent stages. Opinion formers were considered appropriate interviewees because they have knowledge, expertise or information that will guide decision making of opinion seekers (Eastman, Eastman and Eastman, 2002) and may allow a picture of a whole milieu may be established (Serraf, 1978).

The sample structure was informed by the research of Wit *et al.* (2000), Enz, Renaghan & Geller (1993) and Shanahan & Gerber (2004). However the final structure of the sample had to be tailored to address the aims of the research, and was therefore also influenced by the initial stage of primary research. The interviewees selected were as follows:
1. Vice Chancellor
2. Dean
3. Head of Department
4. Board of Governors
5. Marketing
6. International Department and Partners
7. Head of Student Union
8. Head of Careers
9. Market Research Manager
10. Marketing and Communications
11. Head of enterprise and K.T.
12. Head of Public Relations (P.R.)
13. Director of Planning

Data Collection & Instrument Design

Semi-structured interviews were considered suitable within the case study approach (Gomes & Gomes, 2009), as "complex and ambiguous issues can be penetrated" (Gummesson 2005, p. 309) providing an illustration of the participant's true feelings on an issue (Chisnall 1992). This technique aims to gain the perspectives of informants so that the research topics could be explored (Daymon and Holloway 2004).

In the design of the data collection instrument the exploratory nature of the study, and the need to explore the subject with each interviewee, were considered and the interview guide was therefore relatively loosely structured to allow the interviewee to guide the direction of the interview in each section and explore their thoughts. Respondents were encouraged to expand upon ideas and concepts as they wished. The particular questions explored in the context of the interviews linked back to the objectives of identifying and prioritising stakeholders relevant to a UK university, and therefore the interviews were conducted in two stages:
• Stage 1: Identification of all stakeholders.
• Stage 2: Prioritisation of these stakeholders and factors affecting the perceived priority.
The interviews were conducted among key opinion formers within the University of Portsmouth over an eleven-month period between August 2007 and July 2008.

Analysis of Primary Data

The analysis was informed by Reed *et al's* (2009) approach, with 'those conducting analysis embedded in some theoretical perspective of how a system functions'.
To assist in the content analysis the interviews were recorded (Goodman 1999) and transcribed. The

analysis was informed by the qualitative data approach of Schilling (2006) and broadly followed his four stage process.

Essentially, through coding and attributing to identified dimensions the content analysis identified any commonalities or trends in respondent responses (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Findings

The stakeholders and the relevance or interest of each stakeholder group

The breadth of stakeholder groups identified across the sample was notable. One interviewee, the Vice Chancellor (VC), suggested that "stakeholder management is complex for universities, as customers supply only some of their funding". The diversity of stakeholders was a clear theme across most interviews; one senior interviewee commented that "everybody" was effectively a stakeholder of the university.

The stakeholders identified are detailed in table 1, along with a tally that identifies total occurrences of these groups, or types, of stakeholders across the interviews.

Insert Table 1: Frequency of identification of stakeholders by interviewees

The most commonly cited stakeholder group was students, sub-divided in a number of ways - prospective, current, or alumni; UK based or overseas; undergraduate or post graduate. Each sub group of students required a different managerial approach; ranging from recruitment (prospective) to satisfaction and retention (current), although clearly there were links between each group as satisfaction would affect future recruitment. Two student related stakeholder groups were commonly mentioned; parents, as 'funders' and influencers, and schools, as a source of students as well as influencers. One respondent also cited student bodies such as The Student Union and NUS (National Union of Students) as stakeholders.

The second most commonly identified stakeholder group identified was local businesses. National business organisations were also identified, although they were not considered quite so important.

Staff of the university were identified and divided by some into 'academic' and 'non-academic'. This was considered important because academic staff 'had interests that went beyond the university alone, such as a commitment to their subject area', whilst non-academic staff were arguably more focused on the university overall.

Other commonly identified and discussed stakeholder groups included:
1. Academic and research bodies, including funding councils. The most commonly mentioned of these bodies were the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) , HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) , HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) and research councils.
2. Regionally focused stakeholders: local government, local community, local police and community forums.
3. The Government was often referred to. Some interviewees broke this down further into the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Innovation, Universities, and Skills (DIUS), and

Home Office.
4. Another stakeholder group included societies, bodies and groups relevant to universities as a whole, including: (1) 'Learned' societies, such as the British Academy of Management, (2) Networking societies such as the Association of Business Schools (3) Professional bodies.
5. Two further groups that were also detailed were trustees and governors.

In addition to these main stakeholder groups, a number of others were considered of some importance through their overlapping interests with the University (see Table 1).

The stakeholder groups identified across the interviews are summarised below (Figure 1). This represents groupings in which interviewees generally perceived and referred to stakeholders to simplify their understanding and overview, and hopefully simplifies conceptualisation of the variety of stakeholders cited, as well as providing some indication of their commonalities.

Insert Figure 1: Key stakeholders and their groupings identified by interviewees

In addition, a second set of groupings was also apparent from the interviews, which is represented in Figure 2, this second type of grouping is important as it offers a conceptualisation based broadly around operations of the university.

Insert Figure 2: Second set of groupings apparent from interviews.

These two groupings enable simplification of the complex stakeholder environment but they do not necessarily support practical strategic decision-making, other than in terms of understanding. However, the interviews provided insight into three key factors that can be utilised to evaluate the relevance and relative importance of different stakeholder groups at a strategic level, in different areas of the university's operations.

The first factor identified was the importance of stakeholders in terms of whether they had a direct impact on *student recruitment and satisfaction*. Figure three reflects the key stakeholders broken down in terms of their impact on recruitment and satisfaction. They are grouped into those with direct, less direct or partial influence, and those with only an indirect or minimal impact.

Insert Figure 3: Impact of stakeholders on student recruitment and satisfaction

The second factor identified that influenced the relative importance of a stakeholder was the degree to which they had an impact on the university's *policies and strategies*. Again these stakeholders are broken down into three groups based on their influence. It may be proposed that those with high impact on strategies and policies needed great attention due to their power to influence strategic direction.

Insert Figure 4: Impact of stakeholders on policies and strategies

The third factor identified through the interviews relates to stakeholders that have a direct *impact on the university's income*, such as students and funding bodies. This is represented in Figure 5. Again, these groups were seen to have power and influence on the University and are therefore core to strategy development.

Figure 5: Impact on University Income

Conceptualising stakeholders in these groupings provides insight into their relevance to various elements of the university's operations, and can be considered pertinent in their management. Interestingly from a number of the interviews it seemed that those stakeholders placed in the 'direct impact' for each factor were considered to be of key relevance to decision making in each respective area, whilst others even with an indirect impact would receive notably less consideration and have a much lesser impact on strategies and decisions in those areas. Thus the degree to which stakeholders were considered does not consistently differ between the groups, from direct, to partial, to indirect, but rather a big reduction was evident between the direct group and other groups.

By combining the analysis of stakeholders in terms of their impact upon recruitment, policies and income it is possible to visualise the relative importance of various stakeholder groups.. This framework thus provides insight in the management of stakeholders, but does not provide a means to analyse the degree of importance of each stakeholder group, but rather their relevance to each of the suggested key areas.

Figure 6: Impact of Groups to key stakeholder evaluation dimensions

The stakeholders of greatest salience or priority to the University

The understanding provided in the proceeding section highlights the importance of certain groups to the university. However, in order to develop this understanding further the research sought to explore prioritisation of stakeholders in the university. Therefore once interviewees identified a stakeholder group, each of them allocated groups they considered important a score between 1-5, with the highest priority receiving 5 and lowest 1. This overall scoring provides further insight into which stakeholders are of importance to the university.

Before discussing the results it should be noted that several respondents seemed reluctant to prioritise, arguing that stakeholders were 'all of a high level of importance', and ratings showed relatively significant variance, largely due to the fact that some interviewees largely based their prioritisation on their individual job role roles, rather than a 'university view'. On the other hand it should be noted that as the sample was based on the initial stage of primary data collection, and therefore the respondents were relatively diverse, these individual perspectives should in some respects 'equal out' across the range of interviewees.

These scores were totalled for each stakeholder group, therefore enabling a basic comparison of importance weighting (see table 2). The exact ranking and scores are arguably not particularly meaningful

on such as small qualitative sample, but the results do provide insights into the relative importance of different groups.

Insert Table 2: Scoring of Stakeholders

It is accepted that there is a degree of overlap between these categories, such as 'funders' and research council, but the distinction was made by some interviewees and therefore for completeness is represented here.

In this section of the interviews the factors affecting this prioritisation were briefly explored again. Once again, the level of funding was highlighted as a key factor to importance, likewise the impact of groups on policies or the direction of the university was also highlighted. Interestingly, another factor was also raised by a small number of interviewees, which was the level of accountability the university had to the stakeholder, which some interviewees described as their ability to place 'expectations' on the university (e.g. HESA). A final factor that also influenced importance to a smaller degree was 'proximity'; for example local companies, schools, and further education institutions, had a greater affect and were of greater interest.

Exploring the factors affecting prioritisation over time

The final section of the research explored the factors interviewees believed affected the importance of stakeholder groups at any particular point in time .The results are summarised in table three.

Insert Table 3: Factors Affecting the Importance of stakeholder groups

The predominant factor that affected the importance of a stakeholder group was the government policies for UK HE (e.g. widening participation) and changes in policies for key 'parent' bodies such as the QAA. It was considered that these often placed new responsibilities on the university, and therefore the importance of certain stakeholder groups. This again highlights a degree of link between influence on policy and accountability. Interviewees involved in marketing and planning also discussed how some stakeholders were of particular importance to the credibility of the university, such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

Other issues affecting the importance of stakeholders were the university's own strategic agenda, as well as increasing recognition of the reliance of the university on the local community, and the increasing role of 'corporate social responsibility'.

A broad variety of issues were highlighted in the interviews, and the results did differ to some degree between interviewees based on their role.. Current key issues affecting prioritisation included:

- Government policy- anticipating the political future was important. Two examples in particular were highlighted:
- The current importance of STEM- science, technology, engineering and maths subjects, influenced stakeholder policy to some extent.
- Government agendas raising issues, such the university's funding being dependent upon 'success' in terms of policies such as 'widening participation'.
- The issue of engaging academics and 'support staff', who are 'very different' in that academics prioritise subject and research whilst support staff prioritise the university overall.
- Communication with the Home Office and international agents. These groups were seen to be of significant importance to international recruitment of students.
- Research councils were suggested to be 'vehicles of academic esteem', and therefore effective communication is of importance.
- Business and employers are 'increasingly being asked to fund Higher Education' and were therefore increasingly important.
- Accountability to the community in which universities are located is currently thought to be important in stakeholder communication. It was suggested by the VC that this was often due to university's 'high visibility' in towns and cities and significant impact in the community.

It is perhaps worth noting that many interviewees considered stakeholder communication of strategic importance. Another communication issue was appropriate communication with groups such as Research and K.T., where the need to "talk a different language" was discussed as it was considered that being 'overly academic or overly commercial' could potentially be a barrier to effective dialogue.

Arguably the greatest insight was provided by the VC who emphasised the key need for delegation by ensuring "that you don't leave a stakeholder unattached". However, the diversity of the university stakeholder environment suggests the inherent challenge in effectively managing this.

Discussion

Whilst stakeholder theories are relatively mainstream, (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Singhapakdi *et al.,* 1996), limited research has addressed public and not-for-profit stakeholder management (Bryson, 2005). Therefore, whilst there is a broad body of stakeholder theory evident, this research aimed to start with a relatively 'fresh sheet' to identify the stakeholders, their relative importance, and the factors affecting their importance. Whilst this research is a case study, and therefore the results by their nature are not necessarily able to be generalised without further research, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions, which warrant further investigation in order to establish their importance in the university sector as a whole.

Defining stakeholders is of importance (Mitchell *et al.* 1997; Reed, 2008), and this research has identified thirty types of stakeholders that are relevant to the University of Portsmouth. In common with many public organisations, therefore, managers have 'a huge amount of influence to deal with' (Gomes & Gomes, 2009). It is accepted that it is all to easy to make implicit assumptions about legitimacy of stakeholders (Freeman and Miles, 2002) but the use of 'experts' to identify and classify stakeholders (Reed *et al*, 2009) is suggested to offer a valid attempt at an initial sector specific definition.

In particular it seems that staff, students, and key fund providers are of particular importance. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) discuss the issue of 'what stake' each group may have, and it seems that management within

universities have clear views on the 'stake' of different groups this forms a key management task in the university sector.

The research suggests that stakeholders identified have a great influence on decision-making, as they do in private sector organisations. Therefore despite the suggestions of Wit *et al.* (2000), that stakeholders do not have much influence, this does not seem to be the case. In fact in this sector it seems that stakeholders are perhaps of even greater importance, and the diverse nature of a university's operations means many stakeholders must be considered. This is also reflected by Brookes (2003), who suggests that universities are particularly complex stakeholder environment and are now operating as quasi-commercial enterprises.

The research highlights the importance of students, as they are to a large extent the main 'customers' of a university. However, there does seem to be a growing focus on not just these 'customers', but also those influencing them. In particular parents, schools, and academic colleagues seem to warrant significant attention by universities. These can be termed *stakeholders with impact on student recruitment and satisfaction*.

One of the interesting results of this work is the identification of three key factors that influence the effect of stakeholders on the University, and the degree to which they need to be considered in different situations. Whilst *student recruitment and satisfaction* form the first factor, the diverse nature of funding is also of significance, and a number of stakeholders therefore warrant a high level of attention based on *financial implications*. Another particular factor in this HE environment is the need to consider stakeholders in terms of their *potential impact on the strategic direction* of the organisation, in particular those that have a direct influence on these policies and strategies. (This is summarised in Figure 6).

Based on these three identified factors a framework is generated to aid in stakeholder evaluation (Figure 7). This aims to encapsulate these factors influencing the overall importance of different stakeholders, and the areas of management and strategy in which they warrant the greatest attention. In order to utilise this a judgement is required in terms of positioning stakeholders in terms of the three key variables, and an overall score can then be given, to indicate the relative importance of the stakeholder to the particular institution. This proposed model would clearly need further empirical investigation before it could reasonably be argued to offer a clear practical conceptualisation of stakeholders and their prioritisation, but it does arguably offer an insight into an area in which university managers currently have few bespoke tools available.

Figure 7: Tool for evaluation and prioritisation of stakeholders.

A number of frameworks for stakeholder classification and prioritisation exist in the general literature, in particular those of Mitchell *et al.* (1997), Johnson and Scholes (2002) and Carruthers *et al* (2006). Whilst these were considered, and were partially applicable to the university sector, this was not wholly the case and the aim was therefore to take a fresh perspective to consider stakeholder analysis conceptualisation in the university environment.

Conclusions

It is evident that evaluating stakeholders and their relative importance, and key priorities at any point in

time may be beneficial to effective management. Overall perhaps the greatest influence on stakeholder management in universities was government policies, as these often directly impacted the strategic direction of the organisation.

It seemed that there was increasing importance being attached to communicating with students and parents, which was largely driven by the government's tuition fees policy. Similarly increased attention emphasis on communication with local business and employers could also be linked to government policies that placed greater emphasis on these organisations to fund higher education. This perhaps suggests that this factor would need to be weighted higher in this stakeholder evaluation framework, but again further research would be required to validate this.

Overall these findings do provide support for the fact that in universities, as with other organisations, the issue of stakeholder management is clearly a diverse and dynamic one, with differing factors influencing the importance of stakeholders at any point in time, and this reflects the assertions of Mitchell *et al.* (1997), that the importance of a stakeholder group to an organisation can vary over a period of time.
A conceptual model for mapping stakeholders based on the findings is offered. This needs testing and further research may be valuable to understand and monitor longitudinally whether, and to what degree, the importance of stakeholder groups varies over time, and the key factors influencing this.

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[pic]
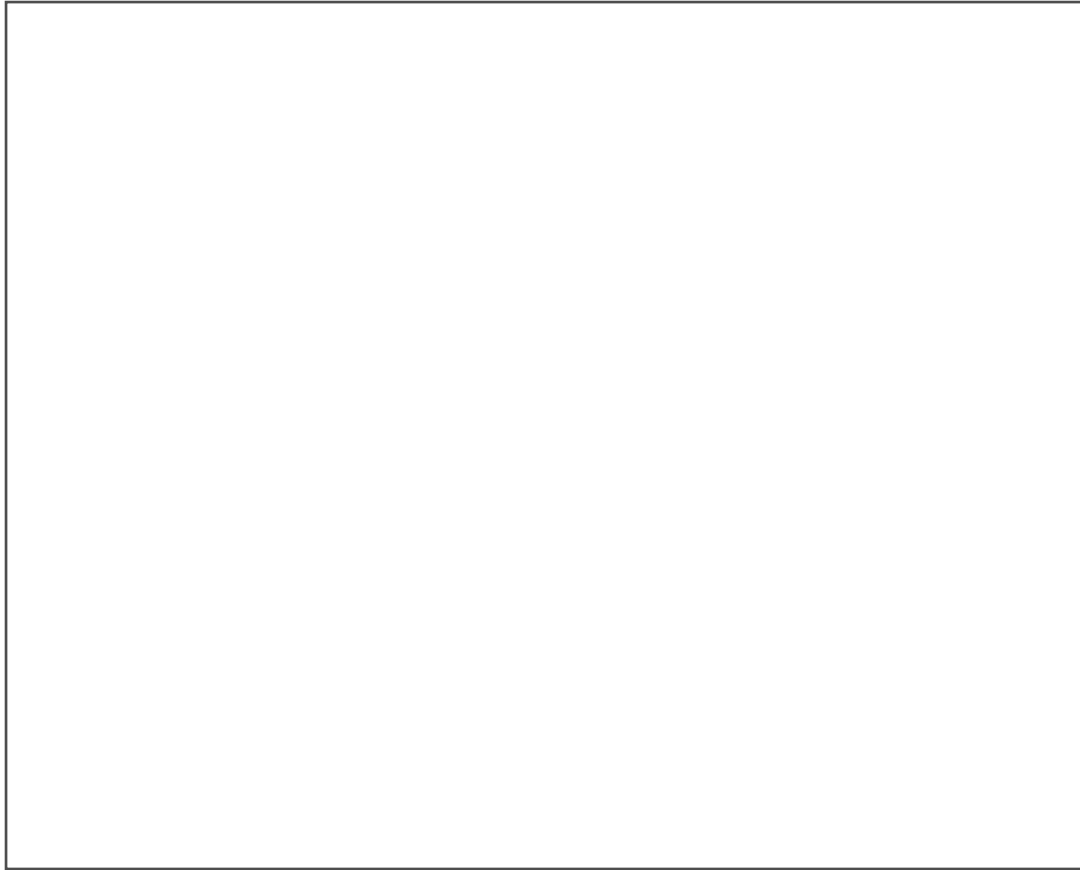Table 1: Frequency of identification of stakeholders by interviewees

Figure 1: Key stakeholders and their groupings identified by interviewees

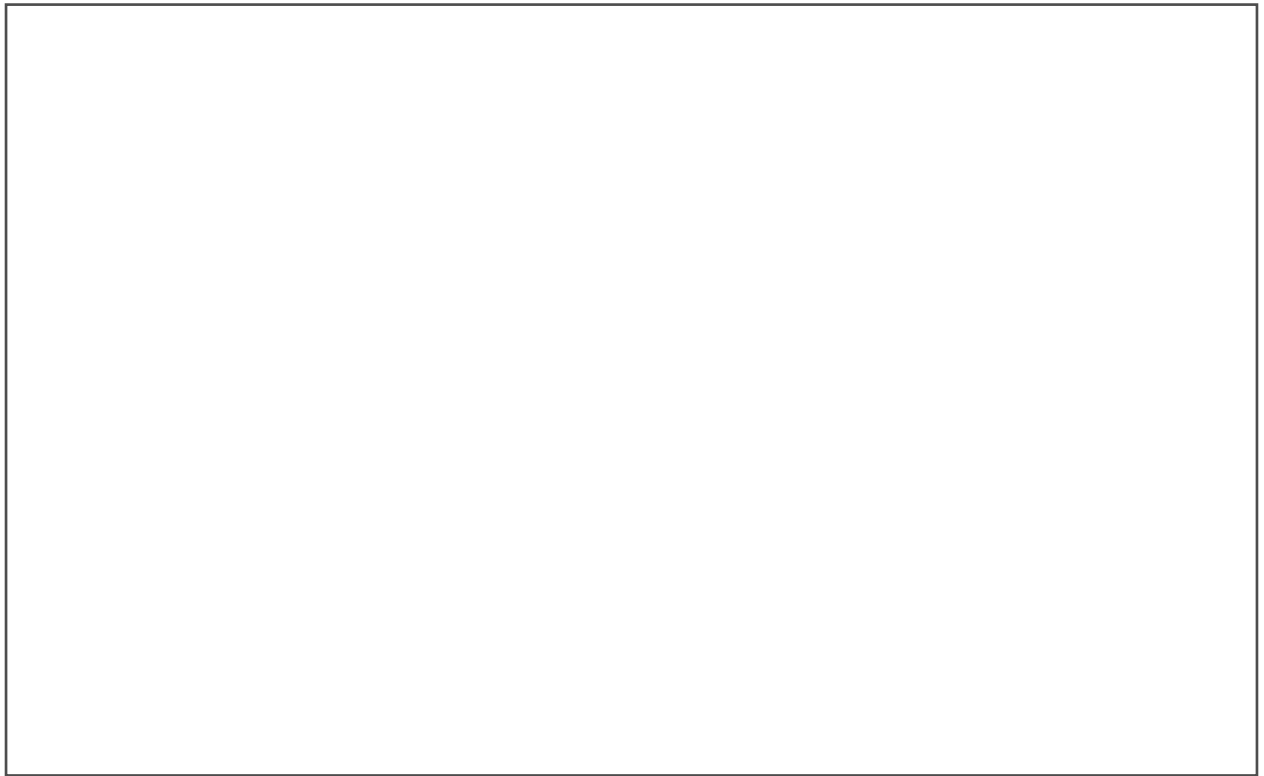Figure 2: Second set of groupings observed from interviews.

Figure 3: Stakeholders influence on student recruitment and satisfaction

Figure 4: Stakeholders impact on University's strategic direction and policies

Figure 5: Stakeholders impact on funding and income

Figure 6: Understanding the Key Stakeholders and their type of influence on the University
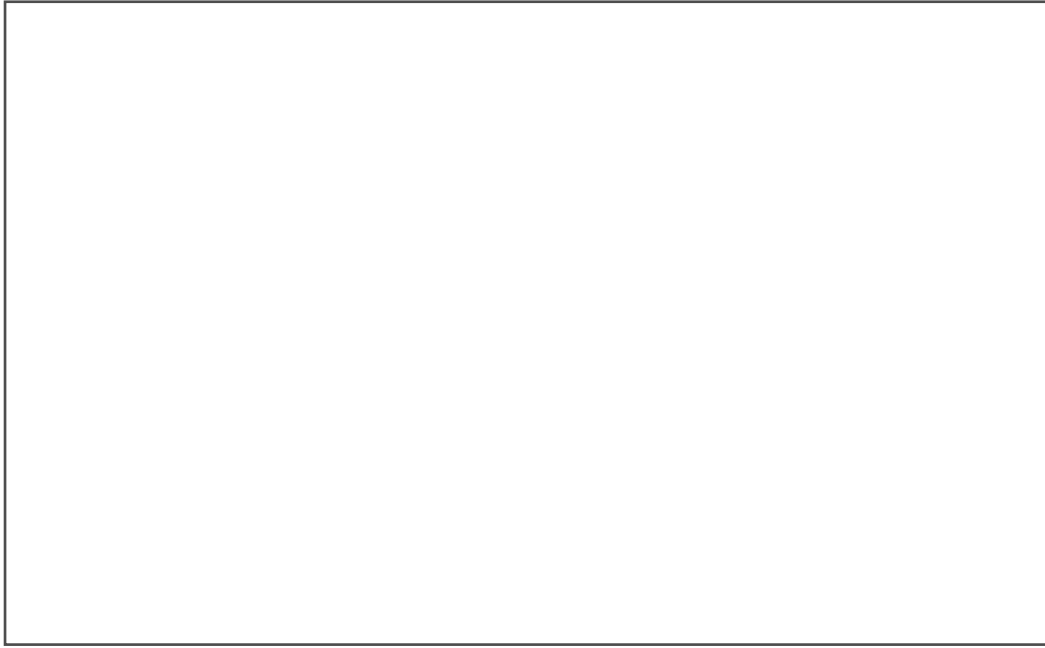
Figure 7: Tool for evaluation and prioritisation of stakeholders

Factor Affecting Importance	No. of interviewees identifying factor
Government policies and agenda	6
Policies of key 'parent' bodies	5
Effect of group on credibility and reputation	3
Local government policies and changes	2
Demographic trends	2
University Strategic Agenda	2
Local community 'reliance'	2
Aging staff population affects sustainability of HE	1
Productivity of economy linked to HE	1
Economy and economic changes	1
Importance of group to income	1
Rising importance of environment	1
Rising importance of corporate social responsibility	1

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Table 2: Scoring of Stakeholders
*Indicates that a number of interviewees referred to the government generally to include sub-departments and related government funded organisations involved in Higher Education.

Factor Affecting Importance	No. of interviewees identifying factor
Government policies and agenda	6
Policies of key 'parent' bodies	5
Effect of group on credibility and reputation	3
Local government policies and changes	2
Demographic trends	2
University Strategic Agenda	2
Local community 'reliance'	2
Aging staff population affects sustainability of HE	1
Productivity of economy linked to HE	1
Economy and economic changes	1
Importance of group to income	1
Rising importance of environment	1
Rising importance of corporate social responsibility	1

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Table 3: Factors Affecting the Importance of Each Stakeholder Group