



**Improving Strategy Formulation and Implementation
in Higher Education Institutions in Malawi: An
Empirical Study**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

By

Phillip Dalitso Frank Kaonda

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***I dedicate this thesis to my wife Mirriam and my two beautiful children
Tawanda-Tiffany and Reddo-Charles who continuously gave me moral
and spiritual support to accomplish this project***

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ABSTRACT

As Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) become increasingly accountable for the quality and value for money of their teaching and learning, universities need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the way that they operate. Strategic Management is viewed as one of the major sources of sustainable competitive advantage for these institutions. Though strategic management has gained prominence in the private and public sector organisations, evidence suggests gaps in strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Malawi that have led to failure to achieve superior performance. This study aims at developing a framework for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs which can be adapted to any situation.

The study takes a systematic approach to investigating strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. Informed by an interpretivist epistemology and ontology, a qualitative methodology is employed to inform the researcher's perspective where in-depth case studies were conducted at four universities, a commercial bank and a multinational telecommunications company, to investigate the process of strategy formulation and implementation. Semi-structured interviews were administered with senior, managers and operational staff who play significant roles in strategic management, and selected operational personnel involved in strategy implementation. A review of the extant literature and a range of internal organisational documents provided a basis for the empirical analysis.

An analysis of the findings of the study has led to the identification of Twenty One (21) factors influencing strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. These factors include leadership, resource allocation, simplicity and undue complexity, organisational culture, organisational structure, communication, human resources management, organisational learning and development, performance management, strategy formulation planning and strategy implementation planning, change management, total quality management, systems and procedures. Consequently, a strategic management framework has been developed by combining the identified SM factors into four dimensions

namely: Planning, Organisation, Managerial and Individual (POMI) based on Alashloo's (2005) framework. The POMI framework integrates the findings of this study with current literature in the SM subject arena. Since strategic management is an important process in organisations, improving formulation and implementation processes contributes to the overall performance of an organisation.

The POMI framework will provide HEI Managers in Malawi and other similar sub-sahara African countries with tools and techniques that will help improve performance through provision of a useful visualization of the key components which they must have to consider in formulating and implementing strategy.

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List of Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CUTL	Committee of University Teaching and Learning
ERP	Economic Recovery Plan
G	Goal of this study
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immune Virus.
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LAN	Local Area Network.
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MIS	Management Information System
MUST	Malawi University of Science and Technology
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
P	Research Problem of this Dissertation
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Q	Major Research Question
Q1	First Research Question of this Dissertaion
Q2	Second Research Question of this Dissertation
Q3	Third Research Question of this Dissertation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Coordination
SARIS	Student Academic Records Information System
SARUA	Southern Africa Region University Association
SM	Strategic Management
SMART	Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Reliable and Timeliness
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and
UNIMS	University of Malawi
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

As Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) become increasingly accountable for the quality and value for money of their teaching and learning, universities need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the way that they are managed. Strategic management is viewed as one of the major sources of sustainable competitive advantage for these institutions. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of strategy formulation and implementation in improving performance of Higher Education Institutions in Malawi.

This chapter puts the study into context. It provides an overview of the work presented, especially the approach used to carry out the research, a summary of the literature review, aims and objectives of the study, motivation for the study and an overview of the research methodology. A discussion of the extant literature resulted in the formulation of the research questions to be addressed in the study. Furthermore, the chapter has discussed the practical contributions to the existing Strategic Management body of knowledge.

1.2 SETTING THE SCENE

Management theorists, philosophers and politicians such as Mintzberg, Sun Tzu, Confucius, Abraham Lincoln, Mao Zedong and Peter Drucker, have offered numerous concepts of strategic management across time and place (Moore & Wen, 2007). Their contributions have led to successes in sectors like the military (Sun Tzu), politics (Abraham Lincoln) and business (Peter Drucker). It is not surprising that the Ugandan government, for example, sought the services of Michael Porter, an authority on strategic management, to help the country draw a Strategic Plan that would help it move from poverty to prosperity. Drawing from famous authors on the subject, Schaap (2012); Teulier and Rouleau (2013); Mintzberg (1990); Paroutis, Heracleous & Angwin (2013) and Moore & Wen (2007), Strategic Management:

- a) is both art and science, accommodating intuition, experience and expertise;
- b) is value based, committed to human, organisational and environmental sustainability;
- c) focuses on achievement of objectives, both long and short-term, and provides the basis for resource allocation;
- d) integrates organisational effort, and creates a whole system framework for improvement;
- e) identifies opportunities, is responsive to changing environments, minimizes adverse conditions while maximizing strengths;
- f) engages employees and identifies individual and group effort, encouraging cooperation;
- g) enhances leadership at all levels through communication, engagement and dialogue and provides formality and accountability;
- h) creates value through integrating environmental, social and financial performance and demonstrates cross cultural and productive diversity management.

Thus, from the above assertions, strategic management has become established as a legitimate field of research and managerial practice (Salih & Doll, 2013; Teulier & Rouleau, 2013 and Smith et al., 1987) despite some writers (e.g. Kazmi, 2008 and Alashloo et al, 2005) arguing that the field is extremely fragmented, and that there is no agreement concerning the underlying theoretical dimensions or the methodological approach to be employed.

Porter (1980) brings another dimension to the argument when he notes that almost no consensus exists about what corporate strategy is, much less about how a company should formulate it. His argument draws impetus from a combination of factors that relate to strategy terms, concepts and principles and their practical applications. However, the complexity about the field of strategy notwithstanding, strategic management has become a necessity rather than an advantage to modern organizations. Increased dynamics and globalization of the business environment favour firms that plan and manage strategically. It is a known fact that firms that need to survive in today's world need to think

strategically and to engage in strategic management. Strategic Management therefore, is an essential element for all types of organisations both public and private sectors across the world, including the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

1.3 STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

African higher education has been at a critical juncture since the 1980s as a result of economic austerity and benign neglect in most countries (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006; UNESCO, 2003, 2005; AAU, 2004a, 2004b; SADC, 1997 and World Bank, 2000, 2010, 2014). The international development community contributed to African governments' relative neglect of higher education (UNESCO, 2005; SARUA, 2008, 2009). For example, the World Bank, which exercises significant influence over developing country governments, has long believed that primary and secondary schooling are more important than tertiary education for poverty reduction (Bloom et al., 2006 and Etzkowitz et al 2001). The inadequacy of funding combined with an enrolment explosion, resulted in a reduction in the capacity of most African universities to provide for effective training and research. Eventually, the quality of education provided by the universities dropped.

Over the period, global trends, political and other challenges at the national and continental levels have heightened the significance of knowledge and knowledge institutions in the stability and development of Africa. Additionally, the current wave of democratization, continental self-reliance and cooperation has improved the environment for critical enquiry and learning. This also brought to prominence the need for greater cooperation and self-reliance among African HEIs. Furthermore, African governments have re-focused on higher education as external donors 'rediscovered' it while universities have responded to the challenges by a variety of innovations and coping strategies such as performance management initiatives, quality management, outsourcing and, entrepreneurship.

1.3.1 The Changing Role of Universities: Context of Malawi

The evolution of Universities bears witness to a remarkable series of changes in the role that they have played in society (McCaffery, 2009). This evolution has been marked by transformations, unprecedented in scope and diversity. It is one which is reflective of a close association with wider developments.

In Malawi, the University of Malawi (UNIMA), the oldest university in the country was established in 1964 soon after the country gained independence from the United Kingdom, bears the above testimony. The purpose of its establishment was, to train personnel for the newly established civil service (UNIMA, 2007) as such; most of its programmes were designed to focus on producing public servants.

Over the years the University's *modus operandi* has changed with a landmark announcement by the third President of the Republic of Malawi, in 2010 during the opening of the National Assembly that in the next ten years, Malawi would have six new Universities to address the needs of different sectors of the economy as below.

- 1) The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) to address the country's science and technology needs;
- 2) The Mombera University would focus on cattle production,
- 3) The Marine Biology University would focus on fish production,
- 4) Bangula University cattle farming;
- 5) University of Mzimba to tackle cattle farming,
- 6) Nkhotakota University to focus on Fish and Rice farming
- 7) Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), would focus on agriculture and natural resources related programmes.

This paradigm shift in Higher Education (HE) in Malawi can be compared to the changes that took place in HE in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1980s where Polytechnics were upgraded to Universities. The ancient institutions of Oxford

and Cambridge were mostly concerned with the training of clergymen and teachers and with the sustenance of the established Anglican Church. Originally, the Oxford and Cambridge universities did not seek to encourage progressive science or provide a liberal education (McCaffery, 2009). Over time, from the medieval times, through the Industrial Revolution to today's internet era, the roles of the Universities have evolved. McCaffery (2009) has summarized the four conventional roles of a University as follows:

- a) Finishing school: the last stage of general education.
- b) Professional school: the training of elite workers
- c) Knowledge factory: the production of science, technology and ideology
- d) Institution: the expression of our individual and collective sense of being.

Similarly, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom of 1997 (cited by Taylor and Miroiu, (2002) came up with four roles of HEIs which agree with McCaffery (2009)'s assertions. These include:

- a) To inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout life, so that they can grow intellectually, are well equipped for work, can contribute effectively to society,
- b) To increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society.
- c) To serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy at local, regional, and national level and:
- d) To play a major part in shaping a democratic, civilized, inclusive society.

These roles can be evidenced in the mission statements of many universities all over the world. The following mission statements for three universities confirm the diverse roles of HEIs and their important roles to shaping national growth:

- a) To improve economic and social conditions for the Nation while advancing itself as a distinctively African university with a regional and international outlook. Specifically, the University will: Provide excellence in the delivery of learning to ensure society is provided with talented, creative and confident graduates, Advance knowledge and understanding through excellence in research and its application and improve economic and social development by high impact engagement with business, the professions, government and civil society. (University of Botswana)

- b) A truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past. (University of Kwazulu Natal)

- c) To advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge (Harvard University).

The above mission statements all confirm the important role that universities play in shaping the world in the 21st century.

1.3.2 From a Developmental University to a World Class University: The Changing Landscape.

In the early 21st century, higher education has become a competitive enterprise. In many countries prospective university students have had to compete for the inadequate spaces in the universities. Admission to the top ranking universities has become even more difficult. Universities now compete for status and ranking, and generally for funding from government or private sector sources (WTO, 2013; UNESCO, 2013)

The rapid change of the independence era in Africa (1950s and 1960s) provided a new context for HE. Staffing the new civil service and fostering economic growth justified substantial allocations to HEIs and was expected to

contribute to the national development effort (World Bank, 2010; UNESCO, 2013 and Etzkowitz et al 2001). This period was marked by an opening of the higher education policy arena to the wider international community, not limited to the former colonial powers, and by a series of international conferences on education, beginning in Khartoum in 1960.

This era also saw the emergence of the notion of the “**developmental university**” in Africa, with a curriculum organized around learning that could be immediately and productively applied (World Bank, 2003; Salmi, 2009). This notion of higher education’s role in national development had widespread international support, including not only governments and international organisations but also major foundations. Notwithstanding tensions and disagreements over priorities and focus, the mood was optimistic. Higher Education had an important developmental mission, and could re-tool from its colonial role to face new challenges.

The optimism of the immediate independence period was followed by a decline in development of HEs in Africa (UNESCO, 2003, 2005, 2013). By the 1990s, the consensus was that the deterioration of higher education in Africa had become a crisis. Diverse voices had similar observations on the new challenges. By 1990, for example, University of Makerere in Uganda exhibited in extreme form the resource constraints facing universities throughout Africa. No new physical structures had been built and no maintenance carried out in twenty years. Journal subscriptions had declined to zero, as had chemicals for science laboratories. Student numbers remained low, the government subsidy small, and research output, minimal.

The situation in Malawi was not different. Just about the same time (by 1990) funding for HEIs was reduced drastically which resulted in reduced enrolment, dilapidated infrastructure, poor maintenance, no procurement of books in the libraries, no chemicals in laboratories as well as unavailability of lecturers due to brain drain and the unwillingness of new graduates to take up teaching positions in the Universities, preferring to work for the private sector (UNIMA, 2005; MIM, 2004). This lack of support for HEIs in Malawi prompted government to pump into the University of Malawi, over MK1 Billion (US\$10 Million) for the rehabilitation of infrastructure (World Bank, 2010).

Much as the World Bank has been blamed for its influence on the decline of higher education through its insistence that Higher Education was a luxury in poor sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2013; SARUA, 2009), it is also true that African governments themselves should share the blame for the decline of Higher Education. Many African governments found universities and their students as well as staff politically threatening. There are numerous examples of conflicts between the African Universities and their governments that can be said to have affected progress. The fight for Academic Freedom in the University of Malawi in 2010 is one good example. One of the constituent colleges of one of the public Universities was closed for eight months because of political influence in its operations.

As if the problems of the 1990s were not enough, the new millennium has also brought an array of challenges to Higher Education which, through Strategic Management, this thesis aimed at addressing. The current challenges that HEIs are facing include, but not limited to, funding, leadership and governance, the brain drain, poor working and living environments, HIV and AIDS, Globalization, Academic Freedom and Strategic Management.

1.3.3 Higher Education and Economic Growth in Africa

The major sources of economic growth for nations have changed over a period of time. While growth depends primarily on land in agricultural societies and physical capital in industrial economies, it depends on human capital in the knowledge economies (Drucker, 1993; Nonaka, 1993). World Bank (1998) cited by Kandadi (2006) notes that for countries in the vanguard of world economy, the balance between knowledge and resources has shifted so far towards the former that knowledge has become perhaps the most important factor determining the standard of living. Today, knowledge is key to development, and a lack of it is a major constraint to economic and social progress (UNESCO, 2005, 2013).

The growth potential of the knowledge economy depends largely on its capacity to produce, absorb and apply knowledge. While economic sectors produce knowledge-based goods, the higher education sector plays an important role in

facilitating the production and distribution of knowledge. Given the importance of knowledge in development, in order to encourage growth, it has become necessary to expand higher education. This is important to enable countries that are lagging behind in terms of technology to catch up with other well advanced countries in order to maximize their economic output (Bloom et al., 2006; World Bank, 2010).

Universities in developed countries such as the USA and the UK attract a large number of foreign students, and income from foreign students constitutes a significant share of the budgets of many universities in these countries. In 2006, for instance, Higher Education in the UK was the 4th foreign exchange earner (Bloom et al, 2006). The United Kingdom and the United States of America continue to dominate in attracting foreign students to study in their countries (SARUA, 2013). Good Management policies and adequate financing among other factors have led to provision of high quality and world class education which has led to attraction of large numbers of foreign students. Improvements in Strategic Management in Higher Educations in Malawi among other important factors can therefore improve the quality of education which can lead to attraction of foreign students from other countries. (UNESCO, 2013)

The Malawi Government takes Higher Education as a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and voiceless as stipulated in the country's National Education Sector Plan (NESP), (Malawi Government, 2007). According to the country's Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), the Malawi government further views Higher Education as tool that enhances group solidarity, national consciousness and tolerance of diversity (Malawi Government 2006).

Although the Malawi Government, through policy documents such as the NESP and MGDS, recognize the important role that education play in Malawi, the reality is that, the direct contribution of Higher Education to the GDP is negligible (World Bank, 2010; Salmi, 2009). However, indirectly through its products and services, the contribution is significant. Research in Strategic Management in Higher Education is, therefore, seen by the researcher as one way of enhancing economic growth. Malawi, as a landlocked country without notable mineral resources in large quantities, can therefore look up to the

knowledge economy as a source of economic growth. As universities are intellectual, cultural and knowledge generating centres, they need to be supported through investment in order for them to effectively play their key roles of training and conducting research.

Universities need to not only engage in strategy formulation resulting in formulating good strategies, but should also put in place necessary mechanisms to ensure that the strategies formulated are implemented. (Mintzberg et al, 1998) Well implemented HE strategic plans are a source of sustainable competitive advantage. A vibrant HE sector ensures availability of quality human resources that are able to drive economic growth.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THIS RESEARCH

Strategic Management has gained prominence in both private as well as the public sector organisations. Despite the prominence, the field continues to confuse managers, researchers and academicians. Even Michael Porter, an authority in strategic management, has confirmed the complexity of the field by accepting that there is no correct definition for strategy (Porter, 1980;). The complexity of strategic management as a field of study, in terms of what it is and how firms should develop winning strategies, has raised debate by researchers and academicians on how strategy should be formulated and implemented (Mintzberg et al, 1998)

Okumus (2003) summarizes works by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1987), Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002), Miller (2002), Alexander (1991), Mankins and Steele (2005), Noble (1999) and Okumus and Roper (1998) on strategy formulation and implementation. He asserts that, while well drafted strategic plans developed through a sophisticated process by a team of accomplished management consultants or a group of top managers is hardly likely to fail, most of the strategies developed are never achieved. He goes on to confirm that failure in most organisations has not been poor understanding of environmental forces for example or inappropriate strategic intent but how to manage change (implementation of new strategies). Another research also confirmed that about 70 percent of new strategies fail at implementation (Deloitte & Touché, 2008).

Okumus and Roper (1998) also reach the same conclusion that unlike strategy formulation, where there are well-known frameworks such as strategic planning, SWOT analysis, Porter's generic strategies, industry analysis or competitive analysis, there are few models or frameworks available in the area of strategy implementation. Those that are available are still in the process of being developed and refined. Alexander (1985) has also observed that literature is dominated by a focus on long range planning and strategy content rather than the actual implementation of strategies, on which "little is written or researched".

Higher Education institutions have not been left behind in as far as strategic management is concerned. For example, according to Hayward (2008), the University of Malawi had a thoughtful and well developed Strategic Plan for the period of 2005 to 2011. However, the University of Malawi Strategic Planning Committee (2011) noted that the Strategic Plan failed to live to expectations. A myriad of factors exist which could have probably led to the failure of the strategic plan to achieve its objectives. The factors, among others, could include:

- 1) failure to analyse the external environment,
- 2) Leadership,
- 3) Organisational structures,
- 4) Human Resources capabilities.
- 5) Resources
- 6) Systems and Procedures
- 7) Government Interference
- 8) Communication
- 9) Motivation
- 10) Performance Management

Lack of strategy implementation frameworks has been raised by a number of scholars (e.g. Okumus, 2001, 2004; Alexander, 1991; Noble, 1999) as a major factor contributing to failure by institutions to implement planned strategies.

Thus, the motivation behind this research came upon observing challenges that HEIs faced which eventually ignited the desire to find solutions to these challenges. Despite significant effort in strategy formulation and implementation in Malawi's HEIs, the literature reviewed indicates that there are many challenges associated with both formulation and implementation of strategies. According to the World Bank (2010) strategic planning is one of the factors affecting performance of HEIs in Malawi. The World Bank (2010) further reports that HEIs in Malawi are the most inefficient in the SADC region with the worst statistics in terms of staff student ratio, student enrolment, infrastructure and information technology.

A further motivation for this study was the researcher's willingness to contribute to the field of Strategic Management in Higher Education in an African context. Such was the case considering that there are very few publications on strategic management in higher education in the SADC region, as confirmed by SARUA (2003) and UNESCO (2005, 2013). Therefore, theory on Strategy formulation and implementation in the private sector will be used to inform practice by developing processes to be embedded in the proposed framework.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There were a number of key reasons behind the researcher's decision to choose this area as a thesis project. The key decision was based on the challenges that HEIs are facing. As pointed out earlier (see 1.1.2), Higher Education Institutions such as universities are vital as they are knowledge generating institutions. They need to be supported through investments in order to play their roles effectively and efficiently.

Although universities are supposed to be the engines of change and drivers or agents for socio-economic and technological development, the majority of them particularly in developing countries, are facing a number of challenges (Muchie,

2009; SARUA, 2008 and UNESCO, 2013). In the Sub-Saharan Africa for instance, According to FitzGerald and Hodgson (2010) and SARUA (2010), challenges facing most HEIs include:

- a) Little investment and inadequate budgets set aside by governments to run universities;
- b) Competition for resources with other more popular sectors like the primary and vocational training sub-sectors, health, agriculture, water and infrastructure;
- c) Competition with other institutions for good students and academic staff;
- d) Dilapidated infrastructure and ageing teaching facilities;
- e) Poor staff incentive packages and retention schemes;
- f) Ageing and high retirement rate of senior and experienced staff, with no succession plans;
- g) Few students with an interest in science and technology programmes, that is less than 22%;
- h) More students enrolled in social sciences, management and business programmes (70%);
- i) Lack of qualified teaching and technical staff on the market;
- j) Pressure to produce more graduates especially in the fields of education, agriculture and health;
- k) General feeling from the public that universities are producing job seekers rather than job creators, due to lack of practical and entrepreneurship skills;
- l) High dependence on external donors especially for research and innovation funds;
- m) Gender imbalance, especially in science and technology programmes.

For universities to be able to address these challenges, they have to re-think their **modus operandi** and engage in Strategic Management. Strategic management will ensure that they are relevant to the society and responsive to the needs of the society, or play more public roles (Edigheji, 2009). The investigation into Strategy formulation and Implementation in HEIs will therefore

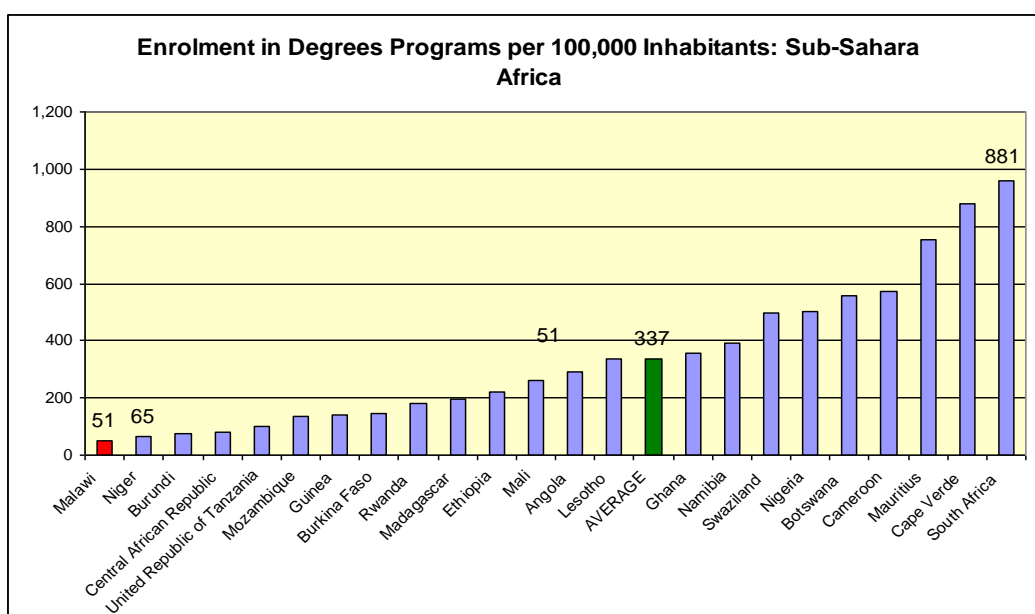
contribute positively to economic development of and Malawi and possibly beyond.

1.6 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates that higher education shall be accessible to all, on the basis of merit (UNESCO, 2003). To many Malawians, just like in many other developing countries, Higher Education has never been a right. For example, according to a UNESCO report of 2009, only five percent of tertiary level students in Sub-Saharan Africa are able to access Higher Education services compared to seventy percent in Western Europe and North America, and a global average of twenty-four percent (UNESCO, 2009). The World Bank puts Malawi as a country with the lowest enrolment rates into Higher Education in the Sub-Sahara Africa with 51 per 100,000 inhabitants against an average of 331 (World, Bank, 2010, 2014) . Figure 1-1 shows enrolment in degree programmes per 100,000 inhabitants in Sub Sahara Africa.

Figure 1-1 Comparison of Enrolment per 100,000 Inhabitants in SSA.

Source: (World Bank, 2006)



The University of Malawi has, for example, been formulating strategic plans for over ten years now. These strategic plans are situated within the national, regional and global trends in the social economic and political environment that impact the HEIs.

Ideally, implementing these strategic plans would imply achieving HE related national goals and objectives simply because these strategic plans are developed with the national challenges and plans in mind. However, the reality, as pointed in section 1.4 is that most strategic plans formulated are never implemented an assertion supported by many authors (e.g. Okumus and Roper, 1998; Alexander, 1985 and Dandira, 2011).

In their evaluation of the 2005 to 2011 Strategic Plan, the University of Malawi Strategic Plan development committee observed that the plan was not effectively planned. The above assertion can be confirmed in the quotation below:

“The objective for revising the strategic plan was to develop a realistic and feasible five year plan that should map out where the University is headed, its short-range and long-range key performance targets and the competitive strategies and internal actions and approaches to be used in achieving the targeted results. In carrying out the exercise, the process took into account the lessons learnt from the development and implementation of the first strategic plan.” (UNIMA, 2012)

From the foregoing revelation, one thing highlighted that might have contributed to the failure to achieve good level of implementation is development of feasible and realistic plans.

Strategy implementation is the critical link between formulation of strategies and superior organisational performance (Shi, 2009; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Rees et al, 2013 and Noble & Mokwa, 1999). Nutt (1999) for example, studied strategic decisions in organisations located in the USA and Canada, and concluded that half of the strategic decisions failed to attain their initial objectives mainly because of the problems during strategy implementation process. Even though the stream of research which deals with strategic decision making is well developed, there are only a few empirical studies on strategy implementation. A comprehensive review of strategy implementation literature revealed that only very few studies (e.g. Hickson, Miller & Wilson, 2003) have examined the relationship between strategy implementation and performance

In the study, strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs was investigated by looking at how strategy is formulated and implemented in the institutions. The thesis aimed at answering the following main research question (Q):

How best can Malawi's Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage?

1.7 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to address the main research question (Q) by developing an integrative strategic management framework. With this aim in mind, the study was designed to address the following objectives;

- 1) To provide a literature review of various theories, concepts and frameworks of strategy formulation and implementation.
- 2) To identify organizational factors which influence strategic management in Higher Education Institutions.
- 3) To evaluate and discuss the study findings against the existing literature of strategy formulation and implementation.
- 4) To benchmark Strategic Management in Higher Education Institutions against best practice.
- 5) To develop an integrative strategy formulation and implementation framework based on the empirical study and insights gained from the contemporary strategic management literature.

1.8 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

As it has been noted earlier in this introduction, the major sources of economic growth for nations have changed over a period of time. Today, knowledge is key to development, and a lack of it is a major constraint to economic and social

progress (UNESCO, 2005, 2013). Universities play a very important role in society in the faculty of knowledge creation. The literature review has confirmed that HEIs in Malawi are at a critical juncture with statistics proving that despite so much effort to improve performance, the HEI sector in Malawi is still lagging behind comparatively in the Southern Africa Development Corporation (SADC) region (World Bank, 2010, Salmi 2009 and SADC, 1997). Among other pertinent factors, strategic management is seen to be one of the factors affecting performance. With so much at stake for HEIs, strategy formulation and implementation becomes a challenging task for the chief executives and senior managers. This study gains significance in this context. The study makes an important contribution to the Strategic Management body of knowledge. Two major contributions are:

- 1) Identification of key success factors for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in the sub sahara context thereby assisting policy makers in Universities and other HEIs
- 2) Development of an integrative framework for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs which can be adapted to both public and private sector HEIs.

In addition to the two major contributions above, the study also makes the following contributions:

- 1) Reaffirms the importance of effective strategy formulation and implementation in achievement of organizational objectives in HEIs.
- 2) Validates the findings of the studies conducted earlier by testing the relationships between various elements of strategy formulation and implementation. The literature review identified various SM factors which the study has also found. Through triangulation the findings of studies conducted earlier will be validated.
- 3)

1.9 THE ROLE OF A FRAMEWORK IN ADDRESSING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

From the gaps identified in the literature review, it transpired that major strategic problems in achieving organisational goals could be attributed to implementation mechanisms. Schaap (2012); Al-Ghamdi (1998); Alexander (1985) and Floyd and Woolridge and (2000) assert that the overwhelming majority of the literature on strategy has been on the formulation side and only lip service has been given to the other side of the coin, namely strategy implementation, so much so that often times failure to achieve planned activities occurs at implementation stage.

Scott, Cavana & Cameron, 2014; Salih and Doll (2013) agree with Alexander (1991) in suggesting several reasons for failure to implement strategies such as strategy implementation being less glamorous than formulation. People overlook strategy implementation because of a belief that anybody can do it. Furthermore, there are very few conceptual models of strategy implementation. The challenges faced by institutions in strategy implementation therefore calls for an integrative strategic management framework which ensures an inter-link between formulation and implementation.

The Balanced Scorecard Institute (2005) defines a framework as a logical structure for classifying and organizing complex information. The researcher's epistemological and ontological beliefs on strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs have been influenced and motivated by Kuhn (1977)'s theory of science through his notion of paradigmatic thinking. Through the use of paradigms the researcher made sense of how strategy could be structured and classified in today's complex dynamic environment.

For Kuhn, a paradigm which is a model, concept or plan conveys the way that the world is seen through our perceptions, understanding and interpretations. Using different terminology, Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Morgan (1997) complement Kuhn (1977)'s philosophy by developing the concept of metaphor as a meta-theoretical tool. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), while paradigms inevitably shape and bound our understandings of organisations and management, knowledge is further shaped by the ways in which we tacitly concretised our fundamental paradigmatic assumptions. What this implies is that developing a comprehensive strategic management framework will in

general help to identify the areas that need to be addressed and will ensure the following:

- a) That organizations take into account external and internal factors when formulating strategy.
- b) That there are proper channels of communication in place.
- c) That organisational systems to aid strategy success are put in place.
- d) That necessary resources are also identified.

The goal of this study was to develop an integrative strategic management framework for successful performance in Higher Education Institutions in Malawi.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives, the research was conducted along the interpretivist philosophy coming from a background that reality exists in people, where people not only interact with their environment but also make sense of it (Saunders et al, 2009). This philosophical view was achieved by using an inductive research approach where data was collected to develop a theory. Data was collected using a case study strategy. This strategy was preferred because of the wealth of data it is capable of collecting compared to other strategies, and also because it can employ several data collection techniques to ensure data credibility and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the choice of the methodology was partially based on how best it could answer the research questions.

A grounded theory approach was used to analyze data collected from the case organisations. This methodology is widely used in analyzing empirical qualitative data (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Saunders et al., 2009). Rationale for favouring the stated methodology and paradigm is provided in Chapter 3.

1.11 RESEARCH FOCUS AND BOUNDARIES

The study is focused on developing an integrative framework for strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. The proposed framework was intended to serve as a guiding theory to managers involved in the management of HEIs.

In investigating strategy formulation and implementation, subjects such as Systems Theory, Organizational Behavior, Knowledge Management, Performance Management and Human Resources Management were explored in the context of strategic management.

Firstly, the research primarily focused on Higher Educations Institutions in Malawi. However, the research's finding could be applicable to other contexts such as other public sector organisations as well as private sector organisations.

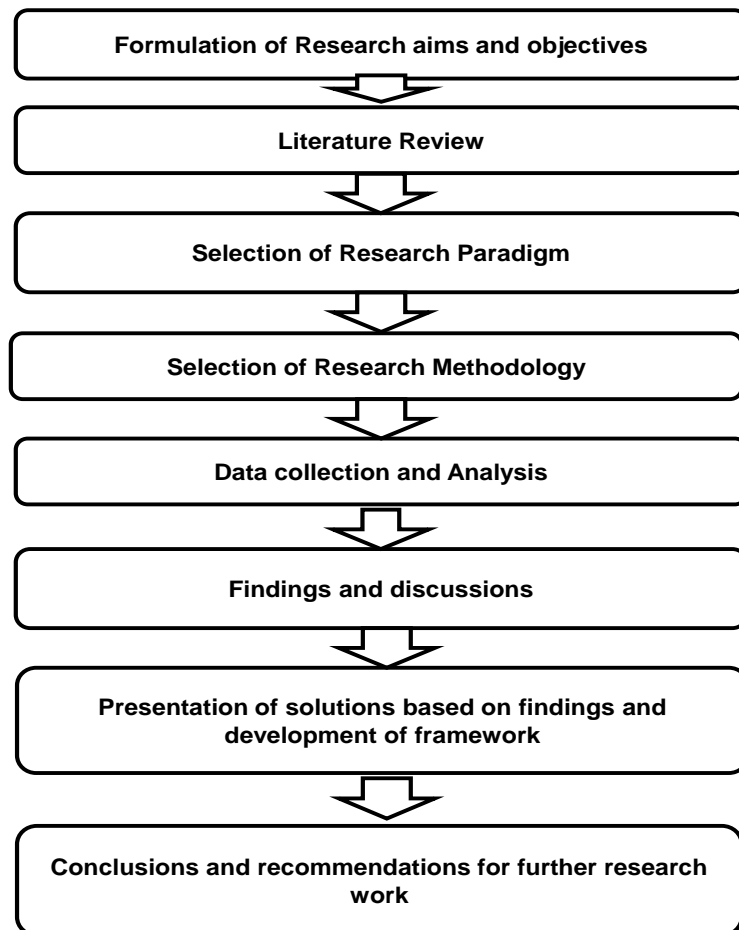
Secondly, the research also studied private sector organisations; a commercial bank and a multinational telecommunications company. These private sector organisations were studied to bring best practice in HEIs. This was in line with the thinking underpinned by the New Public Management concept (MIM, 2002)

1.12 THESIS STRUCTURE

The Researcher intends to adopt the Saunders et al (2009) dissertation structure. This thesis comprises five chapters including an introductory chapter which has outlined the structure of the study.

Chapter two presents a critical analysis of the previous knowledge on the topic. This chapter contains an analysis and description of theories and concepts on strategic management. This review involved analysing books, refereed journals, conference papers, published case studies and other materials. The review focused on discussing historical perspectives on strategy and the related areas, recent developments, challenges as well as research directions on strategic management. Based on the analysis of the findings and the extant literature reviewed, a strategy formulation and implementation framework has been proposed.

Figure 1-2 Thesis structure Source: Author



Chapter three provides a detailed discussion of epistemological and ontological commitments for this research. It also describes the methods the researcher has chosen to conduct the research. Within the methodology, the researcher justified his choice of methodology by providing a critical analysis of all methodologies that can be located in business research. Limitations of the methodology chosen have also been outlined.

The fourth chapter explains the findings of the study. This includes the analysis of results of the data collected from the case studies,. Based on the findings of this study, a comprehensive strategy formulation and implementation framework has been developed for HEIs.

The last chapter (chapter five) provides a summary of the findings of this investigation with a critical discussion on its implications. This chapter aims at providing answers to the research questions that were set at the outset. In this

chapter, the researcher describes the main lessons to be learnt from the study and what future research should be conducted.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a bird's eye view of the study. It started by defining strategic management as a field of study and its contribution to successful performance of organisations. The discussion then moved to the role of Universities in economic growth and how strategic management can facilitate improved performance of HEIs vis a vis economic development of nations. The chapter went further to discuss the motivation for the study and significance of the study. This was followed by analysis of the challenges that HEIs face which led to the identification of the problem statement for the study. This sets the research objectives, which are followed by theoretical and practical contributions to the body of knowledge. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the various chapters.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

“Knowledge doesn’t exist in a vacuum, and your work only has value in relation to other people. Your work and your findings will be significant only to the extent that they are the same, or different from, other people’s work findings”

(Jankowicz, 2000)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is aimed at identifying the major streams of extant literature for undertaking strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Africa. As a starting point, the chapter examines the definitions of strategy, strategy related terms and processes, its evolution, recent developments, challenges and limitations associated with it, research directions and other important aspects of strategic management subject area. Furthermore, the chapter attempts to examine specific factors affecting strategic management in HEIs. The identified factors would serve as the basis for conducting this study. Finally, the critical review of strategic management literature which was conducted, based on the research problem identified at the outset, informed the formulation of the research questions for this study.

2.2 DEFINING STRATEGY

Many authors indicate that strategy is a complex phenomenon that cannot just simply be defined and understood. Understanding what strategy is has been complicated by the proliferation in the number of schools of strategic thought and by the undisciplined, even reckless, use of the term (Davies, 2000). Porter (1980) explains that almost no consensus exists about what strategy is, much less about how an organisation should formulate it. Gooderham (1998) seems to support Porter (1980)’s assertion by contending that there is no one right way to develop and implement strategy.

Mintzberg, Alhstrand, and Lampel (1998) take the strategy enigma to a poetic level by comparing the concept of strategy to the famous fable about “The Blind Men and the Elephant”, where six blind men attempt, and fail, to describe an

elephant, where each blind man touches only a part of the elephant. They go on to describe what the elephant feels like. For instance, one blind man says “the elephant feels like a wall,” another blind man describes it as “the elephant feels like a snake”. In much the same way as each blind man creates a vision of the whole by examining a part, proponents of strategic management have written about the different concepts, which either are about the parts or are visions of the whole drawn from the knowledge of one or a few parts.

The complexity in the field of strategy is due to a combination of factors that relate to, among other things, strategy terms, concepts and principles as well as their practical application. It is, therefore, inevitable against this background that the exploration of the different ideas on strategic management should start with a critical analysis of the definition of the concept.

Strategic management as a field of study is relatively new and evolving phenomenon in that many academic researchers and practitioners alike have yet to fully grasp what it is and what it does. Furthermore, the complexity regarding this subject has come about due to the fact that researchers and practitioners in their various fields tend to define the concept of strategy based on their fields and interests (Elashaheb, 2005). Strategy is characterized by multiple options, multiple paths, and multiple outcomes; and is more complex to design and more difficult to implement (Davies, 2000; Porter, 1989; Gooderham, 1998).

Ansoff (1987) defines strategy as an elusive and somewhat abstract concept while Whittington (2007) attempts to put the strategy debate in context, claiming that we simply do not know what strategy is or how to develop a good one. Henderson (1989) sees strategy from a competitive context, proposing that it involves the application, by original decision makers, of imagination and logic to natural competition; and therefore that strategy making compresses time and accelerates this natural process of competition.

Lynch (2001), on the other hand, defines strategy as the pattern of major objectives, purposes or goals and essential policies or plans for achieving those goals, stated in such a way as to define what business the company is in or is to be in and the kind of company it is or is to be.

Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008) discuss the definition of strategy by looking at its nature and suggest that strategy is the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competencies with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder's expectations.

While many strategists and writers on business and management differ in their own definitions of strategy as might be confirmed in the definitions given above, all do acknowledge however, that it is the essence of what Mintzberg et al (1998) summarized into the 5 P's of strategy as follows:

- 1) Strategy as a "plan" sees strategy as a guide for a course of action, a path from a current state to a desired future end state. Planning is important in organizations as it helps in resource allocation and coming up with alternative ways of doing things.
- 2) Strategy as a "pattern" sees strategy as being a consistency of behaviour over time. Whereas planning involves deciding about the future, strategy as a pattern involves looking at the past behaviours. It is important to consider the pattern of events in an organisation because some strategies are developed based on past behaviours and experiences.
- 3) Strategy as "position" sees strategy as the location of particular products in particular markets. The position aspect was motivated by the work of Michael Porter. As Porter (1996) iterated, Strategy is the creation of a unique and valuable position, involving different sets of activities.
- 4) Strategy as a "perspective" sees strategy represented as philosophy of the business in terms of interacting with the customer, or the way(s) in which goods or services are supplied.

Strategy as a "ploy" means gaining market share through a specific manoeuvre, designed to outwit a competitor. In the public sector for example, competitiveness can be within a sector, economic use of resources or even the ability to attract more donors. The issue of competition is a crucial one to the

success of organisations. Some companies have failed to gain advantage due to being myopic in knowing who their competitors are. Organizations need to realize who their competitors are so that they are able to create robust strategies that underpin competitive advantage. **Error! Reference source not found.** Selected definitions of strategy by strategy researchers is presented in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Summary of strategy definitions by selected authors, Source: Author

Authors	Definitions
Andrews (1980)	the pattern of decisions in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purposes, or goals, produces the principal policies and plans for achieving those goals, and defines the range of business the company is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organization it is or intends to be, and the nature of the economic and non-economic contribution it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities.
Tregoe et al (1980)	the framework which guides those choices that determine the nature and direction of an organization.
Johnson et al (2006)	the understanding of the strategic position of an organization, determination of strategic choices for the future and the turning of the strategy into action.
Thompson (1998)	determined actions for achieving stated and desired objectives.
Pearce II and Robinson (1985)	set of decisions and actions resulting in formulation and implementation of strategies designed to achieve the objectives of an organisation.
De Vit and Meyer, (2004)	a course of action for achieving organisations purposes.
David (2003)	The 'art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives.'

Authors	Definitions
Porter (1980)	a combination of the ends (goals) for which the firm is striving and the means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there.
Quinn et al. (1988)	the pattern or plan that integrates an organisation's major goals, policies, and action sequences into a cohesive whole as a well-formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organisation's resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and weaknesses, anticipated changes in environment, and contingent moves by intelligent opponents.
Slack et al.(1998)	Positioning a business to maximise the value of the capabilities that distinguish it from its competitors.
Chandler (1962)	the determination of the basic goals and objectives of a firm and the adoption of courses of action including the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals.
Hofer and Schendal (1979)	the mediating force or match between the organisation and the environment.

These definitions provide insights into the nature of strategic management as a field of study. Some authors (e.g. Porter, 1980; Mintzberg et al., 1998) assert that most organisations purport to have a well defined strategy which they have developed to aid in performance improvement. If you ask Managers of such organisations to define their idea of strategy, one would be given different answers which vary from corporate strategy to operational planning. This only confirms the complexity of not only the definition of strategy but the entire field of strategic management. From the definitions highlighted in table 2.1 above,, the underlining factors common to all of them is that choices are identified and that decisions are made on how those choices are turned into action to achieve

some purpose. Therefore key issues identified are choices, turning the choices into action and achievement of specific purpose.

2.2.1 A Working Definition of 'Strategy' for the Thesis

The complexity and inadequacies observed in the various attempts to define Strategy, call for a more clear and comprehensive definition of the concept. This thesis proposes a more encompassing definition that addresses both rational and emergent continuums of the field.

Keeping with the traditional perspective of Strategic Management, this thesis adopts Johnson, Whittington and Scholes (2006)'s definition of strategy with modification:

Strategy is the product of the decision making process of developing goals and objectives, understanding of the strategic position of an organization, determination of strategic choices for the future and the turning of the strategy into action .

2.2.2 Strategy versus Strategic Management and Strategic Planning

It is important to define the terms strategic management and strategic planning as some authors, students and managers alike, have not only confused them but used them interchangeably with strategy when these terms mean different things.

The author defines Strategic Management by looking at definitions provided by Johnson et al (2006) and Pearce and Robinson (1988). Johnson et al., (2006) define strategic management as the understanding of the strategic position of an organisation, determination of strategic choices for the future and the turning of the strategy into action. Pearce and Robinson (1988) provide a simpler definition which views strategic management as the set of decisions and actions resulting in the formulation and implementation of strategies designed to achieve the objectives of an organisation. From the two definitions, it can be concluded that strategic management is a process which involves development, implementation and evaluation of strategy for a firm.

Strategic planning, on the other hand, is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. Various business analysis techniques can be used in strategic planning, including SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal analysis, (Lynch, 2001).

Lynch (2001) argues that strategic planning is no substitute for strategic management; it merely formalizes the strategy process in some organizations. Stacey (1996) opposes the views of both Johnson et al (2006) and Lynch (2001) by arguing that only rarely is strategy a deliberate set of actions and that it is, instead, a far more organised approach where short-term and day to day changes are sometimes required for strategic management.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that the three are not the same but are interlinked; strategic planning being the means of developing strategy and strategic management being the entire process of developing and implementing it in order to help an organization improve its performance. Thus, it is important to realize the interrelationships among strategy, strategic management and strategic planning in the quest to achieve organization's objectives, vis a vis, competitive advantage.

The main purpose of exploring various definitions of strategy is to demonstrate the myriad of factors which influence strategy and the complexities involved in encapsulating the concept in a single definition (Veetil, 2008). The challenges involved in defining the concept of strategy can be attributed to its complexity as demonstrated in the fable of the blind man and the elephant. Due to this complexity, strategy making process also becomes a complex phenomena and understanding this phenomena becomes difficult.

2.2.3 Strategic Planning versus Strategic thinking

Many authors assume that strategic planning and strategic thinking are synonymous (Mintzberg et al, 1994; Slack et al, 1998). This review attempts to

explore the similarities and differences between the two and defines what the two stand for in this study.

Mintzberg (1994) argues that strategic planning is not the same as strategic thinking. He contends that strategic planning involves breaking down a goal into steps, designing how to implement the steps and estimating the anticipated consequences of each step. It is a discipline, which can include innovative elements but essentially focuses on the rigor of making sure how to get from one position to another without falling off the cliff.

On the other hand, he defines strategic thinking as the process of synthesising that is, using intuition and creativity to formulate a vision for an organization. It is the ability to think systemically, with a whole systems perspective which often transcends what the organization is currently engaged in.

Mintzberg (1994) agrees with Porter (1980) by contending that while strategic planning and thinking are related they are not the same. They propose that the outcome of strategic thinking can be integrated into a strategic plan.

To remain competitive, in today's fast-changing business environment, organizations are required to keep their strategic management process dynamic, continuously learning and adapting, and taking advantage of emerging opportunities. Strategic thinking thus becomes a key competency for leaders and managers responsible for the design and deployment of business and functional strategies. Strategic thinking therefore needs to be at the centre of the entire strategic management process, constantly re-evaluating, re-visiting and re-defining mental models of the business.

This study assumes that strategic planning and thinking are not the same and treats them differently as explained in the foregoing paragraph.

2.3 EVOLUTION OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

“Strategy” comes from the ancient Greek word “strategia” meaning the art of leading an army, (Sadler, 1998). It is traditionally the art of generalship, with the word, ‘general’, meaning both the high military rank as well as the art of having

a general, high level overview. It refers to “the important plan” where the objective is to defeat the enemy. The strategy will therefore be to deploy the resources available in a manner that is likely to achieve the aim.

Ansoff (1965) suggests that the concept of strategy being applied to business, first emerged after the Second World War in the USA where the methodology of the US forces was adapted to US industry in the late 1940s, led by people such as Robert McNamara, then President of the Ford Motor Company and later US Defence Secretary under John F. Kennedy. According to Ansoff (1965), the coming into being of business strategy was the 1953 publication known as “Theory of Games and Economic Behavior” by von Neumann and Morgenstern. These two Princeton academicians formulated methods of resolving conflict in politics, war and business by interpreting strategy in two ways: pure strategy and grand strategy. Pure Strategy was exemplified by a move or series of moves by a business in a specific area, such as product development whereas Grand strategy was exemplified by statistical rules against which a business could decide what pure strategies it should pursue according to the situation.

Since Ansoff (1965)’s publication, the process of developing strategy has evolved with a lot of changes. It has evolved from long-range planning, as seen by early scholars such as Chandler (1962), Andrews (1971), Hofer and Schendel (1979), to Strategic Planning (Mintzberg, (1990, 1994, 1998) to recently Strategic Management (Johnson et al, (2002, 2005, 2008). Bonn and Christodolus (1996) and Wilson (1998) believe that the above changes in strategic management may have been motivated by the changes that have taken place in the Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal environment. As the speed of dynamism and the level of complexity and uncertainty in the competitive environments further increased, it was observed that it is difficult to determine a strategic direction for an organization, proposing that organizations must constantly adapt to fast-changing circumstances and, hence, move towards dynamic strategy development.

During the Strategic planning era, emphasis was on planning where resources were used to create competitive advantage (Porter 1980). In the 1990’s, there has been a paradigm shift from emphasis on planning to searching for new paradigms. Some of the new paradigms have been reflected in Mintzberg’s

strategy safari, such as the Learning school, Entrepreneur school, Configuration school, Business Process Re-engineering and those that have merged strategy formulation and implementation.

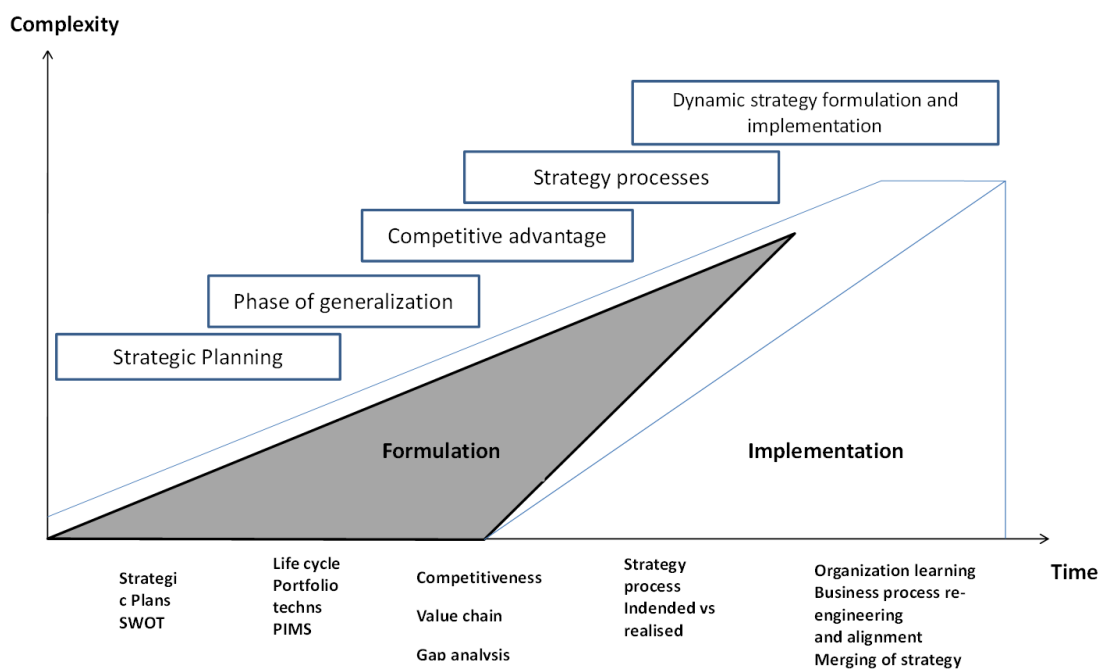
Furthermore, Teulier & Rouleau (2013), Rouleau & Balogun (2011) and Mintzberg (1994) argue that the role of strategists has to change from that of planners and strategy makers to that of strategy finders, knowledge generators and catalysts of change and that strategic planning must be replaced by strategic thinking. Ansoff (1987) seems to be changing with time along with other authors such as Shi (2009); Rees et al (2013) and Paroutis et al (2013) when he stresses that the classical understanding of strategic planning must be replaced by a more dynamic understanding that focuses on strategic issues.

Additionally, the evolution of strategic management can be defined from a context point of view to focus on the people who were involved in strategy formulation. In the early studies on strategic management, the strategy itself was often created by the top management and was rarely discussed with the operative level (Chakravarthy and Lorange, 1993). Furthermore, the main thrust was strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation and control were not important. This sympathized with the classical view of organizations where the roles of employees were to perform duties that were assigned to them. From a classical theory viewpoint, what was important was strategy formulation. Once the strategy was formulated it would be implemented anyway. However, recent research (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Whittington, 2006; Chia, 2004; Dandira, 2011) have taken a more pragmatic approach proposing that strategy formulation should not be left to top management in a top bottom approach but should also allow involvement of implementers in the formulation process.

Recent research, for example by Dandira (2011), Okumus (2002;2003) and Alexander (1998) has identified the lack of involvement of implementers in strategy formulation as one of the key factors leading to strategic drift. This stance reflects the critical choices about who to involve in strategic management process, what to do in strategizing activity, and which strategizing methodologies to use in order to guide this activity (Johnson *et al*, 2008).

Error! Reference source not found. summarises the main stages of this evolutionary process together with examples of concepts and tools developed. This Figure also illustrates that, over time, the complexity of strategy research has intensified where strategy formulation and implementation, which were treated as separate entities in the past, have now merged into a dynamic approach comprising both aspects.

Figure 2-1 Evolution of strategy; Adapted from: Feurer and Chaharbaghi (1997)



2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY

Today's organisations including HEIs face a multitude of pressures, most of which will be familiar to managers operating at all levels. Researchers in the field, such as Salih & Doll (2013); Schaap 2012; Porter (1980), Mintzberg (1998); Lynch (2001) and Teulier & Rouleau (2013), contend that organizations both public and private face the following challenges:

- a) operating within a rapidly changing political landscape, especially in relation to funding and inspection.
- b) coping with rapid and radical developments in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which have the potential to

fundamentally alter the way in which learning and research are conducted.

- c) the challenges of operating within an increasingly competitive market.
- d) the need to absorb major new strategic priorities such as internationalisation, globalisation and responsiveness to business.
- e) the ability to work with and benefit from new stakeholders, such as those within business and the community.
- f) ever-increasing pressure on resources and the resulting need to 'do more for less' through the maximisation of assets and minimisation of wastage; and
- g) recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills, experience and attitude.

Most analysts (Mintzberg et al (1998); Okumus (2003) agree that the scale of these (and other) challenges facing modern organisations is only likely to increase over the coming years, thanks to a combination of socio-economic, demographic, political and technological pressures. The nature of many of these challenges means that most are beyond the capabilities of individual managers, or institutions to control. Nevertheless, that does not mean that we are powerless. It simply increases the importance we must attach to ensuring that our institution is functioning as effectively and efficiently as possible and, therefore, putting it in the best possible shape to meet these demands.

Pearce and Robinson (1985) confirm that the aim of any managerial approach is minimization of the impact of the above highlighted challenges, vis a vis, improved performance. This is true of strategic management systems with a major impact on both the formulation and implementation of plans.

The concept of formal Strategic planning has been a debatable subject by academics, managers and consultants alike for a long time. Some writers argue for strategy while others insist that strategy does not have any bearing on performance. Several research studies have indicated that formalised

approaches to strategy formulation result in high performance measures in an organisation (Hofer & Schendel, 1982). Hofer and Schendel's assertions are supported by the following studies:

- 1) In a study of 93 U.S. manufacturing firms Ansoff et al (1970) found that formal planners who took a strategic management approach outperformed non planners in terms of financial criteria which measured sales, assets EPS and earnings growth.
- 2) Thune and House (1970) compared the performance of eighteen matched pairs of medium to large size companies in the food, drug, steel, chemical and machinery industries over a period of seven years. They found that the formal planning systems significantly outperformed the non planning system with regard to ROI, ROE, and EPS.
- 3) Herold (1972) reported replication of part of Thune and House research dealing with drug and chemical companies and his findings supported the earlier study. He, in fact suggested that the disparity between financial performance of planning and non planning firms was increasing over time.
- 4) Furthermore, Peters and Waterman Jr (1982) found that there was a positive relationship between strategic management and performance.

On the other hand, there is also reported evidence against formal strategic planning. Rue and Fulmer (1973) and Sheehan (1975), after surveying the planning practices and performances of 432 firms in three main industrial groups concluded that in service industries the non planners outperformed the planners in all instances. Sheehan's study of Canadian firms indicated that non planners outperformed planners in some instances.

Having discussed the contributions of the formal and informal planning approaches, which is then the best approach of the two? Essentially, the question regarding the approach of strategy formulation in organisations has

centered on the debate, which emphasizes the difference between deliberate and emergent or informal strategies (Mintzberg, 1990 & McHugh, 1985). Grant (2003) argues that this debate has occurred in the context of lack of empirical investigation of the phenomenon itself by concentrating on a few case examples of “dubious validity”. Further, Grant maintains that much of the debate between the “rational” and “emergent” schools has been based upon a misconception of how strategic planning works in the real world. From his investigation of the strategic planning practices of the major oil companies, Grant (2003) finds that the strategic planning systems of the international oil majors could be described as processes of “planned emergence.”

Harrington et al (2004) reached a similar conclusion “They noted that the debate between Mintzberg (1990) and Ansoff (1991) typifies the view that firms' strategy formulation processes are either deliberate or emergent”. Consequently, the norm has been to separate strategy formulation into deliberate and emergent categories. However, Harrington et al (2004) argue that it should be treated as a continuum in order to better tap into the idea that both approaches can be present in organisations.

From their empirical findings, they conclude that because dynamism and its associated uncertainty are on a continuum, managers do not have an either/or approach to strategy formulation they are cognizant of the environment and they respond by manipulating the strategy formulation process. Further, Andersen (2004)'s findings demonstrate that decentralised strategic emergence, where relatively autonomous managers are empowered to take initiatives of potential strategic consequences, and strategic planning activities that integrate diverse market experiences and coordinate strategic actions are both important to achieve superior performance.

Based on the evidence available, organisations that adopt a strategic management approach do so with conviction that the system will lead to improved performance. If strategy is important, its formulation should therefore be managed and not left to chance. According to several authors including Teulier & Rouleau (2013); Rouleau & Balogun (2011); Porter (1980), Mintzberg (1998), Grant (2003) and (Johnson *et al*, 2008), merits of strategic management can be summarised as follows:

- a) Aids in the formulation of organisational goals and objectives. The strategy formulation process can be used to evaluate whether or not the objectives established are achievable given the resources of the organisation, the nature of the organisation and the environment.
- b) Assists in the training of future managers. One most effective ways to expose promising managers to the types of problems and issues with which they will have to deal when they become managers is to involve them in the strategy formulation process.
- c) Helps identify important organisational strategic issues. Johnson et al (2006) indicated that the process of strategy formulation involves conducting a situational analysis which identifies challenges facing the organization. Thus one important function of strategy formulation is to identify the major strategic issues that will face the organisation in the future.
- d) Helps facilitate the allocation of resources. Traditionally, organisations use financial accounting techniques, e.g., Net Present Value (NPV), Return On Investment (ROI) to allocate capital resources in organisations. These techniques tend to have several implications that restrict their value in allocating organisations' strategic resources. Furthermore, they usually do not cover the allocation of discretionary managed expenses even though the level of these expenses is often as large as an organisation's capital Budget (Berg, 1965) cited by Hofer and Schendel (1978). Thus the strategy formulation process assists in allocation of these important organisational resources.
- e) Helps guide and integrate the diverse administrative and operating activities of the organization. Strategy formulation is becoming more and more important in organizations in this modern and global environment. Without the integration that strategy provides, sub-units objectives will begin to take precedence over total organisational objectives.

2.4.1 Leadership and Governance in Higher Education Institutions

Over the past decades, HEIs in Africa have been increasingly held accountable for measurable outcomes. Increase in competition for limited and scarce government resources, and, a decrease in the public trust in higher education, conduct of business, has resulted in demands for these institutions to be more accountable, effective and efficient. The changes in the academic terrain have led to the need to review HEI operations in the entire value chain system including governance, funding, teaching, learning, research (Rothwell, 2002; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; Ramsden 1998). HEIs are compelled to be always in the know of current situations so that appropriate anticipation can be made to cater for the effects of anticipated change. Horder (2000) cited in Shamsuddin et al (2012) proposed that institutional leadership must not only observe and monitor the evolving external factors, but introduce strategic responses to strengthen and prepare the relevant functional units in the face of changes.

The changes taking place in HEIs therefore call for a more efficient and effective organisational leadership capable of managing and governing in these difficult times. The extant literature reviewed show that there is little known about the impact of Leadership in performance of HEIs (Bijandi et al, 2012). However, other studies have acknowledged that where they found good universities, they would find good leaders (see e.g Dinham, 2005 and Nahavandi, 2009). Conversely, other authors such as Montez et al (2003) and Jackson & Lund (2000) based on their studies, claimed that it has been difficult to construct a description of university leadership, which goes beyond common heuristics grounded in everyday practice.

Governance is the process of decision making within an institution which enable an institution to set its policies and objectives to achieve them and to monitor its progress towards their achievement (Moses, 2006). Ngambi & Nthoesane (2013) and Simplicio (2006) propose that governance refers to the mechanisms whereby those who have been given the responsibility and authority to pursue those policies and objectives are held accountable.

Gayle et al (2004) cited in Ngambi & Nthoesane (2013) argue that effective governance is not easy to achieve. They suggest that there are a number of challenges to effective governance in HEIs which include:

- a) Too many constituencies at the academic table with conflicting agendas and man-dates like identifying who client is or who should ultimately be given the power to decide.
- b) Differing philosophical views on the extent of inclusiveness and depth of consultation with employees and
- c) Differences in perspectives between students, staff, trustees and administration.

More so, the shadows of corporate scandals such as Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and other companies in the United States (Sendjaya 2008), the financial crisis in Greece and the Cashgate scandal in Malawi, raise pertinent questions regarding governance and the quality of leadership. The worldwide economic crisis erupting in mid-2008 for instance, has challenged organizational scholars to question deeply held assumptions about effective business strategy and to define new models of ethical leadership that can more adequately respond to the demands of a profoundly interdependent global society. Furthermore, the decrease in public trust in HEIs, call for improvements in governance as well as leadership. Therefore successful strategic management vis a vis improved performance of HEIs calls for improved governance and strong organisational leaders.

Leadership is a process of interaction between leaders and followers where the leader attempts to influence followers to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010; Yukl, 2005). According to Chen and Silverstone (2005), previous studies on leadership have identified different types of leadership styles which leaders adopt in managing organizations (e.g., Davis, 2003; Hayward and Peterson 2007; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Hirtz, Murray, & Riordam, 2007). Among the more prominent leadership styles are Burns' (1978) transactional and transformational leadership styles and GreenLeaf's Servant Leadership.

Transformational leadership is the ability to motivate and encourage intellectual stimulation through inspiration (Avolio et al., 2004; Dvir et al., 2002). Transformational leaders inspire followers to exert effort beyond self-interest in favour of collective group accomplishments (Berson and Avolio, 2004). Transformational leaders influence followers to achieve goals, and increase confidence, commitment, and job performance (Bono and Judge 2003) cited in Schneider and George (2010). Peters and Waterman (1982) claim that transformational leaders throw themselves into a relationship with followers who feel elevated.

Burns (1978) was the first scholar to distinguish between transactional leaders, those who attempt to satisfy the current needs of their followers by focusing attention on exchanges, and transformational leaders who try to raise the needs of followers and promote dramatic changes of individuals, groups and organizations. Based on transactional leadership theory, a leader focuses on having internal actors perform the tasks required for the organization to reach its desired goals. In doing this, the objective of the transactional leader is:

- a) to ensure that the path to goal attainment is clearly understood by the internal actors;
- b) to remove potential barriers within the system; and
- c) to motivate the actors to achieve the predetermined goals (House, 1971).

Put simply, transactional leadership focuses on the business of getting things done. According to Bass (1985), transactional leadership is postulated to result in followers achieving a negotiated level of performance. In this regard, both the leader and the follower agree on what the follower will receive for achieving the negotiated level of performance. However, organizational leadership consists of more than reacting to crisis and fulfilling basic needs. Leadership also depends on individuals accomplishing tasks and activities in a way that improves the contribution of the overall objective of the organization. In this context, leadership is perceived as a transformational process focusing on the mutual needs, aspirations and values that produce positive organizational change and results beyond expectations.

The term servant leadership was coined by Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) in his seminal work “The Servant as Leader,” first published in 1970:

“The Servant-Leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. . . . The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed?” (Greenleaf 1977,p 7).

Servant leaders encourage followers to intelligently grow, be creative, self-manage and serve people. This leads to the betterment of society and advocates acceptance, tolerance, empathy, love, forgiveness, and adherence to the Golden Rule of “do unto others as you shall have them do unto you”

Ehrhart (2004) proposed that servant leadership involves two main constructs: ethical behavior and concern for subordinates. Thus the servant leader behaves ethically, and encourages and empowers subordinates to grow and success both personally and professionally. He further proposes that servant leadership and transformational leadership share many similar characteristics. However the focus of servant leadership is not only to achieve organisational and personal goals but also to accept a moral responsibility to serve all stakeholders.

The need for more accountability and the need to build public trust call for HEIs to adopt a Servant Leadership philosophy. This has been supported by many authors such as Sendjaya et al (2008) and Kakabadse et al (2010).

2.5 STRATEGY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Literature on strategy is filled with so many tools and techniques which managers or strategists use in formulating strategy. According to Knott (2007) strategy tools or techniques encompass the full range of concepts, ideas, and

techniques and approaches that structure or influence strategy activity. Specifically strategy tools are those concepts and techniques used by managers in the decision making process (Gunn & Williams, 2007). Stenfors and Tanner (2007) cited in Hutchinson (2008) emphasised that using strategy tools can help bring awareness in both a practical and contextual form which fosters more effective strategies to be developed and implemented.

Some of the well known tools are: Porter's Five Forces Model, Scenario Planning, Core Competences, Porter's Generic Strategy Model, SWOT Analysis, Value Chain, and Mackinsey's 7 S frameworks are some of the commonly used management tools in strategy (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2008; Johnson et al, 2008). Strategists select tools based on the given task; some tools are better suited to some strategy tasks than others.

2.5.1.1 Porters Generic Model

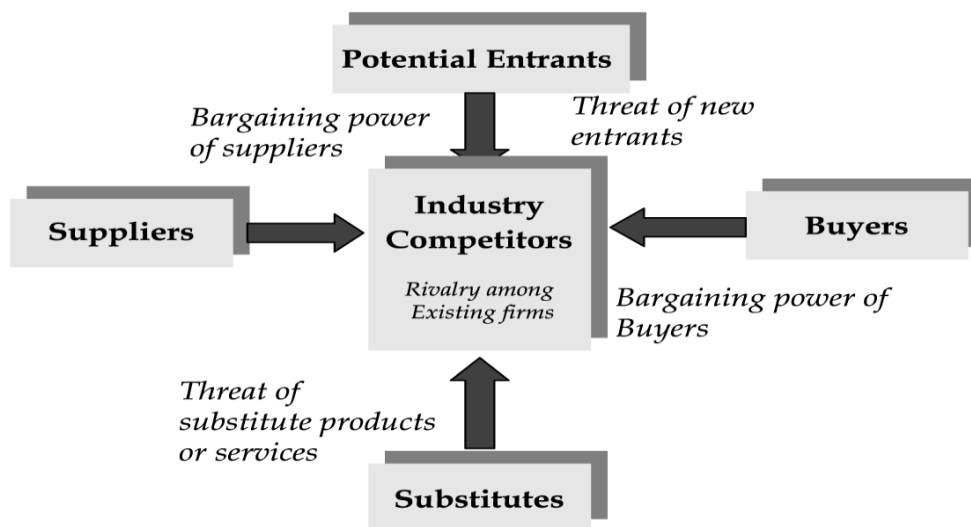
Three generic strategies have been presented by Porter (1980) for improving the competitive position of an organisation: cost leadership, differentiation and focus. Porter (1980) argues that an organisation will have to make a choice between these generic strategies if it is to achieve a competitive advantage. This is to say the organisation will either have to keep its costs lower than its competitors or differentiate its offerings so that they are perceived as providing higher value when compared with offerings of competitors. The implication in HEIs is that with the public nature of most HEIs, the choice of generic strategy undertaken will have a great impact on competitiveness.

2.5.1.2 Porters Five Forces Model

Inherent within the notion of strategy is the issue of competitiveness (Johnson et al 2008). While in business, this is about gaining advantage over competitors; in the public sector, it could be demonstrable excellence within a sector, or advantage in the procurement of resources, efficiency in management of Human Resources (HR), Having strict financial controls and prudent use of resources. The Five Forces Model helps organisations identify the sources of competition in an industry or sector. Johnson et al (2008) argues that often times, managers take too parochial a view as to the sources of competition,

usually focusing their attention on direct competitive rivals yet there are many other factors in the environment which influence competitiveness. For example, public universities might not be aware that Technical Colleges are their competitors for both funding from the government as well as students from the environment. Figure 2-2 shows the model.

Figure 2-2 The Five Forces Model: (Porter, 1980)



Another technique which is used in strategic management is the Value Chain model. This describes activities within and around an organisation which together create a product or service. It is the cost of these value activities and the value that they deliver which determines whether or not best value products or services are developed (Porter, 1980).

When formulating strategy, HEI managers should therefore take cognizance of activities within the organization that they are good and not good at. For example, a HEI can outsource activities that are not part of the core business such as: security, cleaning, landscaping, to concentrate on teaching, research and consultancies. In outsourcing non core functions, the HEIs can dedicate more effort in core functions that would add value to the system.

2.5.1.3 Other Strategic Management Tools and Models

There are many other SM tools, techniques and models that are used in formulating strategy, such as SWOT Analysis, Balance Score Card, Scenario Planning, BCG Matrix, and Stakeholder Mapping.

Rigby (2005) observed that many managers believe that several strategy tools promise more than they deliver. Given that, every strategy tool has its own strengths and weaknesses, positive benefits can only be achieved if users understand the effects (and side effects) of each tool then combine the right tools in the right way at the right times. Furthermore, Rigby (2005) agrees with Frost (2003) in confirming that there is need for a wider understanding of the tools available and their application to strategy development if organisations are to benefit from the tools.

Hutchinson (2008) contends that knowing which tool to use and when to use them is more helpful than just using variety of tools. Thus, it can be argued that while strategy tool usage can deliver favorable results, the inability to differentiate the significance of a given tool at a given time can result in adverse effects. They go further to suggest that managers' cognitive ability plays a vital role in the success of strategy tool utilization. Mintzberg (1994) noted that the flaws and limitations of some of these tools are a result of the shortsightedness of the people using the tools and not the tools in themselves. It is important, therefore, that managers involved in strategic planning should have a clear understanding of the different tools in the field of strategic management as this has an influence on actual performance. The tools and frameworks developed can still be employed for generating knowledge which may be used in the formulation and implementation of strategies.

2.5.2 Critical Success Factors for Strategic Management

Businesses are now viewing SM as a critical success factor in today's global village. Formulating and Implementing well thought- through strategies is crucial for the survival of today's organisations. Successful SM must be founded on careful analysis of an organisation's value chain through the use of available tools and frameworks. Ohmae (1982) supports the above assertions and

advises that successful business strategies do not result from rigorous analysis but from creativity, insight, and a consequent drive for achievement.

Several authors have suggested different critical factors for successful SM. Hussey (1997) for example indentified five areas of critical importance in successful strategic management, these include: capabilities of decision leaders, creative dimension to strategic thinking, quality of analysis, the process and systems that affect how strategic decisions are taken and an obsession with implementation. Hussey (1997) joins Hutchinson (2008) in acknowledging that deficiencies in any of these areas may have negative repercussions in the process of strategic management.

Hay and Williamson (1998) cited in Zarkesh (2008) asked various people in organisations what they thought should go into a successful strategy; the following responses were obtained;

1. Inspirational goals for people to aim for.
2. Linkage of tasks between groups so they work together.
3. Guidelines for individual decisions and prioritizing.
4. Freeing individuals by reviewing critical and non critical constraints.
5. Establishing a common language that everyone can understand.

Managers should therefore ensure that all these factors are dealt with when formulating strategy; otherwise any deficiencies would lead to strategic drift that is failure to implement formulated strategies. For the purpose of this thesis, all the factors identified in the literature revealed are important for successful formulation and implementation of strategy.

2.6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DIMENSIONS PROCESSES AND CONCEPTS

The literature on Strategic Management suggests several approaches of studying the field of strategy. In this study, for the purpose of achieving the aims, the literature review focused on Strategy Dimensions and Strategic Management Processes. This approach was based on the aim of the study.

2.6.1 Strategy Dimensions

Many authors, including De Wit and Meyer (2004), Chakravarthy and Doz (1992) and Mintzberg et al (2003) assert that Strategic Management studies can be divided into three different subfields: strategy content research, strategy process research and strategy context research. The first one focuses on the strategic position of the firm, the second one studies the administrative systems while strategy process focuses on decision-making processes within the organisation. De Wit and Meyer (2004) summarise the dimensions of strategic management as in table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Dimensions of strategic management after De Wit and Meyer (2004)

Strategy Dimension	Description
Strategy Process	The manner in which strategies come about. This is concerned with the how, who and when of strategy: how is and should, strategy be made, analysed, dreamt-up, formulated, changed and controlled; who is involved; and when do the necessary activities take place.
Strategy Content	This is the product of a strategy process. It is concerned with what of strategy: what is, and should be, the strategy for the company and each of its constituent units.
Strategy Context	This is the set of circumstances under which both strategy process and the strategy content are determined. It is concerned with the where of strategy: where (that is in which firm and which environment) are the strategy process and strategy content embedded.

Unlike the two other branches of study, strategy process research addresses the behavioral issues of individuals, groups, and organizational units (Hirsch, 1991; Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992). Even if strategy process research itself is not a cohesive discipline, the field is fragmented into different perspectives. Neither is the classification into three subfields unambiguous; for example, many traditional strategy scholars such as Choo (1992) and Bryson (1995) divide the strategy process into different phases; environmental analysis, formulation of vision and strategy, implementation and control), although this is not the kind of strategy process research defined by Hirsch (1991).

De Wit and Meyer (2004) agree with Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) and Ketchen et al (1996) in confirming that the three dimensions interact, such that the manner in which strategy process is organised will have a significant impact on the resulting content, while likewise, the content of the current strategy will strongly influence the way in which the strategy process will be conducted in the future. Mintzberg (1990) sees the inter-relationship among the three dimensions significant such that a consideration of the content of strategy in the absence of the strategic process means that only a limited view is obtained. Barnes (2001) argues that firms should determine the content and the process of their strategies in the light of their position in the industry and their objectives, opportunities and resources. For example, the University of Malawi developed its second ever Strategic Plan in 2011. The content of the first five year Plan influenced the process taken in developing the second plan. The introduction section of this plan for instance states that:

“The objective for revising the strategic plan was to develop a realistic and feasible five year plan that should map out where the University is headed, its short-range and long-range key performance targets and the competitive strategies and internal actions and approaches to be used in achieving the targeted results. In carrying out the exercise the process took into account the lessons learnt from the development and implementation of the first strategic plan ...” (UNIMA, 2011 p 2)

The above extract from the UNIMA strategic plan confirms the interdependences among the three dimensions.

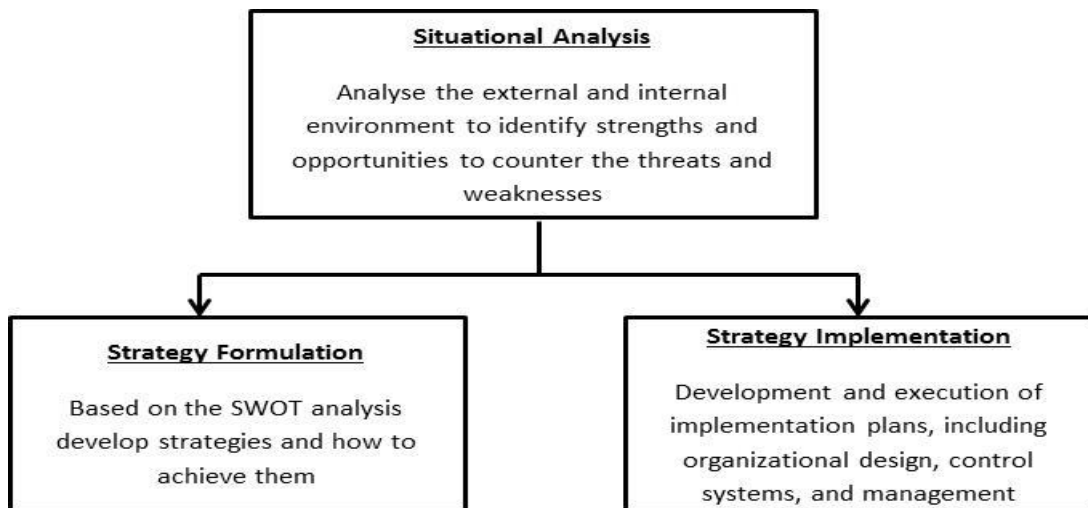
The aim of this research was to develop an integrative framework for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs which ensures sustainable competitive advantage. Such framework will focus on investigating the process of strategy formulation and implementation taking into consideration different schools of thought obtaining in the field of strategy. Thus, the strategy process dimension will be the ideal option for this study.

2.6.2 The Strategic Management Process

In their search for sources of sustainable competitive advantage, researchers and industrialists alike have realised that business performance depends not only on the formulation and successful implementation of a given strategy but also on the process by which competitive positions are created or maintained. While the strategic content explains superior performance at a given moment in time, the process by which organisations formulate and implement strategies is a prerequisite for a sustainable high level business performance.

De Wit and Meyer (2004) define Strategic Management process simply as the manner in which strategies come about. Traditionally, many authors portray the strategy process as a basically linear progression through a number of distinct steps such as strategy analysis stage, strategy formulation stage and strategy implementation stage (Figure 2-3) (Price, 2003).

Figure 2-3 Strategic Management process. Source: Author



This study aims at developing a Strategic management framework which integrates Formulation and Implementation. The aim calls for in-depth understanding of different processes and approaches to strategy formulation and implementation. The following sections explore different approaches to strategy formulation and implementation.

2.6.3 Strategy Formulation

Several authors including Rouleau & Balogun (2011); Grant (2003); Porter (1980) and Quinn and Ghoshal (1999) define strategy formulation as the process through which an organisation's strategy is developed. It comprises defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies and setting policy guidelines. Other authors such as Wittington (1993) and Mintzberg et al (1998) have divided strategy formulation into two: strategy formulation approaches and strategy formulation processes.

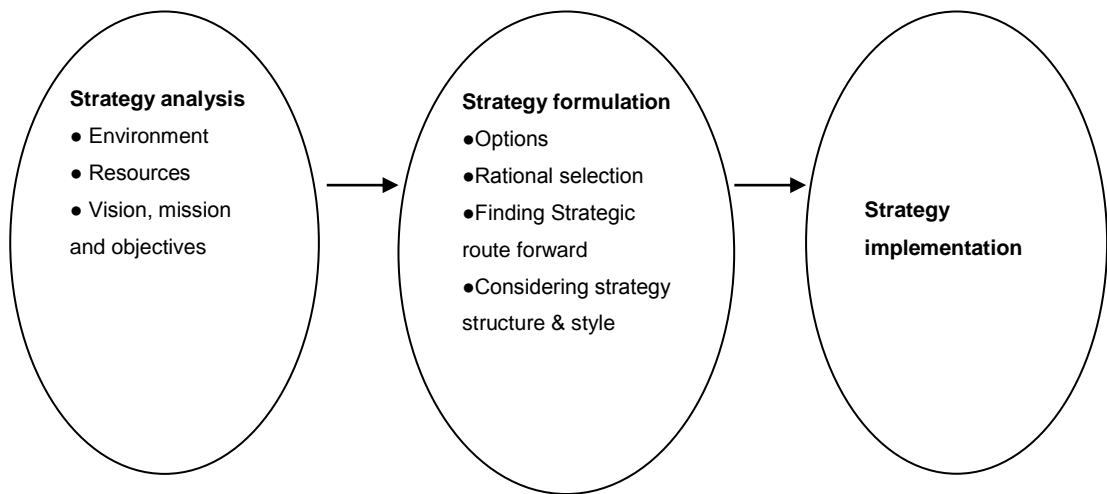
This study has adopted Mintzberg et al (1998)'s approach which views strategy formulation from two perspectives; the strategy formulation approaches and strategy formulation processes.

2.6.3.1 Strategy Formulation Approaches.

Theoretical views on the approaches to strategy formulation fall into two distinct groups: Rational and Emergent approaches (Salih & Doll, 2013; Grant, 2003; Mintzberg et al, 1998). The rational approach is based on the view that

organisations adjust to changes in their environment by making rational decisions and choices based on the assumptions that the environment is relatively predictable and that an organization is tightly coupled, so that all decisions made at the top can be implemented throughout the organization (Chaffee, 1985). This approach is however in contrast to the dynamic nature of the environment. Figure 2-4 depicts the rational strategy process adapted from Lynch (2000).

Figure 2-4 Rational strategy process



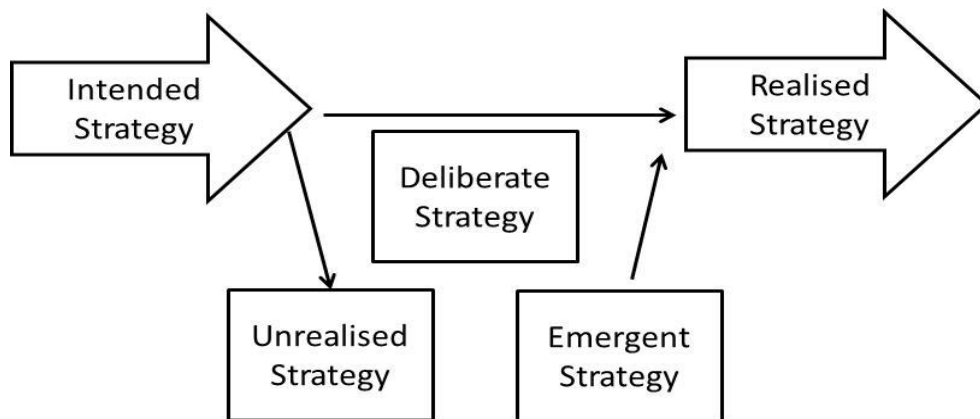
The emergent approach is based on the fact that organisations continually respond to changes by adapting, in much the same way as living organisms respond to their environments. Chaffee (1985) refers to this as the adaptive strategic model where a continual process of adjustment occurs within the organisation (either reactive or proactive) aimed at “co-alignment of the organization with its environment”. Johnson et al (2006) concurs with Chaffee’s thinking and goes on to call this logical incrementalism. This approach looks at strategy formulation as being a result of everyday routines, activities and processes in organisations drawing impetus from the argument that to take decisions, managers rely on a company’s culture, politics and routines, rather than on a rational process of analysis and choice.

2.6.3.1.1 Deliberate and Realized Strategy

The Literature review reveals that strategies can either be deliberate or realised. Mintzberg (1994) contends that strategies are intentional and their

implementation is deliberate before they become realised. (Refer to Figure 2-5) The intentional strategies that are not realised are thus discarded. It is rarely possible to realise intended strategies completely, and so the realised strategies normally diverge to a greater or lesser extent from the intended strategies (Pun, 2004). Furthermore, in some cases organisations do not have any specified intended strategy. The realised strategy is thus, the product of many different decisions taken individually. Therefore, strategies may be unintentional or emergent, that is they simply emerge from the things that a firm does (Maloney, 1997).

Figure 2-5 Realised and Intended strategies: Mintzberg and Waters (1985)



Yee (2012) believes that strategy formulation differs over time and that it is contextual. He notices that different organisations use different processes dependent on different contexts. For example, Senior Managers in some organisations believe that strategy formulation is more intended than emergent. On the other hand, Scholes (1994) agrees with Collier et al (2001) in opining that managers in public sector organisations tend to view strategy as externally imposed more than managers in the private sector. These discerning views between managers in public and private sector organisations contribute to the complexity of the field of strategic management.

The implications for the two approaches to strategy formulation are that different organizations select appropriate approaches based on different factors like the nature of the environment, organisational politics and culture as well as the industry type. As the review will reveal, public organisations lean more towards

the rational processes by nature of their establishment compared to the private sector (Scholes, 1994).

2.6.3.2 Strategy Formulation Processes

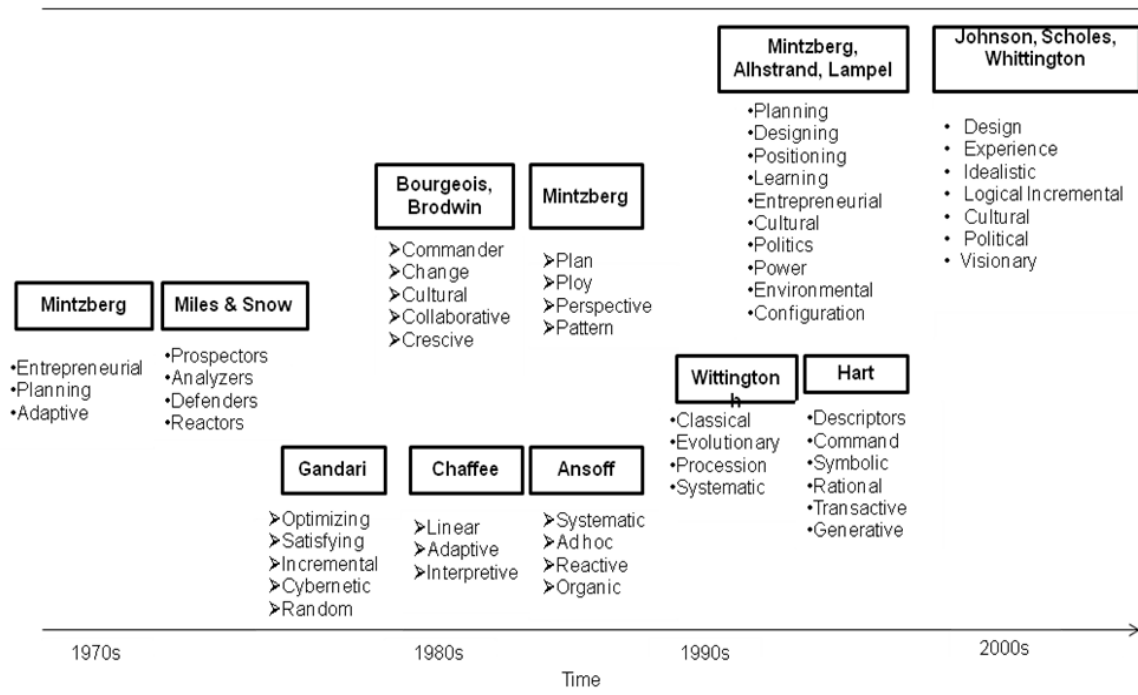
Different researchers have offered different interpretations on strategy formulation processes. As noted earlier, strategy formulation processes are methods and practices organisations use to interpret opportunities and threats and make decisions about the effective use of skills and resources. Here the two key factors affecting the strategy making process are the environmental factors and internal resources. This definition portrays a simplistic view that strategy formulation is a straightforward process where the steps involved in the process are well defined. This definition closely matches the definitions posted by Andrews (1980) and Chandler (1962) summarized in table 2-1.

Several authors have proposed different strategy formulation processes. For example, a categorisation of processes to strategy formulation has been proposed by Whittington (1993), who has suggested that there are four generic approaches to strategy formulation, see Figure 2-6.

Johnson et al (2008) have identified six lenses in which strategy develops in organisations. They however, warn managers not to view strategy development from one lens, as this may result in failure to see issues raised by the other lenses. Mintzberg et al (1998) support the above assertion by not recommending any method, in their ten schools of strategy formulation, as the most preferred one.

Hart (1992) has come up with a process that comprises five elements namely Command, Symbolic, Rational, Transactive and Generative (See Table 2-6). He looks at the contrasting roles top managers and organisational members play and use these to develop an integrative framework. He further agrees with Mintzberg (1998) that in relatively stable environments his two modes (Command and Rational) which he equates to Mintzberg et al (1998)'s Prescriptive schools work well in relatively stable environments.

Figure 2-6 Selected Strategic Management Models Source: Author



development in the field of strategy process and demonstrates the nature of its complexity. Drawing on previous studies by different writers such as Senge, Ansoff (1970), Porter (1980), Chandler (1962), Andrews (1980) and Mintzberg et al (1998) came up with a model (Ten Schools) on how strategy develops in organisations (See fig 2-6). Each of the ten schools critically looks at how strategy is formulated. Despite Mintzberg remaining ambiguous by not recommending a school of thought for an organisation, the author considers the ten schools to be a good reference point on how strategy can be formed in an organisation.

Veetil (2008) suggests that there is still room for in-depth research to establish whether the different schools represent different processes to strategy formation or different parts of the same process. Mintzberg et al (1998) is aware of the complexity associated with the field of strategy and has presented strategy process as a phenomenon which is extremely difficult to perceive. While conducting such an empirical study it becomes difficult to operationalise strategy formulation process because of its complexities (Veetil, 2008). It is, therefore, important to clearly define the dimensions of process to focus on during the operationalisation. Figure 2-6 depicts selected Strategic Management Models proposed by different authors.

Some authors, such as Johnson et al (2011) and Ansoff (1991), contend that strategic planning (planning school) generally results in better alignment and financial performance than trial and error methods. For example, the learning school proponents have challenged the above assertions, arguing that strategic planning causes too much rigidity (Mintzberg et al, 1998).

Despite Mintzberg et al (1998) not recommending any model out of the ten schools, for the purpose of this study, the planning school is adopted. It takes into account the nature of the Higher Education Institutions.

2.6.4 Strategy Implementation

The previous section explored the different concepts on strategy formulation. This section defines and discusses strategy implementation.

Pearce and Robinson (1985) and Bourgeois (1980) define strategy implementation as the process where organisations translate the strategies formulated into action. Pearce and Robinson (1985) emphasise that strategy must be translated into concrete action, and that action must be carefully implemented, otherwise accomplishment when left to chance leads into failure to achieve intended outcomes vis a vis strategic drift.

Paroutis et al (2013) and Noble & Mokwa (1999) believe that strategy implementation provides the critical link between formulation and superior organization performance. This view is supported by Schaap (2012); Cocks (2010) and Johnson et al (2009) who contend that strategy implementation signal a critical new phase in the strategic management process of translating strategic thought into strategic action.

Despite strategy implementation being equally important compared to formulation in the search for superior organisation performance, there is overwhelming evidence in literature (e.g Okumus 2003; Alexander, 1985) to suggest that the former has not only been neglected but it is also not an easy task. Furthermore, numerous studies including Alexander (1985), Dandira (2011) and Okumus (2000) acknowledge that strategies frequently fail not

because of inadequate strategy formulation, but because of insufficient implementation.

Furthermore, there is growing recognition that most important problems in the field of strategic management are not related to formulation but rather to strategy implementation (Flood et al 2000).

While strategy formulation is often based on rational, objective facts and analysis, implementation is often about people, and people are not fully rational such that the domain of implementation is very different from that of formulation (Sadler, 1998). Several studies have indicated that implementation of strategy is a difficult task, but nobody, really seems to know the true rate of implementation. Candido and Santos (2008), cited in Dandira (2011), note that the difficulty of successfully implementing new business strategies has long been recognized in the literature. Salih & Doll (2013); Rouleau & Balogun (2011); Teulier & Rouleau (2013); Alexander (1985); Wernham (1985); assert that most managers believe that strategy implementation is more challenging than formulation. Alashloo et al (2005); Kazmi (2008); Wessel (1993); Alexander (1985); Shah (2005) and Wernham (1985) contend that most of barriers to strategy implementation fit into the following categories:

- a) Too many and conflicting priorities
- b) The top management team does not function well
- c) Top down management style
- d) Interfunctional conflicts
- e) Poor vertical communication
- f) Inadequate management development programmes
- g) Poor governance structures.
- h) Lack of employee and stakeholder commitment
- i) Unclear strategies
- j) Lack of resources.

Veetil (2008) summarised attributes or processes of successful implementation as in Table 2-3.

Many authors including Mintzberg et al (2003), Shah (2005) and Pearson and Robinson (1985) contend that organizations need to focus on these critical success factors in order to overcome the challenges identified earlier for effective strategy implementation vis a vis superior performance which brings about sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 2-3 Attributes or processes of successful implementation

Author(s)	Attributes
Walker & Ruekert (1987)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The degree to which business units' managers have autonomy. 2) The degree to which a unit shares functional programs and facilities with other units for achieving synergies and. 3) The manner in which corporate-level managers evaluate and reward the performance of business unit's managers.
Hambrick & Cannella, Jr (1989)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Obtain broad-based inputs and participation at the formulation stage. 2) Assess the obstacles to implementation. 3) Make early use of the levers of implementation namely resource commitments, sub-unit policies and programs, structure, people and rewards and: 4) Make the strategy acceptable to everyone in the organization and 5) Steadily, fine tune, adjust and respond as events and trends arise.
Noble & Mokwa (1999)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fit with vision. 2) Importance, 3) Scope. 4) Championing. 5) Senior management support. 6) Buy-in. 7) Role involvement, 8) Role autonomy, 9) Role significance. 10) Organisational commitment. 11) Strategy commitment. 12) Role commitment and, 13) Role performance.

Allio (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Keep the strategy simple. 2) Establish a common language. 3) Delineate roles, responsibilities timeframes 4) Devise straightforward quantitative and qualitative matrices. 5) Balance short term with longer term. 6) Be precise, use action verbs. 7) Use a common format to enhance clarity and communication. 8) Meet regularly, but in structured, time-limited sessions. 9) Anchor implementation activities in the firm's financial infrastructure: budget, matrices, rewards and, 10) Be prepared to consistently manage the implementation process.
Shah (2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sound strategy. 2) Sufficient resources. 3) Management commitment and leadership. 4) Employee understanding and commitment. 5) Financial rewards and 6. Information systems

The overarching aim of the study is to explore challenges associated with strategic management in HEIs by investigating the effect of strategy formulation and implementation in achieving organization objectives. Strategic management is a wide area of study such that it is not possible to study all the components enshrined in this field in one research project. This study will therefore focus on strategy formulation and implementation in higher education by using a case study strategy. The outcome of this project will be used to improve strategic management activities in HEIs in general.

2.6.5 Strategic Management in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

HEIs are singular, complex, and durable organisations, characterized by a multiplicity of conflicting interests and significant national differences. Worldwide, higher education is going through a period of big challenges and changes, in the midst of a profound economic crisis. Four main global forces can be identified as main global forces propelling the academic revolution (Altbach et al., 2009), these are;

- a) massification of higher education,
- b) the emergence of the knowledge economy,
- c) demographic trends and ,
- d) information and communication technologies.

It follows that academic institutions are asked by contemporary society to “do more and better with less resources” and have to find some innovative solutions to succeed despite this paradox.

Within the global scientific debate on governance and management systems in higher education, this study focuses on benefits and criticalities of the development of strategic management.

The HE sector recognizes that strategic management is necessary to maintain its own responsiveness to a rapidly changing environment (Alashloo et al, 2005; Streib & Poister, 1990, and Smith et al, 1987). The increasing importance of strategy in HE in Africa may be a result of several trends globally, such as increasing competition which has made competition to be stiff, modern and cheaper transportation and communication which has led to increasing global trade, ageing facilities, changing technology, changing demographics, rising costs and funding cuts and effects of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies which had a negative impact on HEIs in Africa, (UNESCO, 2003).

The role of strategic management in Universities can be examined through the use of a simple strategic management process model presented in the figure 2-7 referred to earlier. This is necessary because despite most strategists and writers on management being academicians from universities which mostly are public institutions, there has not been in-depth research carried out on strategic management in public organisations, (Bryson, 1988; Duncan, 1990 and Wilson, 1990).

Therefore, besides the research available on strategy in HEIs, previous research on strategic management in private sector organisations will be adapted to the context of Higher Education Institutions. The adaptation draws impetus from the fact that public organisations (Universities), just like private sector organisations have objectives to achieve and do exist in a competitive

environment, warranting them to engage in strategic management, Joseph et al (2007). Furthermore, since reviewed literature indicates that there are few publications on strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Africa (SARUA, 2008), available literature on strategy formulation and implementation globally will be adapted to the context of Africa. Lack of publications on strategy formulation and implementation has been an important motivator to conduct this research. Based on various authors, strategic management in HEIs can therefore be summarized in Figure 2-7.

Figure 2-7 Strategic Management process in HEI. Source: Author

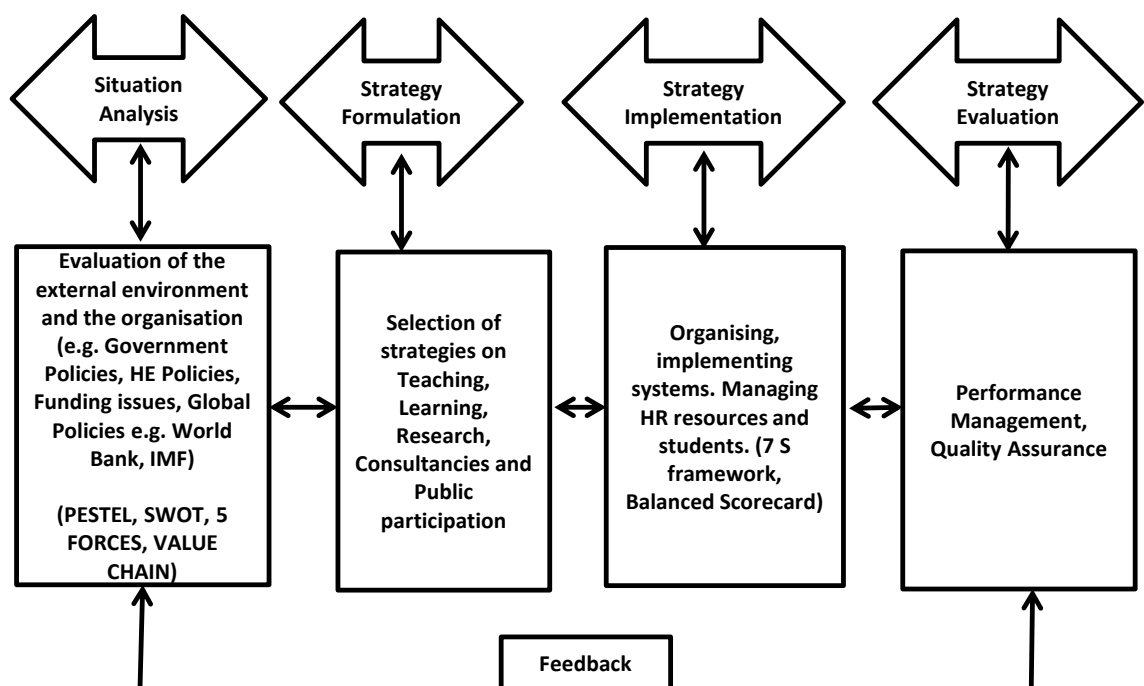


Figure 2-7 summarizes the strategic management process in a typical HEI set up. As Chadwick (1996) suggests, as universities have become increasingly accountable for the quality of their teaching and learning, alongside the quality of their research, academic staff need to improve their understanding of the long term educational processes. This is supported by SARUA (2006), AAU (2003) and UNESCO (2007) who have highlighted the importance of Strategic Management in achieving competitive advantage vis a vis superior performance.

Initial investigation has revealed that the two units of analysis in this study have adopted a rational strategic management model based on the “Planning School”

approach. The following section highlights some challenges in strategic management in HEs in Africa.

2.6.6 Strategic Management Challenges in HEIs in Africa

It has been confirmed in the literature by Porter (1980, 2011) and Mintzberg (1978, 1994, and 1998) that strategic management is a complex phenomenon. The complexity has not spared HEIs who have equally expressed concern on the complexity of the nature of strategic management. SM is a complex issue in HEIs because of a myriad of factors which include “internal” as well as “external” factors.

Internal factors include but are not limited to Leaderships, Politics, Culture, Structures and Human Resources. The organisational power and politics look at the process of negotiation between power holders within the organisation and or between the organisation and its external stakeholders (Alashloo, 2005)

Organisational power and politics call for managers to better understand the role of organised and unorganised individuals in shaping or reshaping behaviour. The notion of organisational power according to Bohnan and Deal (1997) draws impetus from the need for organisations to allocate scarce resources. Thus, power is used to negotiate influence and bargain for these scarce and limited resources within the HEI, between management and faculty and students, and outside the organisation between management and stakeholders. Power therefore has an impact on how strategies are formulated and implemented. Furthermore, politics can stimulate necessary change that is blocked by the more legitimate systems of influence. Organisational politics can also help to reduce resistance after a decision is made.

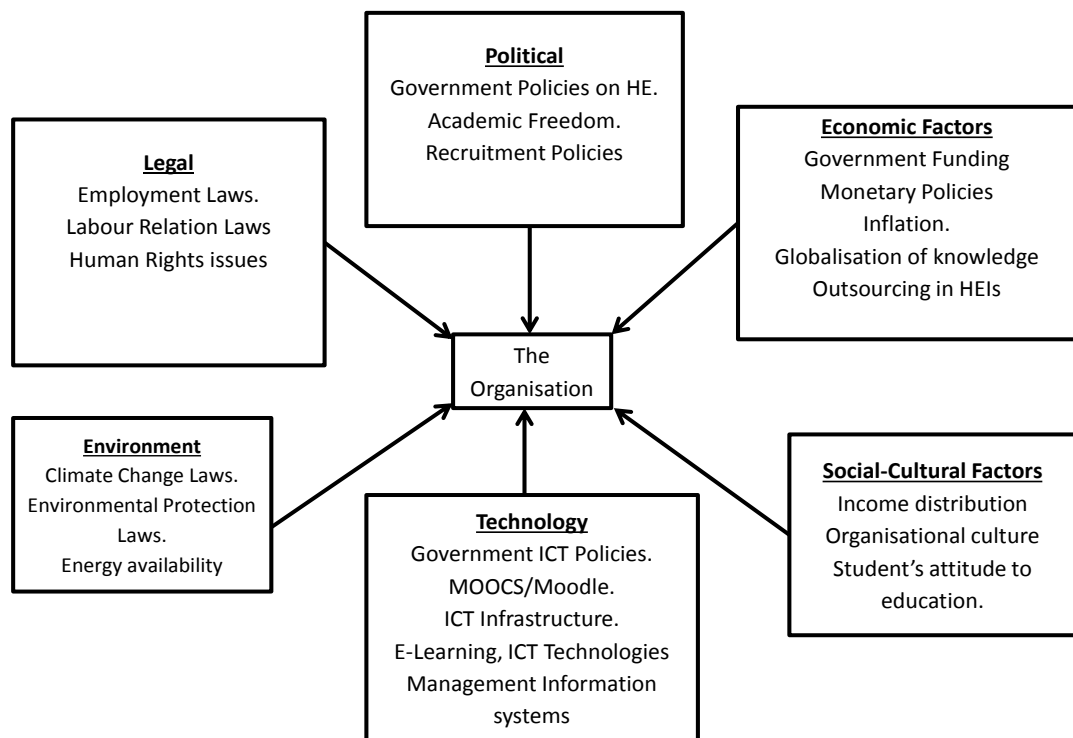
Culture is the most difficult organisational attribute to change, outlasting organisational products, services founders and leadership and all other physical attributes of the organisation (Schein, 1985). Culture stresses the role that social beliefs and values play in decision making and in strategy formulation and implementation. Culture also explains resistance to change and helps to deal with beliefs or behaviours that are dominant. On a negative side, culture can feed resistance to change and can be misused to justify the status quo.

Culture sometimes equates strategic advantage to organisational uniqueness; therefore promoting the notion that being different is good when actually it could be challenging.

People management has developed over the years into one of the most important sources of competitive advantage for organisations (Wilton, 2011). Thus management of human resources is an important ingredient for successful strategic management.

The PESTEL acronym (Political, Economical, Social-cultural, Technological Environmental and Legal) can be used to describe the external factors that influence strategic management in an organization. Figure 2-8 summarizes the six factors with examples.

Figure 2-8 PESTEL Analysis of a typical HEI.



Johnson et al (2011) insists that the PESTEL factors are not independent of each other; many are linked, For example, technological developments such as the Facebook, Twitter, Skype have changed the way that people work, their living standards as well as their lifestyles. As any of these factors changes it affects the competitive environment in which organisations operate. Higher

education Managers therefore need to understand the key drivers of change and the differential impact these external influences have on the organisation.

2.7 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

A Strategic Management framework should not only provide a logical step by step view of SM phenomena but should also help researchers study the field of SM in an organized manner. Out of the many frameworks available, most of them focus on the formulation side with very few on implementation. For instance, Okumus and Roper (1998) cited in Kazmi (2008) note that extensive research has been carried out into strategy formulation rather than into strategy implementation. Alexander (1985) opines that most authors on strategic management research have focused more on strategy formulation rather than the actual implementation of strategies.

This section describes a number of frameworks related to SM. The Strategy Implementation framework described in this thesis is developed to fill in the gaps and provide solutions to deficiencies found in the existing models.

2.7.1 A review of Strategic Management Frameworks

The term, framework, is used in a variety of situations that are often different enough to necessitate what is meant by the framework in this work (Beyh & Kagioglou, 2003). The Balanced Scorecard Institute (2005) defines a framework as a logical structure for classifying and organizing complex information. A SM framework can therefore be seen as a logical structure that must be undertaken in the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating strategy. The author modifies Elashaheb (2005)'s definition of a framework to suggest that a SM framework should be used to improve the identified deficiencies of SM found in the existing literature.

The need for a framework (or a model) is sorely felt in the case of strategy implementation (Kazmi, 2008). The reasons are obvious: it is an extremely complex set of tasks and managers need to know what are the steps to follow; what is the sequence of those steps; why all those steps are necessary; what is

more critical in those steps, and so on. Kazmi (2008) suggests that having a framework of strategy implementation in hand is like having a roadmap in alien territory. Furthermore, in the absence of a framework, managers would still implement their strategies. But they would do so thinking of what they, as individuals, think is important resulting in disjointed and conflicting actions. A framework, on the other hand, would rightly serve as a beacon to guide managers at various levels spread over different functional areas within the organisation.

2.7.2 Analysis of Some Frameworks

Over the past two decades, authors such as Bryson and Roering (1988), Pettigrew and Whipp (1993), Stonich (1982), Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984), Galbraith and Kazanjian (1986), Reed and Buckley (1988), Alexander (1991), Judson (1995), Miller and Dess (1996), and Peters et al (1980) have developed strategy formulation frameworks that consist in well defined and very important factors that guide strategy formulation and implementation. Much as these frameworks might differ in terms of the selection of formulation and implementation factors, the nomenclature given to each factor, the relative emphasis on each factor in the set, and the way how the factors get implemented, the idea that there are a set of implementation factors each significant enough to be treated separately in terms of the managerial emphasis laid on them is clear. Furthermore, these frameworks have devoted more effort on the formulation side rather than implementation. The author summarizes some of the frameworks as follows:

2.7.2.1 Bryson and Roering (1988)

They developed a model which comprises the following steps.

1. Development of a plan for planning
2. Identification of organizational mandates
3. Clarifying organizational mandates
4. External and Internal environmental assessment
5. Strategic Issue identification
6. Strategy Formulation

7. Development of a description of the organisation in the future. Its vision of success
8. Implementation
9. Strategy and planning process re- assessment

2.7.2.2 Pettigrew and Whipp (1993)

Pettigrew and Whipp (1993) encapsulate a framework of analysis to examine the importance of the strategy development process, its content and the context within which strategy is developed. This framework comprehends many aspects of strategy and the inter-relatedness of factors or determinants that affect strategy formulation and execution. The framework proposes that these factors be overlain by a multi-level approach, and this would be at the firm, sector and national context (Hutchinson, 2001).

2.7.2.3 McKinsey's 7-S Framework by Peters et al. (1980)

McKinsey's 7S-framework is one of the oldest frameworks which laid the foundation for a wide range of similar concepts. It identified seven factors that are essential for strategy implementation and managing successful organisational change. The framework is based on the assumption that a change of strategy will require a change in the organization's skills and shared values. This in turn will determine the requirements for the remaining factors. From the above framework, emphasis is on formulation as can be appreciated by the number of steps dedicated to implementation.

As we move towards more recent studies conducted in the new millennium, we find greater complexity and sophistication in terms of the identification of the implementation factors, the clarity in the inter-relationship and the impact that they have on the strategy implementation process. For instance, authors such as Wheelen and Hunger (2007), Pearce and Robinson (2007), Johnson et al (2008), stress on these aspects: organisational structure and culture that is receptive to change, elaborate building up of change management systems and skills, communication, Finance and employee commitment to vision. Table 2-4 presents a summary of some frameworks developed recently as follows:

Table 2-4 Strategic management frameworks source: Veetil (2008)

Author	Issues covered in strategy implementation
Dess et al. (2008)	Strategic control and corporate governance Creating effective organisational designs Strategic leadership: creating a learning organisation and an ethical organisation Managing innovation and fostering corporate Entrepreneurship
Okumus (2003),	Operational Planning; Resources ;Communication People; Control
Hill and Jones (2008)	Corporate performance, governance, and business, Ethics Implementing strategy in companies that compete in a single industry (organizational design, structure, strategic control systems, building distinctive competencies, restructuring and reengineering) Implementing strategy in companies that compete across industries and countries (multinational structure, entry mode and implementation, information technology
Johnson et al. (2008)	Strategy development processes; Organising for success; Resourcing strategies; Managing strategic change; The practice of strategy
Pearce and Robinson (2007)	Strategy implementation; Implementing strategy through short-term objectives, functional tactics, reward system, and employee empowerment; Structure, leadership, and culture
Thompson et al. (2008)	Building an organisation capable of good strategy; execution; Managing internal operations: actions that facilitate strategy; Corporate culture and leadership: keys to good strategy execution.
Wheelen and Hunger (2007)	Organizing for action; Staffing and directing

Author	Issues covered in strategy implementation
Alashloo et al 2005	Planning, Organisation, Management, Individuals

2.8 GAPS IN STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION LITERATURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

An in-depth review of the current literature on strategic management frameworks has identified some gaps in the literature. The author agrees with Kazmi (2008), Okumus and Ropper (1998) and Alexander (1985) in opining that only a few authors follow a well-defined framework of strategy formulation and implementation. Below are some of the gaps identified:

2.8.1 Top Down versus Bottom up Strategy Formulation and Implementation.

One of the dominant views of strategy formulation and implementation literature is to treat strategy formulation and implementation as formal and top-down process in which strategy formulation is a formal process formulated and implemented with the use of various sets of control mechanisms (Mintzberg et al, 1998; Van der Maas, 2008; Hambrick and Cannella, 1989; Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984; Hussey, 1996; Galbraith and Kazanjian, 1986). In this approach, the management team formulates the strategy and delegates implementation function throughout the rest of the organization (Van Der Maas, 2008; Wooldridge and Floyd, 1989 and Andersen, 2000). Strategic management is seen as a process in which top management develops a plan and imposes its implementation on the rest of the organization (Dandira 2008, Anderson, 2000. Many strategy frameworks have not paid adequate attention to involvement of strategy implementers (the operational staff in the process of formulation (Alashloo, 2005; Kazmi 2008).

Very few researchers such as Burgelman (1983) and Norton and Kaplan (1995) have addressed the issue of involvement of implemnetors in the process of formulation and taking a down-up approach. For example Burgelman (1983) found that strategies can also be formulated from the bottom up, without the

participation of top management. Burgelman found that strategy often results from autonomous initiatives at operational and middle levels of the organization. Furthermore, Dandira (2009) found that where operational staff and lower level managers were involved, strategic management was successful.

Successful strategy formulation and implementation should therefore focus on generating employee support and enthusiasm throughout the institution (Piderit, 2000; Dandira, 2009). This can be done through involvement of those responsible for implementation in the process of strategy formulation. For example, in a Higher Education Institution, strategy formulation is done by top management such as Vice Chancellor, Registrars, Finance Directors and Deans and in some cases Heads of Department. Rarely are Lecturers and Professors (not in management) involved in the process (UNIMA, 2008, Modebelu and Anebi 2012; UNESCO, 2004 and Atiogbe, 2012).

Therefore, a strategic plan that is developed by top management without the involvement of relevant operational employees is likely to be resisted during implementation by the affected employees. Thus by involving lower level managers and employees, top management can manage to formulate and implement strategy in which the goal alignment of the organization and employees is as high as possible (Van Der Maas, 2008). Furthermore, the employees and managers will be more motivated by their perceived self-interest than by the goals of the organization unless they coincide (Guth and MacMillan, 1986)

2.8.2 Hard versus Soft Aspects of Strategy Formulation and Implementation

A review of the strategy formulation and implementation frameworks shows that the dominant view on strategy formulation and implementation tends to focus on the “hard” and analytical aspects of formulation and implementation. The hard dimension of strategy implementation includes information analysis, evaluation, action and project plans, and monitoring and controlling (Van Der Maas, 2008;

Hussey, 1996). Pennings (1998) refers to these hard aspects as the 'hardware' of strategy implementation and these include organization structure, reward systems, and control and information systems. Because of this rational and hard focus, strategy implementation research has traditionally emphasized changes in tangible organization structures and systems (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984; Galbraith and Kazanjian, 1986; Skivington and Daft, 1991), while giving less attention to intangible or behavioral aspects. However, other researchers, such as Van der Maas (2008); Hussey (1996) and Pennings (1998) argue that behavioral and 'soft' aspects are important to strategy formulation and implementation as well. Soft or behavioral aspects include perception of information, creative thinking, structure and culture fit, power and influence fit, communication, trust and commitment, encouragement and support, performance management, management of change, human resources management, talent management, career management, learning and organisational development, ICT, power and politics and Organisational culture (Hussey, 1996).

The soft and hard aspects need to fit together if the strategy is to be successfully implemented (Hussey, 1996). There are both behavioral and analytical dimensions to the process of strategic decision-making and the subsequent implementation of a strategy (ibid). Often, 'hard, analytical processes are affected by hidden behavioral or soft considerations. Hence, attention should be given to both hard and soft aspects of implementation management and neglect of either may cause implementation failure (ibid). Thus, it appears that a broader perspective is needed to understand implementation which incorporates an understanding of the organizational context and behavioral issues as well as the more formal analytical aspects (e.g. Piercy and Morgan, 1994; Noble, 1999).

2.8.3 The Dichotomy of Strategy Formulation and Implementation

Kazmi (2008); Alashloo et al (2005); and Alexander (1991) state that the strategic management process can be compared to a two-headed coin. On one

side is strategy formulation, which defines what an organization's game plan will be to compete successfully within a specific context. The other side of the coin stands for strategy implementation, which takes the formulated strategy as given and then decides how to achieve its goals. Strategy implementation addresses the issue of how to put a formulated strategy into effect within the constraints of time, an organization's financial and human resources, and its capabilities. Consequently, these two integral parts of strategic management answer both, what the strategy shall be and how it should be put into effect.

A debate within the strategic management literature is whether strategy formulation and implementation should be treated as separate processes (Van Der Maas, 2008).

Many strategy researchers have treated strategy implementation as a separate stage after strategy formulation (Johnson et al, 2009; Hofer and Schendel, 1997; Drazin and Howard, 1993). According to Guth and MacMilan (1986) widely supported approaches to the general management task divide strategic management into strategy formulation and implementation, with the implication that general management first formulates strategy, using rational procedures, then designs an organization structure and a set of management processes to elicit organizational behavior required to implement it".

Mintzberg (1990) called the separation of strategy formulation and implementation the dichotomy of thinking and doing. Dandira (2008) agrees with Quinn et al (1988) and Hambrick and Cannella (1989) in opining that the tendency to treat strategy formulation and implementation as two separate phases is often considered to be the cause of strategic drift.

Based on the limitations of the dichotomous approach to formulation and implementation in conjunction with empirical evidence of strategy practice (Van Der Maas 2008) several scholars have argued that formulation and implementation should not be treated separately (e.g. Dandira, 2008 and Mintzberg, 1990). Moreover, Alexander (1985), Kazmi (2008), Noble (1999) and Johnson et al (2011) observe that strategy formulation and implementation are

intertwined processes and that success in both is necessary for achievement of superior organisational performance (Bonoma, 1984; Cespedes, 1991).

2.8.4 Limited Literature in Strategic Management in Higher Education Institutions

The study adapted most of the Strategic Management literature from the private sector, having observed that there are few publications on strategy formulation and implementation not only in HEIs in general but specifically in the Southern Africa region (SARUA, 2008; UNESCO, 2005 and World Bank, 2014). Furthermore, most of the frameworks reviewed have also been based on the private sector organisations. There is need for more research therefore in Strategic Management in HEIs.

Furthermore, although there is now a vast amount of literature around the strategic management process, the majority of the literature has been on the formulation side of the strategy (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002) and most of them are about private sector rather than public sector. This is the case because Strategic Management was developed initially in the private sector and spread later into public and non-profit organisations to help these types of organisations to anticipate and respond effectively to their dramatically changing environments (Bryson, 1988, p. 43; Duncan, 1990; Wilson, 1990).

Alashloo et al (2005) and Cameron (1983) note that some studies even indicate that similar types of strategies have been found across fundamentally different organisations (textbook publishing, automotive firms, hospital administration, electronics, air transportation, information-service companies, and universities) as a result of facing similar environmental conditions and despite their internal organisational differences. Therefore, the research into HE can be well informed by the research findings from other sectors. Consequently, in the theoretical underpinning of this study research results from several sectors are combined.

2.8.5 Rational versus Emergent Strategy Formulation and Implementation.

The literature review discussed two types of approaches to strategic management namely Rational and Emergent approaches (refer to section 2.6.3.1.1). According to the literature and frameworks reviewed, strategy is formulated by top management using rational procedures and the formulated strategy is implemented in a rational way (Mintzberg et al, 1998; Guth and MacMillan, 1986). However, some researchers, Mintzberg et al (1998) Andersen (2000) and Johnson et al (2009) have criticized the rational approach to strategic management.

The rational approach to strategic management assumes that during the strategic management process the world is at a standstill where there are no external factors that affect the process (Johnson et al, 2009 and Chaffee 1985). According to Johnson et al (2007), strategy formulation and implementation in organisations is not always planned or formal. It is a result of everyday routines, activities and processes. Therefore the rational versus emergent approach to strategy formulation and implementation confirms limitations that need to be addressed.

Furthermore, Floyd and Woolridge (2000) contend that the rational approach to strategy process with distinctions between strategy formulation and implementation remains the dominant perspective in strategic management. Hrebiniak and Joyce (2005) strongly criticised the notion that implementation can happen without preconceived intentions, something Mintzberg et al. (1998) and Burgelman (1983) would strongly argue against. This issue of intentionality vs. emergence remains unresolved and highlights the need to adopt a more contextualist approach towards strategy implementation research (De Wit and Meyer, 2001; Pettigrew, 1985; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1993).

2.8.6 Domination of Formulation in the Strategic Management Process

The review of the current strategic management frameworks has revealed that in most cases, strategy implementation issues are dealt with in a random manner rather than being based on a definite model. Lack of adequate effort on implementation is mentioned in the literature as one of the factors leading to strategic drift. Dandira (2011) and Alexander (1985) note that often times,

failure, when it occurs in strategic management in organisations, almost always happens during the implementation phase. Yet, strategy formulation hogs most of the attention of management and strategy thinkers while strategy implementation is sidelined. Okumus and Roper (1998) for example note that despite the importance of the strategy implementation process, far more research has been carried out into strategy formulation rather than into implementation.

Alexander (1985) observes that literature is dominated by a focus on long range planning and strategy content rather than the actual implementation of strategies, on which “little is written or researched” .This apathy to strategy implementation can be ascribed to several reasons, among them: greater likelihood of failures in implementing strategies, higher complexity in the process of strategy implementation and strategy implementation being considered to be less glamorous than formulation.

Furthermore, while there are many tools and techniques for strategy formulation, there aren't many for strategy implementation so much so that a well formulated strategy is not implemented. Additionally, while more attention and detail is paid on formulation including the fact that strategy is formulated by Senior Management with little or even no involvement of junior staff members, implementation is often times left in the operational level employees who do not have an idea about the strategy to win their commitment.

Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006) for example have also noted the dominance of formulation in the formulation and implementation dichotomy. They propose that future research should be aimed at exploring the links between implementation characteristics and outcomes whilst analysing the effect of strategy implementation on performance from a rational-mechanistic process view.

2.9 NEED TO DEVELOP AN INTEGRATIVE STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The theoretical inadequacies and challenges faced by HEIs in SM, offer enormous scope for further research in the subject. The concepts and frameworks discussed above have contributed significantly to the field of strategic management. However, there are several limitations in the context of HEIs. This has been confirmed by Okumus (2003) who has asserted that most implementation frameworks are still in the theory building stage.

Despite HEIs making great strides in Strategic Management, vis a vis, strategy formulation and implementation, the preceding section has identified gaps in the literature on how organisations can successfully implement their formulated strategies.

The inadequacies in strategic management theories raise the need for a comprehensive strategic management framework for HEIs which should address the complexities and challenges highlighted. Therefore, the SM framework to be proposed should focus on achieving the following objectives;

Comprehensive

The framework should explore and describe the important organisational factors affecting strategic management specifically focusing on HEIs but would also involve other organisations both private and public. From the literature reviewed, a number of organizational factors influencing SM in HEIs have been identified. These issues would serve as a basis in the exploration and identification of factors influencing SM in HEIs as well as in the process of developing a framework.

Simplicity and User friendliness

The literature review has revealed that there is no point in developing complicated strategy tools and techniques which are difficult to apply. The proposed framework should therefore be simple so that all those involved in strategy formulation and implementation should be able to understand and utilize. Furthermore, the framework should be user friendly.

Systematic

The proposed framework should be developed on the basis of a systematic approach. Objectivity should also be used to conduct the research and analysing findings. This rigor is appropriate for purposes of credibility and trustworthiness.

2.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A comprehensive review of literature conducted has revealed that current strategic management literature does not offer an appropriate framework for strategic management which can guide HEI managers in Malawi and the sub-sahara region to enhance performance. The gaps in the current frameworks show the progress in answering the main research question (Q) which is: *How to formulate and implement strategy in HEIs to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.*

For accomplishing this goal, a set of objectives were developed. The literature review was conducted to address the objectives. However several gaps have been identified. The gaps identified have helped derive three broad research questions to address the identified research gaps. These questions endeavor to explore and describe the fundamental factors of strategy formulation and implementation, and aid in the synthesis of the proposed SM framework. The research questions derived for this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the key factors that influence strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions in Malawi?
- 2) How is strategy formulated and implemented in HEIs in Malawi?
- 3) How best can Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy?

Through a critical evaluation of various strategic management frameworks, has identified gaps which have been highlighted. To overcome this problem, there is need to develop a conceptual framework to guide the research process. Alashloo et al (2005)'s framework for strategy implementation in HEIs in Iran is adopted for the study. There are a lot of similarities in the two countries in terms of HEIs, hence the framework is relevant and will serve as the starting point for achieving the goal of this study. The conceptual framework was used as an

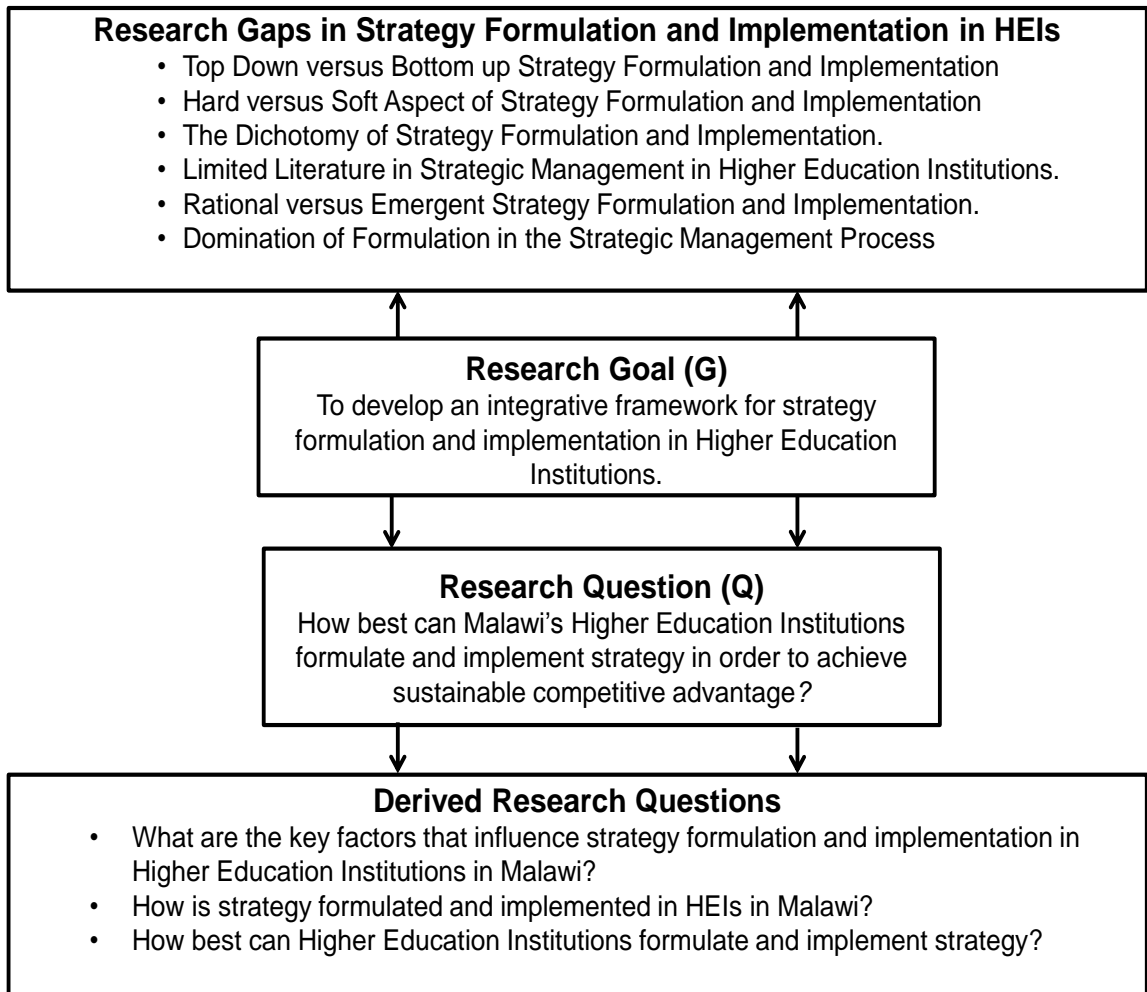
organizing framework and provided a basis for the exploratory empirical investigation. It was used as a way of making sense of what was seen, and presenting the findings in an organized manner. The framework was used to explore factors having an influence on strategy formulation and implementation performance.

For enhancing this framework, empirical data was collected through appropriate research methods. The following chapter will provide an evaluative discussion about the methods available for gathering data and based on that discussion appropriate data collection methods would be chosen for conducting this research.

2.11 LINKING THE RESEARCH GAPS ON STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION WITH THE RESEARCH AIM, THE RESEARCH FOCUS AND THE DERIVED RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Amjad (2008) and Suddaby (2006) opine that a good research study should aim at linking the research gaps with the research aim and the derived research questions. Table 2-5 presents the link between the research gaps regarding strategy formulation and implementation with the research aim, the research focus and the derived research questions that enable this research thesis to offer a contribution to existing knowledge.

Table 2-5 Linking Research aim, focus and questions with strategy formulation and implementation



Each research question is briefly discussed hereunder to clearly establish the boundaries for research and subsequent analysis.

RQ1 What are the key factors that influence strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions in Malawi?

This question responds to the calls by Johnson et al (2007); Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006) and Li et al. (2010) on how strategy should be formulated and various factors that influence the processes. Limited research however, exists to understand how public institutions let alone HEIs should formulate and implement strategy (Alashloo et al, 2005)

RQ2 How is strategy formulated and implemented in HEIs in Malawi?

The literature review has identified gaps in literature of formulation and implementation of strategy in HEIs in general. This question aims exploring how

HEIs in Malawi management the strategic management process. This question has been necessitated by the lack of research on strategic management in HEIs in not only HEIs but the Sub-Sahara region. The foregoing has been confirmed by SARUA (2009), UNESCO (2012) and the World Bank (2014). Through investigating what is currently obtaining in the HEIs in Malawi will help the researcher in identifying the gaps and developing the strategy formulation and implementation framework.

RQ3 How best can Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy?

There is limited literature on how HEIs should formulate and implement strategy (Alashloo et al, 2005; Kazmi, 2008; SARUA, 2012) as discussed in the previous section. The research questions 1 and 2 provides the baseline information for the development of the strategy formulation and implementation framework. The framework to be developed will help address how strategy should be formulated and implemented in HEIs.

There is no current research study with an explicit investigation of how strategy is formulated and implemented in HEIs in Malawi and the Sub- Sahara region (An African context). It is argued here that this investigation will provide insights into how managers manage the processes of strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs.

2.12 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a critical review of literature for this study. An overview of strategic management was presented together with definitions of strategy and strategy related terms and concepts. Based on the literature review, working definitions are derived for the purpose of this study. An in-depth analysis of the available strategic management models, concepts and frameworks has shown the need for a comprehensive and all-encompassing strategic management framework for HEIs. In the conclusion of the chapter, three research questions were derived to address the research problem for this study.

Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the methodology used to fulfil the proposed research aim and answer to the derived research questions. It is based on a discussion of various research paradigms and their underlying ontological and epistemological underpinings. These ontological and epistemological commitments provide the basis for addressing the research question, derived questions and the aim of this study. By analysing these philosophical underpinings, the researcher argues that informed by interpretivist ontology and epistemology, a multimethod approach (case study for data collection and grounded theory for data analysis) was the appropriate methodology for fulfilling the objectives of this study. This chapter therefore explains in detail the research methodology that was used in the study. It explains what was done, how it was done and provides reasons about why it was done using the particular approach described.

3.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT RESEARCH: PROBLEM, GOAL, QUESTIONS

The literature reviewed has revealed no specific methodologies on how to conduct research in strategic management to the research context of this study that is HEIs. Nevertheless, the nature of this inquiry, coupled with the researcher's understanding of how knowledge develops and the nature of reality (truth commitments) has provided insights on how the research should be undertaken.

Kandadi (2006) draws on work by Denzin and Lincoln (2000); Silverman (2005) and Yin (2002) to propose that the choice of the research methodology depends on the problem to be solved and the research questions to be asked. Saunders et al (2003) goes further to argue that there is no best tradition in terms of bringing best results among the available research approaches. The choice of which tradition to use depends on the context of the study and the nature of the questions being asked.

Shih (1998) expands this idea and lists four areas for consideration when deciding on a research philosophy: the philosophical paradigm and goal of the research; the nature of the phenomenon of interest; the level and nature of the research questions; and practical considerations related to the research environment and the efficient use of resources.

From the above, it can be summarized that knowing what you want to find out will lead to asking right questions to get the intended information. The foregoing prompts us to review the research problem, the goal and the questions for this study. The research question (Q) is stated as:

“How best can Malawi’s Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage?”

A review of the existing literature reveals that current SM concepts, theories and frameworks were insufficient to address the above problem as most of the available frameworks focused more on strategy formulation with very few focusing on neither implementation nor the formulation and implementation continuum. Furthermore, most literature has focused on private organizations with very few on Higher Education Institutions (SARUA, 2008). Therefore, the following goal (G) for this study has been defined:

“To develop an integrative framework for effective strategy formulation and implementation in Malawian HEIs by identifying key success factors for strategy formulation and implementation.”

Achieving these objectives will ideally solve the research problem. However, to develop the framework, the research will need to address the limitations in the SM theory identified through the review and in practice. Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework and three broad research questions were constructed to help address the identified research limitations and inadequacies. Creswell (2002) presupposes that in a phenomenological study there may be up to seven sub-questions. The next step involves selecting the appropriate research philosophy or paradigm.

3.3 PHILOSOPHIES UNDERPINNING THE CHOICE OF THE STUDY’S

RESEARCH STRATEGIES.

For most people, at a day to day level, truth in their undertakings is determined by common sense. No one really cares about philosophical underpinnings and paradigms and how these can be used to analyse and help in understanding the nature of reality and existence. They are not aware that these can be used to analyse and bring some understanding to their worlds.

For a researcher, It is important that at the beginning of any research work, they should decide on an appropriate starting point for undertaking the research, and on an overall strategy within which the evidence will be collected (Remenyi, 2002). Therefore, prior to embarking on the journey of studying and exploring the influence of strategy formulation and implementation in achieving competitive advantage in HEIs, it is inevitable to first of all engage in a critical discussion of philosophical discourses that underpin the notion of research knowledge and truth.

Chari (2007) agrees with Greene & Carcelli (1997) in confirming that every researcher brings to their research “a set of interlocking philosophical assumptions and stances” Therefore they should be explicit about the philosophical assumptions underlying their research (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). These assumptions are also termed paradigms or worldviews. However, the term paradigm has been used quite loosely in academic research and can mean different things to different people (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Morgan (1979) suggests that the term can be used at three different levels.

- a) At the philosophical level it is used to reflect basic beliefs about the world.
- b) At the social level it is used to provide guidelines about how the researcher should conduct his or her endeavours
- c) At the technical level, it is used to specify the methods and techniques which ideally should be adopted when conducting research.

However, it is widely accepted that the paradigms at philosophical level are based on three foundations namely Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology (Johnson & Duberley, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Girod-Seville & Perret, 2001).

Ontology: Healy and Perry (2000) defined ontology as the reality that researchers investigate external to social actors or as part of actions and interactions between social actors. It is the science about the kinds and structures of objects, properties, events, processes and realities in every area of reality. Ontology is often used by philosophers as a synonym of metaphysics, a label meaning literally, what comes after physics) a term used by early students of Aristotle to refer to what Aristotle himself called first philosophy. Sometimes Ontology is used in a broader sense to refer to the study of what exists; metaphysics is then used for the study of which of the various alternative possible ontology's, is in fact true (Garden, 1964).

The term Ontology was coined in 1613, independently by two philosophers, Rudolf Gockel in his lexicon philosophicum and Jacob Lorhad in his Thetrum philosophicum. Carson et al (2001) indicate that while ontology is the study of the nature of reality, the study of epistemology essentially concerns the relationship between reality and the researcher. Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) states that ontology is the assumptions that we make about the nature of reality' and that epistemology is a 'general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world. In other words, ontology is 'a way we see the world'; epistemology is 'a way we investigate the world' (McAuley, 2005). All research is based on a particular view of the world, adopts different methods and processes, and presents results which aim at 'predicting, prescribing, understanding, constructing or explaining' (Girod-Seville & Perret, 2001).

It is the most fundamental branch of metaphysics, which is concerned with the beliefs about physical and social reality, existence or being. It has one basic question "What actually exists"? It seeks to provide a definitive and exhaustive classification of entities in all spheres of being.

Epistemology: McAuley et al (2007) define Epistemology as the study of the criteria we deploy and by which we know and decide what does and do not constitute a warranted claim about the world or what might constitute warranted knowledge. Whether we think we can be objective in how we perceive the world has major implications for whether we think we can objectively test our theories about organizations and then use those theories to make changes to organisations with some confidences. It is the area of philosophical study which focuses on the study of the nature of knowledge by asking questions about what is true and false, and what constitutes valid information (Chari, 2007)

Methodology: This is the systematic procedure for collecting empirical information. Various methodologies exist and different methodologies can be used for a given ontological or epistemological perspective.

Based on the above philosophical foundations, various classifications for research paradigms have been proposed. While many philosophers and researchers agree on the definition of a paradigm, there is no agreement on what they constitute and how they are classified (Kandadi, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose four paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism.

Hussey and Hussey (1997) classify them as Positivistic and Phenomenological. Fitzgerald and Howcroft (1998) classify them as Positivistic and Interpretivist. Saunders et al., (2009) group the paradigms as Positivism, Realism and Interpretivism. Burrell and Morgan (1979) outline four possible research paradigms of social science, which they label as radical humanist, radical structuralist, interpretive, and functionalist. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest four underlying "paradigms" for qualitative research: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), following Chua (1986), suggest three categories, based on the underlying research epistemology: positivist, interpretive and critical. However in the emerging literature, pragmatism is considered as a viable option for conducting mixed method research (Datta, 1997;Tashokkori &

Teddie, 1998). From the author's personal epistemological and ontological commitments, this study sympathizes with and will focus on Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Theory as the main paradigms that can be considered in Business and Management Research.

3.3.1 Positivistic Paradigm

Positivism, according to McAuley et al (2007), is the dominant philosophical stance in a great deal of organisational theory such that if a researcher intends not to adopt that stance it is necessary to give valid reasons. Central to positivism is a belief that the world exists in an objective sense and that one can interact with it objectively and neutrally. That is, one can gather empirical data without interfering with the matter under investigation allowing the establishment of theories that can be proved or disproved. Once proved, these theories become the truth. The Boiling water analogy can be used to explain the foregoing. If for instance, you boil water at sea level, the water will boil at 100 degrees Celsius. This experiment can be replicated as often as one desires but the result will be the same. However, if you go up a mountain to repeat the experience, the experiment will yield a different result. This new set of results is easy to replicate. The implication of this analogy is that we experience simple positivistic truths which work well in everyday life.

The positivistic approach seeks the facts or causes of social phenomena, with little regard to the subjective state of the individual (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). It is based on the assumption that social reality is independent of human behavior and exists regardless of whether we are aware of it. According to Smith (1983) the positivists believe that Knowledge is based on science and that there is hierarchy of science with mathematics at the top and sociology at the bottom. The researcher conducting the enquiry is separated from the object of research. Positivist researchers tend to measure the variables of interest by conducting surveys, experiments and analyse the collected data through statistical analysis.

The goal of this study is to develop an integrative strategic management framework. It will involve collecting subjective data through studying human

behavior and management practices in an in-depth way through interviewing HEI Managers, staff and students. The use of positivism in investigating Strategic Management is a challenge because the subject area deals with human behavior and culture, hence, the study will not be adopting this paradigm. Burrell and Morgan (1979) support the researcher's decision when they ascertain that research enquiry in business and management area is generally subjective in contrast to the objective nature of positivism.

3.3.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

The interpretivist approach is built around facts that humans are not objects but are subject to many influences on behavior, feelings, perceptions and attitudes that positivists would reject as irrelevant and belonging to the realms of metaphysics. For the interpretivist researcher, reality is not a rigid thing, but a creation of individuals involved in the research. Reality does not exist within a vacuum, its composition is influenced by its context, and many constructions of reality are therefore possible (Collis and Hussey, 2003 and Saunders et al, 2009).

Interpretivism is concerned with understanding human behaviour from the participant's own frame of reference. The researcher believes that 'to experience' is the way to gain knowledge, and the best way to understand an organisation is to become part of the phenomena being studied, knowledge is validated experientially. IS research can be classified as interpretive if it is assumed our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools and other artefacts (Klein & Myers, 1999).

The major limitation of the interpretivist approach lays in the researcher's proximity to the investigation. It is argued that the research is so personal to the researcher that there is no guarantee that a different researcher would not come to radically different conclusions. However, in this study this limitation was overcome by triangulation where different sources of data such as official documents archival records and questionnaires. Triangulation was also achieved by using different methods to collect data from the same source such as observations, questionnaires and direct questions.

3.3.3 Critical Theory Paradigm

In one sense critical theory has elements of positivism and post-modernism and brings them together into something that can seem a rather pessimistic view of phenomena. It shares with the former the notion of progress from the Age of the Enlightenment and the existence of an objective reality. It takes from the latter the idea that individuals have their own subjective understanding built up from internalized social and historical influences. It is the examination and critique of society and literature, drawing from knowledge across social science and humanities. It is therefore based on a subjective realization of an objective reality and this objectification of that realization can be problematic.

A key difference with positivism is that critical theorists do not believe it is possible to be a passive receiver of sensory data no matter what methodology we use (McAuley et al, 2007). Thus, the neutral interaction with the subject being researched, a key for positivism is impossible.

Critical theory tends to have an orientation towards investigating issues in the society and also intends change the wrongs which emerge from the research as perceived by the researcher (McLaren 2000). For critical researchers knowledge comes from interpreting data by people who are part of the world and understanding the relationships between parts of the world.

Critical Theory is however criticized by both Positivists and Interpretivists. Positivists claim that it is anti-scientific while post-modernists declare that its scientific and rationalistic aspirations to enlightenment are imaginary (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Both Positivists and Interpretivists have also criticized it for failing to provide a clear exposition of the impact of their approach upon research methods, hence, creating a gap between an extensive tradition of critical empirical research on the one hand and guidelines for how to conceptualize and conduct such research on the other hand.

3.3.4 A Paradigm for this Thesis

The literature review has revealed that there is a gap in terms of empirical theories in strategic management in HEIs. In such a scenario, the preferred

paradigm should not require priori hypotheses (Kandadi, 2007). Klein and Myers (2001) suggest that the interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the full complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges. Furthermore, the derived questions for this research also demand the researcher to study several organisational factors that affect strategy formulation and implementation.

Interpretivism, as a paradigm, helps offer many avenues to answer the research questions in this investigation. For example, Saunders et al (2003) argues that an interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in the case of business research particularly in such fields as organizational behavior, marketing and human resources management. This study will explore strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. This will imply answering the research questions by focusing on such issues as understanding human behavior as well as looking at organizational cultural issues, power and politics. Since this research demands the exploration of organisational issues such as power, politics and culture, the interpretivist paradigm will be ideal for this research.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Different researchers have proposed different research methodologies. Bryan (2008) and Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggest that the term methodology refers to the way in which people approach problems and seek answers. Kandadi (2006) draws on work by Denzin and Lincoln (2000); Silverman (2005) and Yin (2002) to propose that the choice of the research methodology depends on the problem to be solved and the research questions to be asked. Saunders et al (2003) goes further to argue that there is no best tradition in terms of bringing best results among the available research approaches. The choice of which tradition to use depends on the context of the study and the nature of the questions being asked. Irrespective of the investigators objective the entire

research process can be classified as quantitative research and qualitative research.

3.4.1 Quantitative Research

The main aim of quantitative research is to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population (Chari, 2007). Quantitative research designs are usually objective (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after treatment) (Saunders et al, 2003). The research results are given in numerical values and the researcher uses mathematical and statistical methods to evaluate the results. The results emanating from quantitative research can be generalised.

3.4.2 Qualitative Research

Bryan (2008) agrees with Saunders et al (2003) in confirming that qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. He goes on to list the following characteristics of qualitative research:

- a) Predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories;
- b) Has rejected the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular in preference for an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world; and
- c) Embodies a view of social reality as constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation.

Bryan (2008) is quick to warn about looking at Qualitative and Quantitative research as opposite and contrasting research strategies as it is possible to have qualitative research, which is generally concerned with generation of theories to test theories. Saunders (ibid) has also given several examples to agree with Bryan's above assertions.

3.4.3 Mixed Method Research

Morse (2003) defines mixed method design as the incorporation of various qualitative or quantitative strategies within a single project which may have either a qualitative or quantitative theoretical drive. The dominance of the positivist paradigm and quantitative research in Management Research is criticised by various researchers (Maculey et al, 2007; Mingers, 2001; Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991; Robey, 1996). Mixed methods can be argued to be the contemporary approach to solving real world problems in academic research. The advantages of solving a research problem using mixed research have been touted for twenty five years (Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979).

By examining the research problem using various methodologies, a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied can be developed and the weakness associated with the methodologies can be strengthened. Robey (1996) argues that research using the same assumptions and research methods can be easily challenged; however a research problem which is examined from multiple perspectives and approaches can withstand opposition. The mixed method approach involves the usage of more than one methodology for gathering data.

3.4.4 Multi-Method Research

Multi-method research entails the application of two or more sources of data or research methods to the investigation of a research question or to different but highly linked research questions (Bryman, 2008). The rationale for multi-method research is that most social research is based on findings deriving from a single research method and as such is vulnerable to the accusation that any findings deriving from such a study may lead to incorrect inferences and conclusions if measurement error is affecting those findings. The rationale for multi-method research is underpinned by the principle of Triangulation, which implies that researchers should seek to ensure that they are not over reliant on a single research method and should instead employ more than one measurement

procedure when investigating a research problem (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1999)

Given the research objectives in chapter 1, this research study intends to develop an integrative strategy formulation and implementation framework for HEIs through identification of key strategy formulation and implementation factors that influence performance. The identification of strategy formulation and implementation factors was achieved through collection of data on strategic management processes in the HEIs and the selected private sector organisations. Due to the complex nature of the area of study as confirmed by a number of authors such as Mintzberg et al (1998) and Porter (1980), there is need for multiple sources of data and efficient data analysis method.

3.4.5 A methodology for this Thesis – Multimethod

This research study intends to seek a rich understanding of the strategy formulation and implementation processes in HEIs where there are several elements and multiple dimensions of the subject that needs to be studied exhaustively (Yin, 1993). Hence, this research study will have more rigour if multiple methods are used. An analysis of various methodologies has revealed that in addition to the traditional methodologies ie qualitative and quantitative, there are two more methodologies mixed method and multi method. Mixed method is applied where the study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches while multi methods approach is applicable where more than one methodologies is used. In this study a case study will be adopted for data collection while data analysis will be conducted using grounded theory. Therefore, a Multi-method approach will be adopted as a methodology for this study

A review of literature indicates an array of quantitative and qualitative methodologies that can be applied for researching strategic management. They include Action Research (Lewin, 1946); case studies (Yin, 2003); ethnography (Gray, 2004); Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998); Surveys (Fink, 2006) and Experiment (Hakim, 2000). Following section provides a brief overview of the methods that are commonly used in the Strategic Management.

3.4.5.1 Experiment

This strategy is not practical for many topics or questions which relate to social business research, as people cannot be randomly allocated to experience different conditions, such as employment, war fighting, and marriage for instance, (Hakim, 2000). Thus, this strategy cannot work with this research which is about exploring the effectiveness of the strategy formulation and implementation processes.

3.4.5.2 Survey

Surveys are often conducted by using questionnaires. The data can be collected in a large amount of population economically and is very easy to compare. This strategy however, does not apply well for carrying out exploratory work as it takes a lot of time to analyze the findings which will make the procedure become inefficient and ineffective, (Robson 2002). A survey is not appropriate for this investigation since the sample size is small in view of the nature of the investigation which will involve interviewing a few employees in an Organisation. In addition, the phenomenon to be studied that is strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs is complex requiring thorough investigation of context.

3.4.5.3 Ethnography

Ethnography generates from the field of anthropology, the study of people especially of their societies and customs. In this strategy, the researcher uses socially acquired and shared knowledge to understand the observed patterns of human activity (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Since the aim is to interpret the social world in the way that the members of that particular world do, the main method of data collection is participant observation where the researcher becomes a full working member of the group being studied. Creswell (2002) asserts that in Ethnographic research to achieve the objective the research normally takes place over a long period of time, often many months in a clearly defined location such as a factory floor and involves direct participation in the activities of that particular workplace.

This methodology would have been appropriate if the researcher had adequate time, in that case, he would have participated in the five year cycle of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. In that case, he would have observed the patterns of human behavior in the whole process.

However due to time constraints, the method was not be adopted.

3.4.5.4 Action Research

Action research was popularized by Lewin (1947) who described it as research that united the experimental approach of social sciences with programmes to address social problems. It is used to find an efficient way of generating an awareness of change in a partly controlled environment, with the researcher and the research being part of the change, (Collins & Hussey, 2003).

The feature of this strategy is that the researcher no longer tries to maintain a distance and separation from the thing that is being researched as it might have a direct and immediate influence on the research.

The study explored the effectiveness of the strategy formulation and implementation process; it aimed at making a conscious direct and immediate change in the organization. Hence this strategy was not appropriate.

3.4.5.5 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was first articulated and elaborated by Glasser and Strauss (1965, 1967, 1968) in the medical field but has now been developed in many disciplines. They hold that theories should be “grounded” in data from the field especially in actions, interactions and social process of people. Central to the grounded theory methodology is the development of a theory closely related to the context of the phenomenon being studied (Kandadi, 2006; Creswell, 2002). Thus theory is developed from observations rather than being decided before the study. Data is first collected through an inductive approach and then a deductive approach is used which eliminates unwanted data, thus leading to the generation of concepts and theories (Silverman, 2005). In a similar contribution to that of Saunders et al (2009), Goulding (2002) contend that a grounded theory strategy is particularly helpful for research to predict and explain

behavior, the emphasis being upon developing and building theory from data generated by a series of objectives.

In grounded theory, the theoretical framework is developed by alternating between inductive and deductive thought in the process collecting a considerable amount of data (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Furthermore, the researcher attempts to derive a theory by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and inter-relationship of categories of information. Goulding (2002) proposes that this theory is helpful for research to predict and explain behavior, the emphasis being upon developing and building theory.

The application of Grounded Theory according to Kandadi (2006) and Chari (2007) is recommended in situations where the researcher has few predetermined ideas. The research strategy is of greatest value when the researcher has little knowledge of the subject field of qualitative enquiry. Although it is difficult to conduct research with few ideas, Strauss and Corbin (1998) warn that grounded researchers should not be so steeped in the literature that their creative efforts become impeded or constrained

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework was developed for the study. The conceptual framework is aimed at guiding the researcher in data collection and analysis. Therefore the idea of the researcher having little knowledge of the subject under study poses a big challenge to adopt grounded theory for data collection.

Furthermore, Grounded theory has been criticized for its failure to acknowledge implicit theories which guide work at an early stage (Bryman, 1988; Silverman, 2005). The research strategy advocates ignoring previous knowledge so that the analytic and substantive theory can emerge. However, the researcher has described various strategy formulation and implementation frameworks and theories which would be used to conduct this study. The goal of this study is to develop a strategy formulation and implementation framework. Therefore, focus on each of the organisational factors would make the consideration of the proposed integration framework difficult.

Thus the grounded theory has some limitations especially related to data collection. However, Hussey and Hussey (1997) supported by Suddaby (2006) confirm that grounded theory is one of the well-known qualitative data analysis methods. Thus this method will not be recommended for data collection but will be adopted for data analysis.

3.4.5.6 Case Study

Yin (1998) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Bell (1993) uses the case study methodology as an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on an enquiry around a specific instance or event. Stake (2000), assert that case studies can prove invaluable in adding to understanding, extending experience and increasing conviction about a subject.

Given the above, it can be inferred that the case study is ideal for situations which demands in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The complexity in the relationship between various Organisational, management and individual factors and strategic management practice illustrates the appropriateness of case study enquiry for this study. The case study methodology is often advocated as a suitable method for research in Organisational and management studies (Yin, 2002; Hamel, 1993 and Amjad, 2008). Furthermore, Yin (1993) identifies the circumstances where case study would be beneficial.

- a) The research aims not only to explore certain phenomena, but to understand them within a particular context.
- b) The research uses multiple methods for collecting data which may be both qualitative and quantitative

With reference to this study

- a) This research aims to explore the role of strategy formulation and implementation in the performance of HEIs in Malawi
- b) By conducting case studies, the author has an opportunity to gather data through observation, interviews and perusing relevant documents.

Yin (2003) suggests that the case study is often the preferred methodology when “how” or “why” questions are being asked or when the researcher has little control over events.

Applying these arguments to the present study, ‘case study’ can be used to identify the reasons for the following research questions derived for this study

- 1) What are the key factors that influence strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions in Malawi?
- 2) How is strategy formulated and implemented in HEIs in Malawi?
- 3) How best can Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy?

Yin (2003) and Saunders et al (2009) note that case studies can be used in examining ‘contemporary events’. This view is also supported by Hussey and Hussey (1997) who opine that case study approach is appropriate when conducting research in a newly emerging area. Strategic Management is a relatively new phenomenon in HEIs in Malawi (UNESCO 2005, SARUA, 2008) and there is little research conducted so far.

Therefore, considering the views of Yin (2002, 2003); Hussey and Hussey (1997); Robson, 2002; Saunders et al, 2009) and Creswell (1994,2002), the appropriateness of case study as a possible methodology for accomplishing the objectives is established. Thus a case study strategy will be adopted for data collection because it provides a multi-dimensional picture of the situation. Additionally, a case study is a useful design for research on organizations and institutions in both public and private sectors and encompasses studies of firms. Furthermore, case studies have substantial capability to answer not only why questions but also what and how questions, (Saunders et al 2003).

Some researchers have criticized the case study methodology that it lacks dependability, reliability and validity (Yin, 1994). However, to ensure the reliability of the study, a case study protocol was developed which guided the researcher in collecting data from the case study. Furthermore, the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected was achieved by triangulation that is, using multiple sources of evidence. However, the findings of this research were unique to the specific organization and current conditions in the external

environment; generalizability was improved with the use of multiple case studies.

3.4.6 Case Study Design

Four main designs can be located in case study methodology (Yin, 1994). They are single case study, holistic, single case study embedded, multiple case study holistic and multiple case study embedded.

3.4.6.1 Single case study, holistic

Under this design, a single case is examined holistically. This type is more suitable when the case under consideration is rare or an extreme case (Saunders et al, 2009)

3.4.6.2 Single Case Study, embedded

In this type of study, multiple numbers of units of analysis can be used within a single study.

3.4.6.3 Multiple case studies, holistic.

Multiple cases can be considered when the researcher intends to improve the reliability, credibility, trustworthiness and generalizability of the study. In this type each case study is considered as one unit of analysis.

3.4.6.4 Multiple case, embedded.

In multiple embedded case studies, there would be more than one unit of analysis for each case thus providing rich data for the subject under study.

For the purpose of this study, multiple holistic case studies design will be adopted because:

- a) Yin (1993) cited in Chari (2007) notes that by gathering data from multiple organisations, optimum and reliable results can be achieved.

- b) This research intends to investigate the impact of strategy formulation and implementation on performance of HEIs. Strategic Management is not only a complex phenomenon as confirmed by Porter (1980) and Mintzberg et al (1998) but is a relatively new phenomenon in HEIs in the sub sahara africa region. Therefore using one case organization will not provide the adequate information to enhance validity and generalizability.

Moreover, Yin (2003) notes the single case study is more appropriate:

- a) When the case study represents the critical case in testing a well formulated theory.
- b) When the case represents an extreme case or a unique case.
- c) When the single case is the representative or typical case.
- d) When the single case study is the revelatory case.
- e) When the case study is a longitudinal one

Considering the research objectives and inappropriateness of single case study, multiple case studies were chosen for this study.

3.4.7 Research Design: MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES

The previous section provided the basis for choosing the Case Study methodology for data collection for this study. The next task as proposed by Yin (1994) is to develop a research design for the case study investigation. The researcher uses the “Builders analogy” to explain the research design phenomenon.

When constructing a structure, the builder will first require the Architect to design the building before the Quantity Surveyor determines the quantity of materials and the cost implications. The design of the building will, among other things, depend on size of the piece of land, purpose of the structure, location as well as the funds available. There is no point for the builder to order materials or set critical dates for completion of project stages until the above planning stages have been fulfilled. Likewise, the way in which research is designed will depend upon preferences, research philosophy, and ideas as to the most appropriate strategy choices of methods for conducting research. Once the researcher is

aware of the preliminary requirements such as the research philosophy, approach, and strategy (the three outer layers in the Saunders research onion), the next step is to start building by collecting data, analyzing it and then interpreting it.

From the above analogy, it is concluded that a research design is a general plan of how the researcher will go about conducting the research. Saunders (2009) supports the analogy by suggesting that a research design should contain clear objectives, derived from the research questions, specify the sources from which data will be collected and consideration of constraints that will be met with such as access to data, time, location and financial resources. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), Yin (2003) and Denzin (2000) assert that the research design guides the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Bryman (2004) cited in Kandadi (2006) supports this assertion and states that a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The research design therefore provides the plan and structure as to how explanation could be obtained, or rather how the builder will construct his building using the plans provided by the Architect.

After identifying the research methodology (Case study), the next step is to identify an appropriate research design to address the research problem and arrive at the conclusions. Elashaheb (2005) suggests that when it comes to data collection, an important component of the research design, a researcher must be willing to use all available sources of evidence including but not limited to interviews, documentation and observation. This motivated the researcher to use case study methodology for data collection. Yin (2009) proposes that the Case study research comprises the following five core components:

- 1) A study's questions;
- 2) Its propositions if any;
- 3) Its units of analysis;
- 4) The logic linking the data to the proposition;
- 5) The criteria for interpreting the findings.

The critical review of current strategy formulation and implementation literature in chapter 2 addressed the first two components. This involved carrying out an in-depth literature review to analyze different aspects of strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. The review included analysing the current strategy formulation and implementation concepts and frameworks. The review has revealed that there is a wide variety of strategy formulation concepts, techniques and frameworks that aid managers and planners in formulating strategy. However, the review has revealed gaps in strategy implementation. Unlike in formulation, there are few concepts, tools and frameworks for strategy implementation confirming another revelation that most of the strategies formulated are not implemented. Several authors; Alashloo (2005), Okumus (2003), Alexander (1985) and Dandira (2011) have confirmed the foregoing, suggesting the need for a comprehensive strategic management framework.

The first component calls for the development of the research question. The research problem (P) and three research questions were developed for the study.

The second component calls for the development of hypothetical propositions for the proposed study. However, Saunders et al (2009), Yin (2003) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that the hypothesis development is a characteristic of a deductive or positivist research design where the researcher develops a theory and hypotheses, and then design a research strategy to test the hypothesis (scientific research). This investigation, however, sympathises with the Interpretive or inductive research approach through which a strategy implementation framework will be formulated. Because of the interpretivist nature, this study deliberately stays away from prior theory development. Nevertheless, Kandadi (2006) agrees with Yin (2003) in suggesting that even an explorative case study should have some purpose. Yin (2009) further suggests that instead of propositions, the design for an exploratory study should state this purpose, as well as the criteria by which an exploratory study will be judged successful.

Thus, so far, components one and two have been explained. The next sub-sections synthesize the remaining three components. The third component “unit of analysis” is related to the fundamental problem of defining what the case is

where as the fourth which involves data collection describes the techniques for gathering data while the fifth component describes the understanding, linking data to the research questions.

3.4.8 Units of Analysis (Cases)

The Unit of analysis refers to the actual cases to be studied as part of the research. The case selection or sample selection process is an important aspect of the research design that directly determines the quality and relevance of empirical data to be collected and ultimately shape the conclusions (Kandadi, 2006). Yin (2003) advises that selection of appropriate units of analysis will start to occur when you accurately specify your primary research questions. Thus the six research questions defined for this study identify the need to explore in detail, several organizations.

In determining the cases, it is important to select the most appropriate sampling technique to select the cases. Different techniques such as Quota, Judgmental or Purposive, Snowball, Self select and convenience can be located in business research (Saunders et al, 2009). A Judgmental or purposive sampling was used for this study. Yin (2009), Neuman (2005) and Saunders et al (2009) proposes that it is ideal for very small samples such as in Case study research and when selecting cases that are informative and explanatory. However, bias is a likely limitation for this method.

Yin (2009) supports Patton (2002) and Stake (2000) by asserting that in purposive sampling the researcher needs to select cases based on characteristics that are important to answering the research question.

A sample of six cases is selected for this study on the based on Location, Sector, Size, Access to information and Knowledge intensity.

Similarly, Yin (2009) supported by Hussey and Hussey (1997) recommends developing a clear criteria for selecting case organisations in a case study research. Based on the research problem (P) objectives (O) and questions (Q) of this investigation, the following criteria are identified to select the case organizations.

- 1) The majority of the cases should include HEIs;
- 2) The cases should be domiciled in Malawi;
- 3) All the cases must be engaged in formal Strategic Management.
- 4) The researcher should have adequate access to privileged information related to SM in these institutions considering the sensitive nature of the investigation.
- 5) The HEIs should be large organizations and accredited by respective regulatory authorities in Malawi.

Based on the above criteria, six organizations were chosen for the research study as detailed in chapter four.

Out of the six case organizations identified, four are public HEIs, one is a private HEIs, one is a multinational Telecommunications PLC while the other one is a commercial bank.

The general purpose for selecting cases from different sectors was:

- a) To obtain rich data on SM in different industry segments whereby helping achieve the objective of benchmarking SM based on best practice. The literature review revealed that there is a gap in strategic management literature in HEIs in sub sahara Africa including Malawi. At the same time the review under the concept of new public management calls the need for public sector institutions to adopt private sector systems including strategic management and performance management which are predominantly private sector systems. Therefore, the study included two private sector institutions to act as best practice. The two institutions were selected based on performance and easiness to collect data.
- b) To achieve a rich mixture of responses as interviews will be conducted in different organizations in different industries in Malawi.
- c) To experience SM in different cultural contexts as follows in order to achieve triangulation. Investigating SM in different sectors enhanced

the study findings, reliability and credibility of results. This in turn enhanced the generalizability of the findings(Yin, 1994,2003,2009 ; Saunders, 2003,2009).

d) To enhance the study generalization by investigating SM in different cultural contexts as follows.

- Public sector organizations in Malawi
- Private Sector organization in Malawi
- Multinational company based in Malawi

Table 3-1 highlights the details of the case organisations that were used in this study.

Table 3-1 Case Organisations of the study

Organisation	Industry	Sector	Location	No of employees
Public University (A)	HE	Public	Malawi	1356
Public University (B)	HE	Public	Malawi	400
Public University (C.)	HE	Public	Malawi	365
Private University	HE	Private	Malawi	90
Commercial Bank	Banking	Private	Malawi	257
Telecommunications Firm	Telecommunications	Private	Multinational (Malawi)	175

The descriptions of the case organisations focusing on case study context, interview profiles, rationale for case selection and background of case organisations is discussed in detail in chapter four.

3.4.9 Pilot Interview

The interview questions were piloted before a full-scale research was conducted. The aim was to understand how much time would be needed for the indepth interviews, whether the questions were relevant i.e. whether the questions were able to elicit the desired responses and the appropriateness of the research approach. Five respondents at one institution participated in the

pilot study. These included three members of management, two operational staff and two student union members..

Through the pilot interview, the researcher was able to make finer modifications to the questionnaire, the approach and general interview arrangements. Some of the modifications to the questionnaires included rephrasing of the questions as it transpired that respondents would have challenges with SM terminologies and jargon (b) some questions that were deemed irrelevant were removed and replaced with new ones. For example, the broad question asking respondents to explain how strategy was formulated in their organisation was removed because respondents would give various responses that would not help the researcher.

The pilot interview also revealed that the researcher would need more time than expected per interview. While the original thought was that one hour would be spent on an interview, it transpired following the pilot interview that it was necessary to allocate atleast 2 hours for each interview. Furthermore, the pilot interviews revealed the need to consider ethical issues looking at the nature of the study. For example, the respondents were at times not comfortable with sharing some information and even suggested that they should not be recorded. However, the respondents were assured by the researcher that all ethical considerations would be strictly adhered to and that the data collected would not be used for any other purposes other than the thesis.

3.4.10 Case Study Data Collection

Yin (1994) identified six main sources of case study data, each of which have their own strengths and weakness. The six sources of data are summarised in Table 3-2 . In this study, “interviews” was the main source of data. These were held with senior, middle and lower level managers in the selected HEIs and private sector organisations. Student leaders were also interviewed in the HEIs. The aim of the interviews was to identify how strategy was formulated and implemented and how the processes influenced the performance of the institutions. Other sources of data namely document analysis were also used but not extensively. This is because the researcher was interested in

understanding the impact of Strategic Management (strategy formulation and implementation) on organization performance and this could best be achieved through in-depth interviews with the people involved in the processes and those who are beneficiaries of the decisions arising from the processes. It was also found that SM processes in the case organisations were deferent and did not follow a systematic approach. However in certain case study organisations, archival records and documents provided the information required.

Table 3-2 Sources of Case Study Data – Strengths and Weaknes

Source of Evidence	Strength	Weakness
Documentation	1) Stable – Can be reviewed repeatedly 2) Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study 3) Exact – Contains exact names, references, and details of an event 4) Broad coverage – long span of time, many events and many settings	1) Retrievability – Can be low 2) Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete 3) Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of author 4) Access – May be deliberately blocked
Archival Records	(Same as above for Documentation) Precise and Quantitative	(Same as above for Documentation) Accessibility due to privacy reasons
Interviews	1) Targeted – focuses directly on case study topic 2) Insightful – Provides perceived causal inferences	1) Bias due to poorly constructed questions 2) Response bias - Inaccuracies due to poor recall 3) Reflexivity – Interviewee gives what the interviewer wants to hear
Direct Observation	1) Reality – Covers events in real time 2) Contextual – Covers context in event 1	1) Time consuming - Selectivity – unless broad coverage 2) Reflexivity- event may proceed differently because it is being observed 3) Cost – hours needed by human observers
	(Same as above for	(Same as above for

Participant observations	direct observation) Insightful into interpersonal behaviour and motives	direct observations) Bias due to investigator's manipulation of events
Physical Artefacts	Insightful into cultural features Insightful into technical operations -	Selectivity - Availability

Source: Yin (2003, p.86)

3.4.10.1 Data Collection through Interviews.

The case study design adopted interviews as the main approach for data collection. A questionnaire was developed to help collect data from the interviewees. This questionnaire was derived from the conceptual framework developed from literature and comprised a number of structured questions developed to help collect data on the institutions background, organisational systems and processes and information on strategic management. (Refer to Appendix 2)

The questions contained in the questionnaire provided a basis for questions that were asked in the interview. These questions were not closed but open and most of the interviews took a form of a discussion and they were based on the replies provided by the interviewee. The following section discusses the pilot study that was conducted before conducting the case study.

3.4.10.2 Data Collection through Document Analysis and Archival Records

Several social scientists suggest that employing rigorous data collection procedures is one of the characteristics of a good quality study (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2005; Yin, 2003). They emphasise that the qualitative researchers need to collect data from multiple sources.

Since the literature lacks a comprehensive strategic management framework, the author decided to use documents and archival reports as sources of data for

the study. Documents and Reports were used as a data source because these present a rich source of carefully collected, accessible and up-to date information about the a subject under study (Chari 2007; Shang and Sedddon, 2002). The data collected from the secondary source helped to understand and analyse the strategy formulation and implementation infrastructure.

Twenty two sets of reports published by Government, HEIs, the two benchmark organisations and other organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, AAU and SARUA were collected and analysed. The sample comprised of strategic plan documents, financial reports, consultancy reports and organisational annual reports. While choosing the sample, efforts were taken to ensure that organisations fell under the domain of Higher Education. Secondary data was also collected from the two benchmark organisations that were used in the study.

3.4.11 Data Analysis: Grounded Theory

After data collection, data analysis is the next step. The data analysis phase in a case study methodology comprises the fourth and fifth components of the research design. These two are: the logic linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Yin (2009) presupposes that while the first three components of data collection are well developed, the fourth and fifth components are the least well developed components of the case study design. Yin (ibid) goes further to explain that “too many times, investigators start case studies without having the foggiest notion about how evidence is to be analyzed” (Yin, 2009, p 127).

Hussey and Hussey (1997) also suggest that “despite the proliferation of qualitative methodology texts detailing techniques for conducting a qualitative project, the actual process of data analysis remains poorly described” (p.248). The other complexity in analyzing case study data is the lack of clear process or procedures to be followed to analyze this data. This has been highlighted by many researchers. For instance, Kandadi (2006) and several other authors, argue that there are no clear and accepted set of conventions to analyze

qualitative data. Nevertheless, they propose the non-quantifying methods of analyzing the qualitative data in interpretive research studies such as, content analysis, cognitive mapping, data displays, quasi-judicial method and grounded theory (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Sanders et al, 2009; Miles & Huberman 2002).

Crawford et al (2004) cited in Kandadi (2006) opine that grounded theory and content analysis are the two major approaches for analyzing qualitative data.

Content analysis is a way of systematically converting text to numerical variables for quantitative data analysis (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Despite Crawford et al (2004) recommending content analysis as one of the main qualitative data analysis approaches, several authors suggest that this approach is inclined towards positivist research because of its theory building and hypothesis testing nature (Mostyn, 1985; Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). This method could have been ideal to analyse data in this study, however, due to its limitation that “its theoretical basis is unclear and its conclusions can often be trite” (Silverman, 1993, p.59), it is not preferred for this study. Furthermore, this study is rather explorative and is not aimed at testing a hypothesis to employ the content analysis approach. Several authors (Saunders et al, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Hussey & Hussey, 1997) contend that grounded theory is a popular method for analyzing qualitative data other than its use for data collection.

The case study approach was preferred for collecting data as it was deemed helpful in capturing rich data based on multiple sources of evidence. Other than being used for data collection, grounded theory is often used as an approach at data analysis stage irrespective of the data collection approach employed. Many authors (Sanders et al, 2009; Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Creswell, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1991) believe that grounded theory is one of the most influential approaches to qualitative data analysis. It operates almost in a reverse fashion from traditional social science research (positivists), where, rather than beginning with a hypothesis, the first stage is data collection through a variety of methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The motivation to adopt this approach for analyzing data for this research is based on the grounded theory's commitment to study the social world and the rejection of a priori theorizing. Since this study was about strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions, the grounded theory approach became an important analysis method. Furthermore, this approach also helped in developing the strategic management framework since it has theory building capabilities (Charmaz, 2011); Strauss & Corbin 1998). Baily et al (2008), Charmaz (2011) and Collis and Hussey (2009) summarize the advantages of using grounded theory as a data analysis technique as follows:

- a) It allows considering the mentioned variety of factors being necessary for the intended unifying applicable framework, since all relevant sources or methods related to interpretivism can be applied, unless personal boundaries are avoided.
- b) Because grounded theory is open to comment and correction, the methodology allows expecting a maximum in terms of the aspired applicability of the research results
- c) Grounded theory allows publishable conclusions from originally confidential sources.

Based on the above merits, the grounded theory was adopted as the data analysis method for this research.

Strauss and Corbin (2008) have proposed a structured and systematic process of data analysis, using grounded theory comprising three coding techniques: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Underpinning the three techniques is the process of constantly comparing the data collected with the concepts and categories being used so as to aid the process of developing an emerging theory that will be thoroughly grounded in the data (Saunders et al, 2009).

During open coding raw data is identified, analyzed and categorized into various units. Axial coding categories and sub categories are connected on a more

conceptual level. During the selective coding stage the core categories are selected and summarised into a theory.

During data analysis, the first step was to identify or ascertain the factors which appeared to influence the level of strategy formulation and implementation success by investigating the factors which managers, operational staff and students perceived to have an influence on strategy formulation and implementation success or failure. Furthermore, related factors were also grouped together in such a way that data was sorted grouped and regrouped into factors which appeared to have the biggest influence on formulation and implementation success.

The study adopted the grounded theory approach for the data analysis in this study. Table 3-5 summarizes the coding steps and their application to the research study. The coding steps assist in addressing the main research question (Q) of this study, i.e. *How to formulate and implement strategy in Higher Education Institutions*, while the following sub-sections provide detailed explanations of how the codes were utilized in analyzing the data of this study to achieve the stated research goal (G), i.e. *To develop an integrative strategy formulation and implementation framework*.

3.4.11.1 Open Coding

Open coding is the process of identifying, analyzing and categorizing the raw data. It involves developing categories of concepts and the themes emerging from data (Kandadi, 2006). This step involves a number of processes. First, the researcher breaks down and labels the individual elements, making the data more easily recognisable and less complicated to manage. Furthermore, the codes are categorized into a pattern of concepts and categories, together with their properties. This is accomplished by classifying the different elements into distinct ideas (the concepts) and grouping similar concepts into categories and sub-categories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe a concept as an abstract representation of an event, object or action/interaction that that a researcher identifies as being the significant element in data.

Hussey and Hussey (1997) note that the labels by which the concepts and categories of concepts are known are entirely subjective and are chosen by the researcher, though the label should reflect their nature and content. Hussey and Hussey (1997) warn of using common terms as codes as readers can be biased by a prior knowledge or understanding of a term which conflicts with or does not reflect what is intended by the researcher. The categories discovered at the open coding step can be formulated as processes through which strategies are developed and implemented in HEIs. The categories discovered also helped establish how strategy should be developed and implemented in HEIs. Therefore, the open coding assisted in answering the first and third research questions (Q1 and Q2) of this study.

Strauss and Cobin (2008) advise that once the categories are identified, the sub-categories will be developed for each of the categories. The sub-categories are the theoretical elements that specify a category further by denoting information such as when, where, why and how a phenomena is likely to occur. Strategic Management factors (new categories) are developed through a process of continuous comparisons such that each time an instance of a category is found, it is compared with previous instances.

For each Strategic Management factor, the properties and dimensions are identified from the data. Kandadi (2006) explains that the properties are the general characteristics of a category while the dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum range. Substantiating codes or quotes of data will be displayed to support the development of the concepts, categories and subcategories.

3.4.11.2 Axial Coding

Axial coding is a more extended and evolved form of open coding and enables the researcher to build on the research. Hussey and Hussey (1997) note that Axial coding is the process of connecting categories and subcategories together on a more conceptual level than was adopted at the open coding stage. It

basically involves putting data together in new ways by making connections between categories. This is achieved by exploring the conditions, context, action/interaction strategies, consequences which influence the phenomena and/or social processes that are being studied. The focus here is on determining more about each Strategic Management factor in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context in which it is embedded; the strategies that people use to manage it or to carry out the consequences of those strategies.

Strauss and Corbin (1998, 2008) advise that as additional data are collected, the researcher moves back and forth amongst the data collection, open coding and axial coding continuously refining the categories and their interconnections.

While the open coding step helped answer the research question (Q1 and Q2) the axial coding addresses the third questions (Q3) of this study. The second question focuses on identifying factors that influence strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions.

3.4.11.3 Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating these relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement (Hussey & Hussey 1997). During this process of selective coding, the categories and their interrelationships are combined to form a storyline that describes “what happens” in the phenomena that is being studied. The core categories are those which represent the main theme of the research. Strauss and Corbin (2008) advise that two conditions guide the development of the core categories. First, a core category must be central, that is many major categories can be related to it. Secondly, a core category must appear frequently in the data.

During this stage, each of the core categories developed encompassed several strategy formulation and implementation factors that influence performance. They served as the main elements for developing the strategy formulation and

implementation framework in Higher Education Institutions. They in essence represented the major organizational issues which needed to be looked into for superior performance vis a vis achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. Thus far, the selective coding process provided important input for achieving the goal (G) of this research study.

Table 3-3 Grounded Theory coding techniques in the data analysis: Adopted from: Kandadi, 2006)

Analysis Stage	Description	Research question/goal addressed
Open Coding	<p>Discovering and labeling the concepts based on the case study data.</p> <p>Abstracting and grouping the concepts into categories and sub-categories.</p> <p>Developing the categories further in terms of their properties and discussion</p>	<p>Using the developed categories as processes for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Hence the categories address research questions (Q1& Q2)</p>
Axial Coding	<p>Connecting categories and sub-categories together on a more conceptual level.</p> <p>Identifying the variety of conditions, and consequences associated with categories.</p> <p>Constructing mini-theories about the relationships within the data</p>	<p>Identifying and describing the causal conditions and consequences for each factor influencing SM in HEIs. Thus the Axial coding stage helps in addressing research question (Q 3)</p>
Selective coding	<p>Reducing data from cases into concepts and relational statements for explaining strategic management functions.</p> <p>Generating themes by referring to literature reviewed.</p> <p>Deciding and defining core categories representing the main them of the research.</p>	<p>The core categories serve as the Strategic Management elements for the framework development. Thus the selective coding stage assists in addressing the research goal (G)</p>

3.4.12 Data Analysis Protocols: Triangulation

A case study approach was adopted for data collection in this study, where data was collected through semi structured interviews and analysis of archival documents. All the interview records were thoroughly reviewed to ensure that all important data were captured. Post-interview consultations were carried out where interviewees were approached for clarification or further information. This process ensured enhanced accuracy levels of data collected.

Many authors propose using triangulation during data analysis as a strategy for improving the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Denzin, 1970; Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Miles & Huberman 2002). Denzin (1970) p.297 cited in Hussey and Hussey (1997) defines triangulation as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon”. He argues that the use of different methods and techniques by a number of researchers in the same study will overcome the potential bias and will result in improved reliability, credibility and validity of the findings. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) and Patton (2002) suggest four types of triangulation.

1. Data triangulation where data is collected at different times or from different sources in one study.
2. Investigator triangulation, where different researchers independently collect or analyze data on the same phenomenon and compare the results.
3. Methodological triangulation, where qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the same study.
4. Triangulation of theories, where theory taken from one discipline is used to explain phenomena in another discipline.

In this study, data triangulation and investigator triangulation were adopted. As part of data triangulation, the data was collected from different sources, in Higher Education Institutions such as interviews and archival documents. Furthermore, the data was collected from different respondents at different times in different HEIs. As part of investigator triangulation, the data was analyzed and compared by different researchers independently (see appendix

4). The triangulation process helped in achieving reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

A Case study protocol was also developed for this study (See Table 3-4). The protocol guided both data collection and analysis. Yin (2009) believes that a case study protocol helps to improve the reliability of case study research against the criticisms leveled against this methodology through the systematic collection and analysis of qualitative data collected.

Table 3-4 Case study protocol for data collection

<p>Overview of Case Study Project</p> <p>To improve the findings of the study vis a vis improvement of the framework to be developed, several people will be interviewed in the HEIs identified as well as the benchmark organisations. In both types of organisations, all cadres of employees, Top management, Middle Management and operational staff would be interviewed. Student leaders will also be interviewed in the HEIs. The objectives of this modus operandi is to appreciate how Strategic Management is implemented in the different types of organisations.</p>
<p>Data Collection Procedures</p> <p>Two types of case organisations were identified the first group comprised HEIs. A list of HEIs was chosen based on type of ownership (public or private) and size in terms of number of staff and students. The second group comprised two commercial entities. These were selected based on industry profitability and the researcher’s access to the organization for data collection purposes. Contact was established by the Registrars’ office in the HEIs which organized all the interviews as a focal point. In the commercial companies, contact was made through the marketing departments. A questionnaire was sent in advance through email to prepare the respondents. During the interview, a Digital voice recorder was used after obtaining prior consent of the interview. Field notes were taken during the course of the interview which lasted between 1 – 3 hours. In an event that the interview had been cancelled, alternative arrangements were made in consultation with the interviewee to re-schedule a new appointment</p>
<p>Case Study Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief of Strategic Management in the organization.

- Process of Strategic Management in the organization
- Impact of Strategic Management on performance

Data collection protocols

- The questionnaire must be enhanced after each interview process.
- The data should be reviewed after each interview.
- The recordings must be transcribed soon after an interview to avoid compiling untranscribed data

3.4.13 Research ethics: Considerations and Protocols

Several authors, including Zikmund (1998), Hussey & Hussey (1997) and Bryman (2007) contend that most research situations involve three parties; the researcher; the sponsoring client (user) and the respondent (subject). How the three parties relate requires considerations into ethical issues that may arise if the research is to be objective.

Hussey and Hussey (1998) and Saunders et al 2009 propose that the following ethical issues should be considered by researchers in business research:

1. Safeguarding the interests of the respondents (interviewees and case organisations);
2. Offering confidentiality or anonymity to participants in a research study;
3. Obtaining the informed consent of the participants;
4. Maintaining dignity and
5. Ensuring objectivity while publishing the research findings.

This research involved collecting sensitive data through interviews and mostly analyzing confidential company documents. It was considered important for the researcher to ensure that the ethical issues discussed above were considered and followed. Kandadi (2006) opine that the the above issues are important aspects in a phenomological study which involves collecting data through interviews and other sources from several organisations. Stake (2000) and Hussey and Hussey (2003) recommend such ethical

considerations. They assert that the value of the best research is not likely to outweigh injury to exposed. It is therefore important to value and adhere to relevant research ethics throughout this research study to ensure validity, trustworthiness and acceptability. To follow the ethical practices, the following ethical considerations are charted:

- a) The particulars of case organisations are separated from the analytical arguments and conclusions. Details of the interviews in terms of position and organisation's details are provided to give an idea of the sample that is being studied.
- b) The particulars of the respondents were separated from the analysis and conclusions in so doing confidentiality and anonymity to participants was achieved.
- c) Consent of the participants was obtained prior to the interviews. The letter written to interviews clearly highlighted that the data would be handled with utmost confidentiality.
- d) Dignity was maintained by use of a case study protocol.
- e) By using a case study protocol and data triangulation, objectivity was ensured.

3.4.14 Summary

This chapter focused on the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this research which resulted into adopting an interpretive philosophical stance and a qualitative methodology. A case study strategy with multiple case studies was adopted for data collection while grounded theory was selected for data analysis and framework development.

Chapter 4. ANALYSIS AND FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

“Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there; they cause change. They motivate and inspire others to go in the right direction and they, along with everyone else, sacrifice to get there” –

John Kotter

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data gathering and analysis form an important element in the fulfillment of research objectives. This chapter provides a thorough analysis and discussion of the qualitative data that was collected from the documents, archival reports and case studies and propose a framework for strategy formulation and implementation. A discussion of the the findings has also been provided. The chapter has combined findings, analysis and discussion of the data collected through the secondary data (documents and archival reports) and primary data (interviews) to enhance validity, transparency and integrity between the findings, interpretations and conclusions (Kandadi, 2006; Saunders et al 2009).

The first section presents the proposed framework termed POMI matrix. This is followed by an analysis of the secondary data. The subsequent section highlights the multiple case studies while the fourth section presents the analysis and discussion of the findings. Despite its acknowledged importance for the success of any organisation, strategic management, especially the implementation side remains a relatively under researched subject (Foss, 2011, Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst, 2006). Jooste and Fourier (2009) and deLeon (1999) have argued that the complexity of implementation is more than daunting and that strategy implementation is more challenging compared to formulation. Taking cognizance of the foregoing, the study puts more emphasis on the implementation side of strategic management. This is supported by Alashloo et al (2005), Kazmi (2008) and Okumus (2001). They opine that unlike strategy

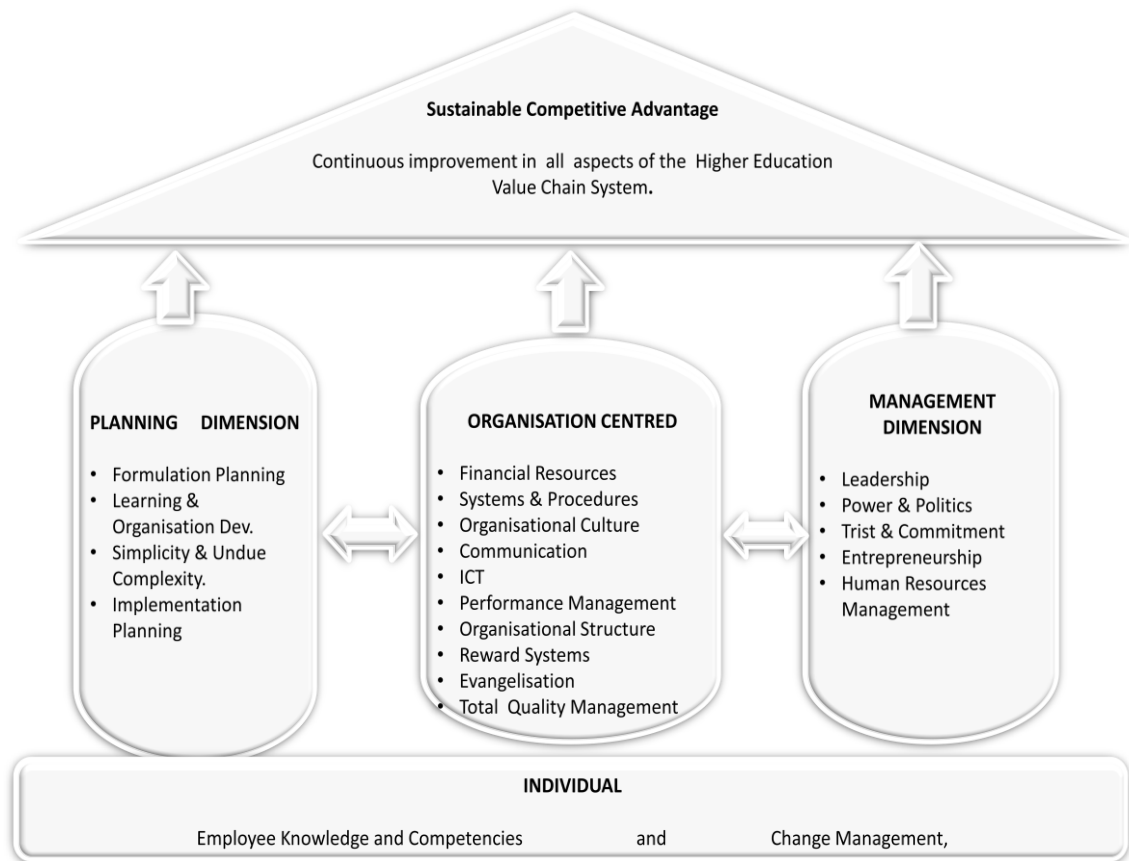
formulation, implementation side of strategic management remains under researched as such more effort need to be placed in strategy implementation.

4.2 SECTION I: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A framework is developed for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Malawi. The framework is based on empirical findings of this study and is termed 'POMI' Matrix which is an acronym representing the four core organisational dimensions identified in this research study: Planning, Organisation, Management and Individual (POMI). The proven principles in the current Strategic Management literature are also integrated in this framework based on an analysis made for each of the SM factors (F1-F21).

The framework depicts a structure of a house and comprises the following: The roof which is the desired future state the sustainable competitive advantage, the three pillars are the are the major anchors of the house these are Planning, Organisation and Management. The base which is the backbone of building and the foundation of this structure is the individual category. This comprises the three factors namely management of change, knowledge and competencies and total quality management. The individual category comprises soft intangible skills that cut across all the other categories and are crucial in holding the structure together.

Figure 4-1 POMI Framework. Source: Author



To successfully formulate and implement strategy, the strategy framers and implementers need to have knowledge and competencies on all the factors contained in the framework. Furthermore, formulating and implementing strategy implies doing things differently that is introducing change. Therefore change management becomes an important success factor to be considered. Ensuring that quality in all the processes will ensure successful performance.

4.3 SECTION II : ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY DATA

Various documents and archival reports were collected and analyzed based on grounded theory. The documents analysed included Strategic Plan documents for the case organisations, Government policy documents (Malawi growth and Development policy, World Bank Country Status Report, National Education Sector Plan, the Malawi Institute of Management Report, Government circulars and reports). This was done through open, axial and selective coding. This analysis resulted in the enhancement of the strategy formulation and implementation framework proposed for this study. While the document and

archival reports analyses were used, the purpose was to enhance the findings of the study which used interviews as the main source of data. However, the analysis of secondary data provided a good source of triangulation. Yin (2003) proposes that case study methodology provides the advantage of using different sources of data in one study. He goes further to suggest that in a case study research use of multiple sources of data enhance the reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings.

The results of the secondary data analysis are summarized in **Error! Reference source not found.**

Table 4-1 Summary of Findings of the Secondary Data

Quote	Strategic Management Factor
<p>...Government has advised the universityto reduce state-sponsored students to enable the institutions manage their subvention following salary increment proposals...</p> <p>Ministry of Education in a letter to the vice chancellors says...universities must admit the other students as non-residential students.....</p>	Lack of Funding
	Government influence in HEIs
	Lack of Planning
	Power and Politics
	Implementation Planning
	Systems and procedures
<p>Government's offer of the 21% is an apparent effort to stop an impending industrial action and another strike underway...</p> <p>Both universities are demanding 113% salary increment while government is offering 21%....</p> <p>..But the institutions are arguing that their demand was based on inflation and two devaluations of the kwacha by 10% last year and 49% this year.....</p>	Human Resources Management
	Lack of Planning
	Reward systems
	Power and Politics
<p>..Comptroller of statutory corporations last week made communication to the effect that salaries had been increased by 15% to all employees in the statutory corporations including universities.....but the universities rejected the offer</p>	Communication
	Funding
<p>The Chief Secretary to Government has said government has introduced Organisational performance assessment system (Opas).....</p> <p>....Apart from this, Opas has also been introduced to</p>	Total Quality Management
	Performance Management

provide a basis for promoting quality and dedicated performance in the public service for the benefit of the citizenry and the country as a whole... ...The average salary increase in the civil service is 24 %.. We are surprised that the universities are quoting 45%....we wonder where they are getting this information from....	Entrepreneurship Management of change Human Resources Management
...performing ministries and institutions will be rewarded..... ...the reward policy helps the bank reward high performing employees....	Reward Systems
....Human Resources constitute the most important element in the development equation for it is their transformation that constitutes development. For Malawi, this is arguably the single most important missing link.....	Human Resources Management
There is no denying that the country faces a crisis of Human Resources development. A case in point is the result of the civil service census that indicates that the proportion of civil servants possessing post-secondary qualifications was less than 2 percent of the total	Human Resources Management Implementation Planning
The structural adjustment programmes the country has been undergoing since the early 80s have clearly paid inadequate attention to the development of universities.....	Role of Government Funding
Virtually, all the universities recurrent spending is underwritten by Government subvention.....	Funding Government role
The private sectors' contribution towards HE and research has not been outstanding.....	Funding
....Similarly, the university has relied on Government grants and considered donor support for capital formation..... ...	Funding
The Consulting team observed that the existing promotions criteria for staff are too narrow...they place undue emphasis on research and publications excellence and exclude other relevant work factors such as teaching workload, student's evaluation....	Performance Management system Reward systems Systems and procedures Human Resources Management
...It is clear that the Universities managements has	Formulation Planning

not for a variety of reasons been dynamic enough to its response to the changes let alone anticipate the future and position itself to deal with the situation in ways that would ensure its own survival.....	Implementation planning
There is a paradox of graduate unemployment at a time of national human resources crisis indicating a demand and supply mismatch.... ...there is an apparent need of training and development and succession planning....The Registrars position needs to be reviewed...Most finance issues handles by staff not well qualified...the last two audit reports have alluded to this...	Systems and procedures
	Knowledge and Capabilities
The success of the nation depends on the creativity and flexibility of its human resources and their capacity to create and adapt to change....	Management of Change Human Resources Management
Due to current federal set up of the colleges, some courses are duplicated....this makes universities waste resources.....	Resource Allocation
...we have argued that the system of definig capacity in terms of bed-space limits admissions and ultimately the graduation of graduates.....	Systems and procedures
...The gross student enrollment ratio might suggest there is room for expanding student enrollment....	Systems and procedures Resource allocation
A good number of staff in the University Registrar's office are unclear about their jobs owing to the absence of job descriptions....similarly, arguments characterize the other offices e.g. finance, procure, etc.....	Human Resources Management Performance Management Systems and Procedures
...The University's tenure system is a very costly system and introduces a lot of rigidities in the system....Elsewhere, tenure has been reserved for academic staff upon achieving certain demonstrable competencies.....	Systems and Procedures Performance Management Human Resources Management
Moonlighting has become endemic in the universities ostensibly because the remuneration packages are inadequate and somehow one has to survive in the hard economic conditions	Resource Allocation Human Resources Management

The analysis of the secondary data led to refinements in data collection and thus both processes of collection and analysis took place iteratively. However,

as per common practice and due to the fact that data analysis continued for much longer than data collection, its discussion follows data collection (Amjad, 2008; Suddaby, 2006; Myers, 2009).

The first step to the analysis was assigning codes to the data. Codes are usually labels assigned to passages within the qualitative data to denote important concepts, phenomenon and themes of interest (Bryman, 2008; Chari, 2007; Amjad, 2008). The research questions were used as guides to record the codes as they emerged from several analytical iterations within the data (Krippendorff and Bock, 2008). Coding is an important activity in analysis of qualitative data and helps conceptualizing the data into meaningful themes and sub themes. The coding process involved constant comparison and theoretical sampling to analyse the relevant data, emerging theoretical constructs and achieving saturation in coding and categorization.

The coding process progressed with the researcher's continuous attention to the similarities and differences within the codes. The codes that were very similar were coded with a single, identical code. For example, 'funding', _ 'funds' _ 'resources', and _ 'resource allocation' were all similar codes and thus they were identically coded as 'resource allocation'. The coding process led to the identification of 14 factors affecting strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. In addition to the codes, the researcher also noted the phrase's serial number and the page number for each code. This recording of relevant information with the codes helped in easy retrieval and tracing back of codes to their specific firm contexts during the data analysis (Bryman, 2008).

The findings of the secondary data were compared to the findings of the primary data collected through the interviews. Triangulation was achieved through this comparison. For example, the researcher found through the secondary data collection that introduction of a performance management system in the public sector institutions including HEIs would improve performance. The data collected from the two private sector institutions confirmed that the use of a balanced scorecard as a performance management system contributed to the two institutions successful performance. Conversely, lack of formal performance

management systems in all the HEIs confirmed the importance of this factor in successful performance. Therefore through this comparison, triangulation was achieved.

4.4 SECTION III: MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES

The biggest limitation in section (i) of the study is the possibility of bias. Since the documents and archival records are published by the organisations, there is more chance for bias. The bias was overcome by judgmental sampling techniques wherein six case studies were chosen for the study. Conducting real time case studies enhances the studies validity, credibility and trustworthiness (Yin, 2009; Kandadi, 2006; Chari, 2007). The main focus of the investigation was around understanding the current strategic management function of the organization. This included the following:

- a) How strategy was formulated and implemented in the organization.
- b) Challenges and successes of the processes
- c) Who were the key players in the processes?

From the six organizations chosen for this study, four were Higher Education Institutions while two were private sector organisations which were identified as benchmark organisations to provide best practice.

4.4.1 Case Study Organisation Profiles.

This section provides a brief overview of the organisations that were chosen for this study. A detailed description about the core activities of the case study organisations and names of the participating organizations have been camouflaged as a part of the data protection agreement signed with the organisations before commencing the study.

4.4.1.1 Case No 1. Public University (A)

Public University A is a leading University. The University is based on a federal structure with a central office and four constituent colleges. Each college is headed by a Principal who is assisted by a Vice-Principal, a Registrar, a

Finance Officer, Deans, and a Librarian. In total the University has 13 faculties offering various undergraduate and graduate programmes.

The University has a student population of 10,900 out of which 3,800 are female representing 35%. It also has a staff complement of 800 academic and administrative staff and 556 support staff.

The management system is highly centralised with an organisational structure that is rigid and inflexible, making the operations and decision making very ineffective and inefficient (MIM, 2004). Public University A's academic system is over centralised and slow moving, with decision making concentrated in the University Senate. Administrative procedures are lengthy, making it difficult for Schools to respond rapidly to emerging national needs (MIM, 2004)

The following were interviewed:

Chairman of Council

Secretary for Education, Science and Technology (Ex Officio Member)

The Vice Chancellor

The University Registrar

The University Finance Officer

University Internal Auditor

Deans of Faculty (4)

Senior Lecturer or Professor (4)

Staff Associate or Lecturer (4)

Student Union Representative (3)

Involving the constituent colleges and the central administration office serves as the best way of studying strategy formulation and implementation in this institution. This has been supported by Yin (2003) in his assertion that within a single case study, multiple numbers of units of analysis can be used. This case provides an opportunity to study different cultural issues in respect to strategy formulation and implementation in the different colleges.

4.4.1.2 Case No.2 Public University (B)

This institution is one of the public Universities established recently in Malawi. It has a student population of 3250 and a staff compliment of 120 academic staff members and 150 support staff.

The University has the following faculties: Science, Health Sciences, Security, Business and Commerce, Education. The following were interviewed;

Chairman of Council
The Vice Chancellor
The University Registrar
The University Finance Officer
Deans of Faculty (3)
Senior Lecturer or Professor (4)
Staff Associate or Lecturer (4)
Student Union Representative (3)

4.4.1.3 Case No. 3 Public University (C).

The University is one of the recent public universities in Malawi. The following were interviewed: Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Four Deans, Five Heads of Department, four members of the Support staff and three student leaders. The University has a student population of 5010 out of which 3100 are males and 1910. The institution has a staff complement of 320 academic and administrative staff and 270 support staff. Out of these the percentage of female employees is 30%. The following were interviewed:

Chairman of Council
The Vice Chancellor
The University Registrar
The University Finance Officer
Deans of Faculty (2)
Senior Lecturer or Professor (4)
Staff Associate or Lecturer (3)
Student Union Representative (3)

4.4.1.4 Case No. 4 Private University

This University is one of the fastest growing HEIs in Malawi. The institution belongs to Christian Church. Currently, it is offering 4 programmes. It has a staff compliment of 40 academic staff, 50 support staff against a student population of 800.

The following were interviewed: Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Two Deans, two Heads of Department, three members of the Support staff and three student leaders.

4.4.1.5 Case No. 5 Commercial Bank

The bank was originally set up as a development bank and was converted to a commercial bank later. The bank's original mandate was to contribute to the economic and social development in Malawi. In order to achieve this mandate the bank provided medium to long-term loans in both local and foreign currencies; and equity investments which upon maturity were sold and the proceeds re-invested. Having largely achieved its mandate, the Bank commenced operations as a commercial bank around the year 2002.

Since the year 2006, the bank has become operationally profitable, and has continued to turn good results since then. It offers the following services: Corporate Banking, Structured / Trade Finance, Corporate Project Finance, Advisory Services, Retail Services.

The bank has branches and agencies spread throughout the country and has a staff compliment of 257 employees. The case was selected because the author had access to it for data collection purposes. Besides the issue of accessibility, the banking industry is one of the most developed industries in Malawi as they require meeting some minimum national and internationally set standards. This was an opportunity for the author as he was able to benchmark SM practices in the HEI to those in the banking industry. The following participated in the study; three members from the executive management, two junior managers and 3 operational staff from various departments.

4.4.2 Case No. 6 Multinational Telecommunications PLC

This company is one of the leading telecommunications companies in Malawi. The company is one of the oldest Mobile phone companies and yet the biggest in terms of profits and number of subscribers. It operates across the country and has a staff establishment of 175.

The following were interviewed: The Managing Director, The Marketing Director, The Director of Finance and four operational staff. This case was selected because the author wanted to have a flavor of a multi-national company with the objective of improving validity of the study. Furthermore, the choice of this multinational over other multi-national companies was based on the author's contacts that would enable access to data.

4.5 SECTION IV: ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES

The biggest limitation in analysis of secondary data is the possibility of bias as already highlighted in section iii of this chapter. Since the documents and reports are published by the case organisations themselves, there is more chance for bias. The bias was overcome by judicial sampling techniques wherein no more than seven case studies were chosen for this study. The data gathered from the qualitative research was analysed by applying the concepts of Grounded Theory wherein line by line coding was conducted to identify the 21 factors influencing strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Further analysis resulted in identification of four core categories. These helped develop a framework which was termed POMI. Based on Alashloo (2005) framework, the factors were grouped and regrouped to develop the POMI framework which comprises four core categories and 21 strategy formulation and implementation factors.

The coding phases (open and axial) of the grounded theory analysis have resulted in identifying factors influencing strategic management in HEIs. A total of 21 factors influencing strategic management in HEIs have been identified. Although these factors influence each other, they have been dealt with as mutually independent factors because of their individual roles in achieving the organizational goals. The following sections describe each of these factors in detail with substantiating codes (interviewee responses). **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the core categories from the selective coding

phase and the SM factors from the open and axial coding. The SM factors are evaluated with relevant theories in the existing Strategic Management literature and they directly answer the first question (Q1) developed for this study. The discussions for each factor endeavor to answer to questions two and three (Q2, 3) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The 21 strategic management factors identified during the open and axial coding phases are grouped into core categories based on their similarities, and are created using selective coding techniques of the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin 1998). From the 21 SM factors, four core categories have been developed based on Alashloo (2005), Kazmi (2008) and De Wit and Myers (2003) frameworks. These categories are: (1) Planning (2) Organisation (3) Managerial and Employee (Individual). Strauss and Corbin (1998) have also advised that selection of core categories need not be based on specific criteria. In this case, the researcher has modified three frameworks by Alashloo et al (2005), Kazmi (2008) and De Wit and Myers (2003) based on power of control and influence (Saunders et al, 2006). Table 4-2 presents these four core categories with the corresponding SM factors identified during the empirical study.

Figure 4-1 identifies the four organizational SM dimensions and their interrelationships. The Individual category is placed at the epicenter to reflect the strategic role that the employees play in the achievement of organizational objectives. Furthermore, the Individual category is considered to be cross cutting as it influences the three other categories. For example, for the strategic management process to be successful, all the key success factors identified need to be managed. To management these factors, individual employees need to have the capabilities to lead, formulate strategy, communicate and implement it. Furthermore employees should be able to do things differently (change). Therefore, employee capabilities, willingness to change and the quality issues tend to cut across all the other factors.

Figure 4-2 A thematic representation of the core SM categories and their interrelationships.



The Planning category is related to the process through which the entire strategy is formulated and implemented to achieve the intended content under a specific context. The Organization category is associated with the factors that are influenced by the nature and behavior of the organization. Manager category is associated with the factors that are influenced by the leader while the Individual category is associated with factors that are influenced by the individuals within the organization.

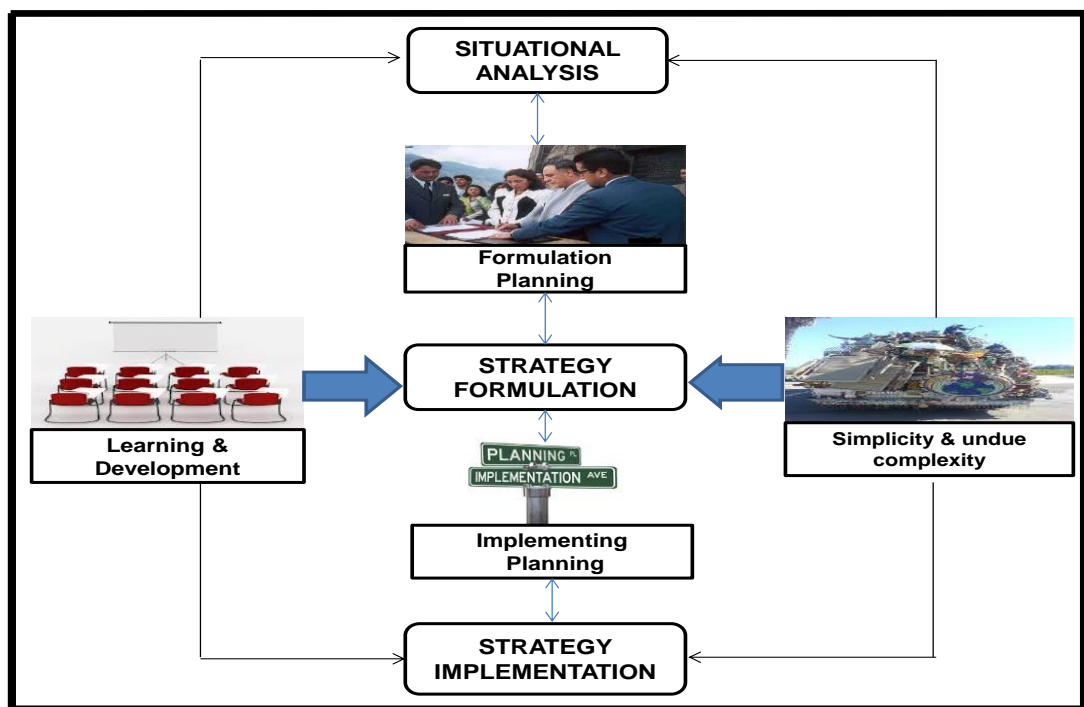
Table 4-2 Four Core Categories with the constituent SM Factors

Core Categories (From selective coding phase)	Strategic Management Factor (From open and axial coding phase)
Planning Factors	Formulation Planning (F1) Learning and Organizational Development (F2) Simplicity and Undue Complexity (F3) Implementation Planning (F4)
Organization Factors	Financial Resources (F5) Regulations, Systems and Procedures (F6) Organisational Culture (F7) Communication (F8) Information Communication Technology (F9) Performance Management (F10) Organization Structure (F11) Reward Systems (F12). Evangelisation (13) Total Quality Management (F21)
Manager Centered Factors	Leadership (F14) Politics and Power (F15) Trust and Commitment (F16) Entrepreneurship (F17) Human Resources Management (F18)
Employee Centered Factors	Change Management (F19) Lack of capabilities (F20)

4.5.1 Planning Dimension

The study has revealed that lack of adequate planning is one of the major reasons for failure to formulate and implement strategic plans in HEIs. While much of the available Strategic Management literature suggest the role that SM plays in improving performance, Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst (2006), Mintzberg et al (2003) and Kotter (1996), the majority of the respondents indicated that they had challenges in planning for success in areas such as formulation planning and implementation planning. The planning core category encompassed several factors F1, F2, F3 and F4. A conceptual view of the planning dimension is presented in Figure 4-3 .

Figure 4-3 Conceptual view of the Planning dimension, Source: Author



depicts the relevant factors of this core category with some substantiating codes. A unique number (e.g. 18e) is assigned to each of the codes displayed. Kandadi (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that assigning numbers to the substantiating codes assist the author to identify code origins and context for further reference. The following sections provide detailed analysis of various SM factors on planning core category.

Table 4-3 Planning Dimension: Constituent Factors and Substantiating quotes

<p>4.2 Constituent Factors</p> <p>Lack of Formulation Planning (F), Lack of Implementation Planning (F2), Simplicity and Undue Complexity (F3). Learning and Organizational Development (F4)</p>
<p>Substantiating Codes</p> <p>Lack of planning in our public universities is a major challenge that we face in this country. We hope that the National Council for Higher Education which Government has established will help address strategic management challenges that the HEI sector in Malawi is facing. (18e).</p> <p>Private sector institutions have proved to be better at planning. The public sector institutions can learn from the private sector....Actually that's the thinking in the new public management or new managerialism. (24f).</p> <p>Some people still think strategic management is a waste of time and resources.....it is not surprising therefore, that our institutions are not performing (18g)</p> <p>We also make sure that we keep our plans simple....When the former Vice Chancellor was appointed, he engaged some strategic planning experts from the USA to help the university develop its first strategic plan....The biggest problem then was that we did not develop a plan for implementation. While we had a good strategic plan document though very voluminous, it was never implemented successfully....some departments developed work plans (17s)</p> <p>Planning is our major strength...We review our plans every month due to the competitive nature of our industry. (3j).</p> <p>If we don't plan, our competitors will overtake us.(3q).</p> <p>We ensure that we involve all staff members in planning. Thats the only way we will ensure there is buy-in among staff...We need to involve our staff in the planning process so that they are part and parcel of the decisions that we will take.(8i)</p> <p>Our success lies in our ability to use SMART objectives. Before developing plans , we ensure that we take a bottom up approach and that all staff members involved are provided with relevant orientation on how to go about with the process (8h)</p> <p>We have charged the Marketing Manager with the responsibility of ensuring that all heads of department achieve their plans (8k).</p> <p>Even the Bible says where there is no vision people perish. Planning helps develop a vision.....(3p)</p>

4.5.1.1 Strategy Formulation Planning (F1)

The study has found that proper strategy formulation planning is key to development of effective strategic plans. The study found that lack of a clear strategy to formulation resulted in formulation of strategic plans which were not supported by the majority of employees in the organisation. Table 4-4 presents the substantiating codes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide

factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-4 Strategy Formulation Planning (F1): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Codes
<p>I have been here for over five years now, but I am not aware of a strategic plan for this institution, nor have I heard that we are developing one.(24i)</p>
<p>Strategy formulation is done by senior management, as a middle level manager involved in budgeting, I have never been involved in strategy formulation...It appears the process is so discrete and for a privileged few. However, this is in contrast to how the strategic planning process was managed in the private sector organization I worked for, before joining this institution, where the process was so inclusive, the planning section drew ideas from all staff members through a memo which was sent to all staff members requesting them to submit ideas to be considered ..(4j)</p>
<p>.....We haven't developed planning offices in universities in Malawi... If you look at successful universities in the western world who have succeeded in Strategic Management, they have a core team of experts that work on the planning process. In the past for example, in this university, if you were a Senior Assistant Registrar responsible for planning, you knew that you were on your way out because that's where underperforming Registrars were deployed. Yet in a modern university, you are what you are because of your strategic plans. Thus the best brains should be in strategic planning (3i)</p>
<p>The process of strategy formulation in our organisation is very systematic...This is coordinated by our marketing department which informs all staff members of the foregoing at the same time requesting them to submit their input. Involving all staff members in the process of strategy formulation in my view, has proved to be important as there is buy-in. In the past, we never involved other staff members other than senior management, however, the consultant we engaged a few years ago, encouraged us to involve all staff members in the process of strategy formulation. If you ask any staff member, they will tell you that they have taken part in strategy formulation...(8g)</p>
<p>Our strategic management is successful because we make sure that we involve all staff members in the formulation process.....(17h)</p>
<p>One of the challenges that we have is lack of ownership mentality on the part of junior staff members....They seem not to support management's endeavors aimed at taking the organization forward...(1k)</p>
<p>Our planning starts with enquiring from all staff members through memos and departmental meetings on what the institution needs to do to be successful.(10c)</p>
<p>We do not have adequate resources to include all staff members in the process of strategy formulation. We always ask HODs to make sure that they consult their subordinates as much as they can.... Off course we know that often times subordinates feel sidelined in the strategy formulation process..(6d)</p>
<p>Management is not realistic in its strategies. If we were consulted we could have contributed to the process...(2d)</p>

We don't understand why we always think finances will be provided by government.....The problem is management thinks it knows it all. But will we ever learn.....if we were involved in strategy formulation we could have been advising on some of these things..(9c).

Planning is one of most import key result area in my performance contract. At the end of the financial year I will be assessed if I was able to plan for the department and if I managed to implement the plans (9k).

We did not manage to involve all HODs in the process of strategy formulation because of time we plan to start providing trainings on strategic management to our staff members as well...(29d)

I am a head of department and I am expected to be involved or rather take part in strategy implementation. However, I was not involved in the process of formulation. The strategic plan was formulated by management and yet we are asked to implement it at departmental level...(40e).

Properties

1. Planning is a critical factor for successful strategy formulation in HEIs.
2. Leadership is key for successful strategy formulation.
3. A thorough analysis of both the internal and external environment is necessary for successful strategy formulation.
4. Besides the process being championed by the Chief Executive Officer, there is need to have an office coordinating the process.
5. Bringing in external members to facilitate strategy formulation is important. This is relevant in public institutions, such as universities where there are different stakeholders with different interests within the institution.

Strategies

1. Management needs to ensure that all staff categories are involved in the process of strategy formulation.
2. All those to take part in developing the strategy need to be oriented on the process.
3. HEIs should utilize tools and techniques available for strategy formulation.
4. Planning should be one of the key responsibilities for managers in HEIs. This should be clearly spelt out in their job descriptions.

Discussion

The study has found that although all the HEIs involved in the study followed a formal strategy formulation process, the majority of strategies implemented emerged from daily routines and processes in the organisations.

The study has also found that strategy formulation planning in HEIs is also influenced to a greater extent by factors external to the organisation. Many respondents observed that their planning was to a larger extent affected by factors external to the organisation. For example, an Administrator at one of the public universities explained the following

“after developing our regulations and conditions of service, we were advised by government to abandon the proposal and to just adopt conditions of service of another public university” (17f)

Another common example given by many respondents was the government directive to delink some colleges from one university to establish two new universities. The decision by government to establish the new universities completely took the parent university by surprise. This implied that the whole vision for the parent university would change as some constituent colleges would be delinked. Thus such external factors can affect performance of the HEIs.

The study reveals some differences in formulation planning between private sector organisations and HEIs. Although the two benchmark organisations followed a formal strategy formulation process, just like the the HEIs, the difference was that in the two benchmark organisations, strategies formulated were reviewed on a regular basis in response to the dynamic nature of the business. The study found that in one of the two benchmark organisations strategies were reviewed biannually while in the other one they were reviewed monthly due to hypercompetition. The regular reviews ensured that the two institutions should be in touch with what is happening in the external environment.

The study highlights the importance of planning in achieving successful organisational performance. Many respondents in both the HEIs and the two benchmark organisations noted that lack of adequate planning including failure to involve implementers in the formulation process affected strategy formulation. For example, a Head of Department at the public university (A) explained as below:

“Strategy formulation is done by senior management, as a middle level manager involved in budgeting, I have never been involved in strategy formulation...It appears the process is so discrete and for a privileged few. However, this is in contrast to how the strategic planning process was managed in the private sector organization I worked for, before joining this institution, where the process was so inclusive, the planning section drew ideas from all staff members through a memo which was sent to all staff members requesting them to submit ideas to be considered”

Similar observations were made at the other public universities as well as the benchmark organisations. A Head of Department at one of the two benchmark organisations (the commercial bank) noted the following:

“We ensure that we involve all staff members in planning. Thats the only way we will ensure there is buy-in among staff....We need to involve our staff in the planning process so that they are part and parcel of the decisions that we will take” .(8i)

While the traditional view of strategy posits that strategy formulation is a responsibility of top management (Mintzberg et al 1998; Andrews 1967; Chandler, 1962), current thinking suggests that strategy formulation should not be left to senior management. Many scholars believe that strategy formulation should include all organisational members (see e.g. Deloitte et Touch 2006; Dandira 2011; Collier *et al.*, 2004; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). The advantages ascribed by researchers to increasing the scope of involvement include:

- I. improved strategy implementation, higher quality decisions, better understanding of deliberate strategy.
- II. enhanced organisational learning.
- III. stronger organisational commitment.
- IV. higher job satisfaction.
- V. reduced resistance to change.
- VI. improved rationality and adaptability of the strategy process.

While the respondent in the HEIs partially attributed their inability to achieve acceptable implementation levels to their not being involved in the process of strategy formulation process, in contrast, the study found a different situation in the private sector organisations. All the respondents in the two benchmark organisations opined that involvement of all organisational members in the strategy formulation process may have contributed to the successful implementation. For instance, in one of the two benchmark organization, the marketing department sent questionnaires to all employees through the institutions Local Area Network (LAN) for them to give suggestions on the strategic plan. In this way the employees felt their views were considered.

Besides the involvement of the implementers in the strategy formulation process, atleast ten of the respondents in the HEIs believed that successful strategy implementation depended, to a greater extent, on the quality of the strategy formulation process. For example, some respondents in the HEIs noted that the quality of their plans was affected by lack of orientation and experience in SM.

This is in agreement with the literature reviewed. Many authors (Hrebiniak, 2006; Alexander, 1985; Okumus 2001; Cai, 2008) believe that good implementation cannot overcome the shortcomings of poor strategy formulation. They highlight that the type of strategy that is developed, and the actual process of strategy formulation, will influence the effect of implementation. Alexander (1985) notes that the need to start with a formulated strategy that involves a good idea or concept is mentioned most often in helping promote successful implementation. As Allio (2005) notes, good implementation naturally starts with

good strategic input: the soup is only as good as the ingredients (Allio, 2005; Cai 2008).

The importance of people management in effective strategy formulation planning has been acknowledged in the two benchmark organisations examined in this study. The majority of the respondents in the two private sector institutions attributed their success partly to effective people management. For example, it was mandatory for all Heads of Department in these organisations to develop work plans as part of their annual performance contracts. Furthermore, the inclusion of planning in the job descriptions helped inculcate a culture of planning in the organizations. While there was a well coordinated planning effort in the two private sector organisations, the study found the process to be wanting, in the HEIs. The study found that planning was not well emphasized as a critical performance attribute in the performance contracts for managers in HEIs.

All in all, formulation planning is an important factor to developing good strategic plans which are based on critical needs of the organization. HEIs need to plan for formulation before the actual process is undertaken. Furthermore, strategy formulation should be a responsibility of all staff members if the final document and plans are to be accepted and implemented.

4.5.1.2 Implementation Planning (F4)

Twenty respondents in the HEIs believed that strategy implementation failed in most cases because of lack of a coordinated effort to implement the plans. The study depicted that a well-coordinated implementation plan was a requirement for successful implementation. Table 4-5 presents the substantiating codes for this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-5 Implementation Planning (F2): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Quotes
<p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation (5m)</p>
<p>From our five year strategic plan we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this trickles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan.(8f)</p>
<p>..We seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan. As implementers, we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning (17a)</p>
<p>...I recently asked the Vice Chancellor about the establishment of an implementation committee to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan...up to now nothing is happening.....this is likely going to create another white elephant.....(17c)</p>
<p>Strategy implementation is championed by the Marketing department....Once the document has been developed, the Marketing department summarizes the plans and identifies activities that are supposed to be carried out by different departments...and it ensures that the activities are undertaken.. The Audit department also follows up to ensure that the plan is being implemented. In so doing you can actually see how implementation is being managed...(19d)</p>
<p>Strategy is developed by Deans, and other senior managers.. we are not involved so I don't think we should be involved in implementation....(19q)</p>
<p>This time around we have involved all staff members in the process of strategy formulation and we also hope that once we have developed an implementation plan we will put together a team to oversee implementation..(19s).</p>
<p>Strategic planning is considered as a strategic process but implementation is taken as an operational process. We do not look at the two as being on the same level....this is the problem (42h)</p>

Properties

1. Planning is a critical factor for successful strategy implementation in HEIs.
2. Leadership is key for successful strategy implementation.
3. Resistance to change affects strategy implementation planning.
4. An implementation plan outlines in detail the manner in which the strategy is to be realized.

Strategies

1. Strategy implementation is a difficult task. Managers need to be on top of things to make sure that the process is successful.
2. HEIs should utilize tools and techniques available for strategy implementation.
3. Developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms enables the organisations to assess performance and to take corrective action where things are not going on well.
4. Those involved in implementation should take part in strategy formulation.
5. Once strategic plans have been developed, work plans spelling out how the strategy is to be implemented should be developed.
6. Quality mechanisms should be put in place to ensure high levels of performance.

Discussion

The study has found that poor strategy implementation was partially as a result of lack of implementation planning. The majority of the respondents in the HEIs (All the Vice Chancellors and 8 Deans) believed that failure for their institutions to implement strategy was due to the fact that once the strategic plans were developed there were no plans put in place on how to implement the formulated strategies. Failure to plan for implementation resulted in the institutions not implementing the strategic plans. In contrast, the respondents in the two benchmark institutions attributed success in the strategy implementation effort to the implementation planning initiatives. They explained that the long term plans were translated into yearly, half yearly and quarterly plans. The benchmark organisations also intimated that once the long term plans have been translated into the annual work plans, they are costed to become the annual budgets. There is a clear link between the strategic plan, annual work plans and the budget. As one of the respondents at one of the two benchmark organisations explained:

“Our strategic management process is systematic. Once we have developed our five year plans, we make sure that we break the plan into

yearly plans based on departmental needs. The next step is costing the work plans to come up with the annual budget. Off course we use a balanced scorecard to measure performance. From the foregoing you will note that our strategic management is successful”

The study has also found that strategy implementation was considered inferior compared to strategy formulation. At least five respondents in the HEIs reported that there was more effort in strategy formulation compared to strategy implementation. This was also confirmed by the level of involvement of top management in the process of strategy development. Strategy formulation in all the HEIs was carried out by top management coordinated mostly by the office of the deputy vice chancellor with input mostly from deans and heads of department. Once the strategic plan was launched there was nothing much done afterwards.

Strategy implementation has not been considered important compared to formulation as confirmed from what is obtaining in the HEIs. This could explain why strategic management as a process is not successful. For example, it was established in all the HEIs that once the strategic plans had been developed, there was no form efforts to monitor performance. In contrast, the study has found that in the two benchmark organisations, strategy implementation was considered as important as formulation. Apart from treating implementation equally important as formulation, there were regular strategy implementation review meetings in the benchmark institutions aimed at assessing how the organisation was performing. While strategy implementation was viewed as an operational issue in the HEIs, the two benchmark organisations treated it as an important process.

The findings of this study support the extant literature reviewed. Many respondents believed that there was poor implementation of the strategic plans due to lack of implementation plans. This assertion has been confirmed by Dandira (2011), Okumus (2009) and Alexander (1985) who argue that most of the strategic plans developed have not been implemented due to problems at implementation stage. The study has also confirmed the fact that strategy

implementation is viewed as an operational issue as opposed to planning which is given prominence. (see e.g Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst, 2006; Gimbert et al 2010; Best, 1997; Thompson & Strickland, 2003; Reed & Buckley, 1988; Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

An implementation plan may comprise the following components: the objectives of the implementation, the tasks and activities that are required to implement the strategy and the responsibilities for the achievement of those tasks (Van Der Maas, 2008). Planning for implementation is an important factor for successful strategy implementation in HEIs. HEIs need to ensure that efforts are put in to enhance planning for implementation. Regular review meetings need to be conducted to evaluate performance of the plans.

4.5.1.3 Learning and Employee Development (F2)

The study depicts the crucial role that learning and employee development (training) plays in successful formulation and implementation of strategy. The study has found that an employee's competence is critical for the current and future progress and prosperity of HEIs. Table 4-6 presents the substantiating codes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-6 Learning and Employee Development (F3): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Quotes
One of the biggest challenges in universities is that we often concentrate on academic qualifications for staff such as Masters and PhD degrees. We do not look at developing lecturer's capacity on how they should improve their teaching (45 h).
The end of first semester examination results are out. Over fifty percent of the first year students have failed. Chances are that these students will struggle to proceed. One of the reasons for poor performance of students is the quality of lecturers that we have..... We have recruited many lecturers without proper training. In the past, the Committee on University Teaching and Learning (CUTL) would organize orientation trainings for new staff.....(22d)
..Here training usually focuses on academic staff members. We rarely train our support staff...we have concentrated on developing capacity of academic staff at Masters and PhD

level...our support staff have rarely been provided with on- the-job training....Where I worked in a private sector organization, Training was seen as an important source of competitive advantage....The organization recruited an officer at senior management level to manage the training function..(4h)

There is need for appropriate induction for academic staff members... Academics get to where they are through personal efforts....once recruited academics are left to swim or sink on their own... There is need for regular assessment of faculty's capabilities and provision of relevant trainings..(3s)

We do not develop systematic Training Plans due to austerity. Thus priority for training opportunities is given to academic members of staff... Those Universities that have done well amidst this supper complexity environment are those that have ensured that they have taken into consideration the cultures of other professionals and treated them equally in terms of providing learning and growth opportunities... (5k).

We realize that the success of our organisation lies in having a work force with requisite skills, we provide training to our staff on a continuous basis(8j)

We have training plans and we ensure that they are implemented.(8n)

We have a learning and organisational development department which coordinates trainings for all staff. Our policy is that each and every employee attends atleast one training per year.....this helps our staff perform better and enhances their motivation .(3m)

Properties

1. Training needs identification is an important activity which helps identify knowledge gaps. Training plans should be developed based on these identified knowledge gaps.
2. Training helps employees acquire knowledge to help them enhance their performance.
3. There is need to provide the framework for which to establish and cultivate a culture of training in the organisation.
4. All organisational members need to be provided with training in their respective areas of specialisation. It is recommended that every year an employee should attend at least one relevant training programme.

Strategies

1. The organisation needs to demonstrate its commitment within budgetary constraints, to providing its entire staff with appropriate training, developmental and educational opportunities that will enable them to

acquire the skills and competencies that are required by the institution to meet its objectives.

2. Training can help to define the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, thus ensuring that all parties in the organisation are familiar with and understand their roles and responsibilities.
3. It is important to ensure that employees are properly trained and developed to levels appropriate to their roles in the skills they need to carry out their present jobs at an acceptable standard and prepare them for future roles in line with Career Management discussions.
4. A training policy will help management in making correct decisions about human capacity development.

Discussion

The study re-emphasises the need for HEIs to provide the employees with the opportunity for training on an on-going basis to equip and/or supplement them with the skills and competencies required to perform their jobs in the most productive and satisfying manner. Normally, an academic institution comprises the following staff cadres: Academic staff, Administrative staff, Clerical staff, and Technical staff and Support staff. The study supports the extant literature that all organizational members need to be provided with relevant training on an ongoing basis to equip them with the required skills and competencies in their jobs. While naturally one would expect that employee learning and development to be an obvious undertaking in an HEI, the research discovered that this was far from the truth.

The study found that there was no formal strategy for on-the-job training especially for junior staff in HEIs. Some junior staff interviewed, explained that they had not attended any short course in six years. Some narrated that they were not even given formal orientation training on their jobs. This was corroborated by a number of respondents including some academic staff. For instance a Staff Associate at one of the public universities explained as below:

“When I was recruited I was not provided with any formal orientation on my job. I am told that in the past the Committee on University

Teaching and Learning CUTL would provide trainings, In my case I was just given an office and a computer and a class to teach”.

Similarly, a Dean at another public university seems to be in agreement with the above observations when he explained the following:

..”Here training usually focuses on academic staff members. We rarely train our support staff...we have concentrated on developing capacity of academic staff at Masters and PhD level...our support staff have rarely been provided with on- the-job training....Where I worked in a private sector organization, Training was seen as an important source of competitive advantage....The organization recruited an officer at senior management level to manage the training function”..(4h)

One would expect that the challenges only affected junior staff; however, the study also revealed that there were no formal management and leadership trainings arranged for new senior managers such as Heads of Department, Deans of Faculty, Centre Directors, Finance Officers, Principals and Registrars. Conversely, the situation appeared to be different in the two benchmark organisations. Almost all respondents in the two benchmark organisations explained that their organisations placed great importance on training and employee development. For example, it was reported in both the benchmark organisations that all senior managers were supposed to attend mandatory leadership development training upon being appointed and on a regular basis there after. In some instances, executive members of management were also sponsored to undergo Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes.

The study has also revealed that lack of learning and organizational development planning affected development of Human Resources efforts. In almost all the HEIs, there were no training policies and training plans. Staff development was not properly coordinated. In contrast the two benchmark organisations had well developed training sections headed by a human resources management specialist at middle management level. Furthermore, staff training was well coordinated. These organisations also had training plans

developed based on formal training needs analyses conducted yearly before commencement of a financial year.

The study also found that lack of on the job training affected organisational performance. For example, lack of on the job training for academic staff despite them having acquired Masters and PhD qualifications resulted in them performing poorly in some instances which resulted in the institutions poor performance. Four respondents in two universities actually attributed the high attrition rates in the public universities to inadequate skills of staff to teach at university level. Many respondents in most of the HEIs alluded to the fact that the Committees of University Teaching and Learning (CUTL) which arranged courses for university teaching and learning were no longer active so much that they relied on the academic qualifications, and on on-the job training provided through "*sitting by Nellie*" where staff members learn informally from the people they work with. This challenge is consistent with the literature reviewed (see e.g Armstrong 2006).

While this is the situation for senior management, there are also challenges with upcoming managers that form the future of any organisation. Career management, talent management and succession planning issues were also highlighted as impinging on the long-term success of Higher Education Institutions. Where as in the benchmark organizations there were clear succession plans, talent and career management plans developed through the established career management committees, HEIs did not have such initiatives in place. Although some respondents argued that such Human Resources Management systems were not ideal in HEIs; current thinking in management studies support the view that HEIs should adopt private sector systems and procedures that have been proved successful in the private sector and these should be adapted in the context of HEIs (Johnson et al, 2006). Examples include: outsourcing; performance management systems (the balanced scorecard); total quality management (Porter, 1980;; Norton and Kaplan 1994).

The study also found that, in the benchmark organisations, high flying graduates were motivated and deliberate efforts were made to retain them.

Some of the motivation initiatives mentioned included attaching such talent to mentors who would help develop their careers, giving them challenging tasks as well as providing them with opportunity for further training. While the HEIs provided the best opportunity for growth in terms of educational qualifications such as opportunities for scholarships for Masters and PhD degrees, sometimes, when the employees went for training outside the country, a few (5 out of 30 members of staff in one of the universities) did not come back to join the institutions due to, among other things, low salaries and poor conditions of service.

The study also revealed that failure to put right people in right places for academic staff affected performance. For example, the minimum qualifications for senior administrative staff in most of the HEIs were maintained at a Bachelors degree level. More so, there were no deliberate training programmes to make up for the low qualifications. Additionally, while it was a policy requirement that those to be appointed as Deans and Head of Department should be of the rank of Senior Lecturer or above, the reality on the ground is that some members of staff holding such positions are of a lower rank. The low levels of qualifications by the aforementioned senior positions affected performance in these organisations. As one respondent at one of the universities explained:

“We have many challenges that have resulted in our failure to achieve our plans. Firstly, we need to train our administrators.....we need a deliberate policy to develop capacity of our administrators. All administrators should have atleast an MBA or even the DBAs or PhD. The other issue is our Academic leaders e.g. Heads of Department and Deans. The senate regulations are clear, for a Dean we need a minimum of a Senior Lecturer....but currently, we have Lecturers heading the faculties in some situations, this brings challenges..”

The importance of employee learning and development is underscored by the fact that several successful organisations placed great importance on training and education of organisational members during the implementation effort

(Armstrong, 2006; Pearce & Robinson, 2003 and Argyris, 1992). While the attainment of Masters and PhD qualifications are important in HEIs for the operational responsibilities such as teaching and consultancy, the study has revealed that equipping employees with specific knowledge and skills at all levels of an organisation can have a positive influence on implementation of strategy in the following ways:

1. Learning may increase the level of motivation and confidence of employees which can influence their performance. For example, at one organization, courses such as business etiquette and professionalism, supervisory skills, internal marketing, mastering strategic management and strategic leadership, were mandatory to specific positions and they were found to be helpful in improving the level of motivation of organisation members. The study found that the learning and development initiatives in the two benchmark organisations contributed significantly to improved performance (see fig 4.5) These organisations had training sections that coordinated employee learning and development function through which activities like Human Resources Planning, Training planning and the actual delivery of trainings were coordinated.
2. Learning can play an important role where change will need to be introduced. Argyris (1992) propose that organisations do not perform the actions that produce the learning; rather, it is individual members of the organization who behave in ways that lead it, although organisations can create conditions which facilitate such learning. Often times, strategy calls for doing things differently, hence training becomes a necessity to ensure that the organisational members acquire the necessary skills. Furthermore, Armstrong (2006) notes that the knowledge and skills a worker has – which comes from education and training, including the training that experience brings, generate productive capacity. The study reiterates the role of learning as an important agent of change. Respondents in the HEIs felt that their organisations needed to take a deliberate role to enhance employee learning. On the other hand,

Respondents in one of the benchmark organisations highlighted the important role that the training, orientation and briefing programmes played in ensuring that change is accepted in the organisation. For example before introducing any product or system, all employees who will be involved, are provided with relevant trainings.

3. Learning facilitates improvement of employee's skills, competences and knowledge, thereby contributing to organizational performance. This was evidenced in HEIs where provision of training to academic members of staff was a prerequisite for them to become full Lecturers. This is consistent with assertions by many authors such as Armstrong (2006), Marsick (1994) and Argyris (1992) who opine that learning helps employees acquire requisite job skills and competencies to improve performance.

All in all, training is an important source of sustainable competitive advantage in HEIs. HEIs need to invest in learning of all staff members. The process should include identification of training needs and development of training plans. This would help to ensure that a coordinated approach is adopted.

4.5.2 Simplicity and Undue Complexity (F3)

Undue complexity was identified as one of the factors influencing strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Surprisingly, the study has found that HEIs failed to implement strategy because the strategic plans were voluminous, complicated, and not responding to the immediate challenges that the institutions were facing.

Table 4-7 presents the substantiating codes of this factor. The following subsections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-7 Simplicity and Undue Complexity (F4): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Quotes

We went for a strategic planning training workshop in 2006, where we developed the first strategic plan document. I think we need training on how to improve the process, otherwise we seem to be too ambitious in our plans.(25 a)

Look at the strategic plan for Makerere UniversityIt is a tiny document compared to ours which is over 200 pages...We do not achieve our targets....Maybe we are too ambitious. Our strategic plans are too complicated.....they are not achievable (3n)

Departments and Faculties are specialized Schools that have diverse requirements. Currently, our university has four faculties and thirteen departments..... Each of these departments has a departmental strategic plan which feeds into the faculty plan. The faculty plan feeds into the University wide plan. It is not surprising that our strategic plan documents are complex. (1m). We have a Strategic Plan which is unfortunately not fully endorsed. I do not really think we can implement it because it seems it has too many priorities. (4m)

As a University, we did not have a strategic plan until 2004. Since we never planned strategically before, the first plan was a monumental task for several reasons, because colleges never believed in strategic management it being a new phenomenon, they were also wondering why management was bothering them to develop the strategic plans. Secondly, because colleges had not planned strategically before, there was so much to go into the strategic plan and everybody was overwhelmed about how to implement it. Furthermore, the amount of money that was required then was enormous. To make it even worse, the Strategic Plan was a new language for the majority of the people as a result when the plans were ready, college Principals did not understand the documents as such could also not communicate them. The main issue was voluminousness of detail, inexperience of the key players in Strategic Management and interconnectedness to delineate real issues. (11k).

“Our first five years plan was very complex and I think we struggled to achieve it. After the poor performance of the first plan, we called in consultants to help as with the process. We have a five year plan which is reviewed annually but we also have quarterly, monthly and also bimonthly reviews looking at the dynamic nature of the telecommunications industry. Furthermore, we have tried to simplify the process because we believe that the best strategy is premised on simplicity. Gone are the days when you have a complicated 300 or so strategic plan which the authors cannot even manage to understand. (15h).

I must admit that though I am a Professor, I need some training on strategic management..... (27f).

Our first strategic plan was not fully implemented because it was too complicated....Our current document has been simplified and it is easy to understand. (27e).

The problem with our universities is that sometimes they take time to respond to criticals issues.....(28c).

We do not believe in simplicity. We believe in the fact that simplicity is the ultimate complexity. (16k)

Properties.

1. Complexity brings chaos. Strategic plan documents should be simple and straightforward.
2. Complexity is an obvious ingredient for failure. When strategic plan documents are complex, employees find it difficult to implement them.
3. Strategy evangelisation helps employees to understand their roles towards strategy implementation.
4. Communication helps organisational members to understand the strategy.
5. Learning and development are key to ensuring organizational members understand the strategy
6. HEIS need to be learning organisations if organizational members are to understand and implement strategy.

Strategies

1. Once strategic plans have been developed, they need to be summarized and copies should be made available to all staff members in the organization. Heads of department should work on evangelizing the organizational strategy to all members of staff within their departments.
2. Provision of training to personnel involved in strategic planning is essential. This helps strategy framers to develop plans that are easy to understand and implement.
3. Development of complex documents is already recipe for strategy failure. Managers need to ensure that the strategic plans are summarized for every staff member to understand. Otherwise one would not implement a document their do not understand.
4. Use of strategy implementation techniques such as the balanced scorecard helps in simplifying the strategy.

Discussion

The issue of undue complexity was implied from respondents who believed that the whole issue about strategic planning was complex and difficult to realize. Some respondents believed that SM was an academic exercise which could not achieve results. In the two benchmark organisations, the study found that simplified strategic plans were likely to be understood and implemented

compared to complex documents. For example, five respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that they were able to implement their strategic plans with a very high success rate because the documents were simplified and all staff members were aware what their roles were towards the implementation effort.

Furthermore, the respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that simplicity was achieved because, among other reasons, managers involved in strategy formulation and implementation attended various trainings on leadership and strategic management. In contrast, respondents in the HEIs believed that failure to implement the plans was partially because the strategy framers were not realistic. For example, one respondent at one of the universities explained the following:

Our annual budget for last year was U\$17 million. Based on experience, the budget is usually increased by not more than 10 percent annually. Our 5 years strategic plan is worthy over U\$250 million. I don't see how we are going to achieve this.

The study also found that provision of training to organizational leaders enhanced their ability to understand strategic management. The study revealed that in the organisations where strategy implementation was deemed successful, it was mandatory for senior management (organizational leaders) to undergo relevant trainings as regular as possible. All respondents in the two benchmark institutions explained that all managers attended various leadership trainings locally and internationally. In contrast, the respondents in the HEIs noted that lack of training interventions could be one of the factors influencing the failure to understand let alone implement strategy.

Despite undue complexity being mentioned as a factor affecting strategic management, very few authors have addressed this issue. At least Alexander (1985), Porter (1986) and Lau (1999) recognize the need for simplicity in strategy formulation. For example, Lau (1999) insists that strategy implementation fails because most companies are burdened with undue

complexity. They go on to say that these organisations are bogged down in principles that produce similar responses to competition. Other authors (e.g. Mintzberg, 1998; Johnson et al, 2006; Johnson & Scholes, 2004) seem to also agree with this observation when they suggest that strategies need to be SMART (Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely).

While some respondents alluded to the fact that undue complexity affected the strategy implementation, others felt that the undue complexity was as a result of the fact that since strategic management was a new phenomenon, a university which comprises many departments, centres and faculties just had too many things to include in the strategic plans. As a result of this, the universities ended up developing voluminous documents that tried to incorporate all the issues. Some respondents claimed that the complexity came about because HEI managers were still learning how to formulate and implement strategies since this was a relatively new phenomenon in HEIs in Malawi.

The researcher has also documented the challenges of undue complexity and lack of strategic management knowledge in the course of data collection. The questionnaires had to be changed several times because it transpired that not many people were conversant with strategic management terms and theories. The author would spend time explaining strategic management terms and concepts prior to the interview in order to give chance to the respondents to appreciate what the interview was all about and what type of responses were expected.

Issues of undue complexity have also been highlighted in the way that HEIs respond to potential businesses and opportunities for growth. Some respondents (five in HEI C) believed that HEIs have deep rooted bureaucratic tendencies that affect growth and development. They argue that it sometimes takes unnecessarily long for some HEIs to consider new developments proposed by government, the private sector, as well as, potential donors.

This was, for example, alluded to, by two senior government officials from documents analysed who separately complained that it took unnecessarily too long (over two years) for one university to respond to a request by government

for a specialized programme on distance learning. Despite the fact that this delay was attributed to quality management issues and the fact that decisions in the university followed a federal committee system, it was felt that looking at the dynamic nature of the environment, there was need for the HEIs to revisit their operations so that they were more able and prepared to respond to the needs of society.

All in all, HEIs need to develop SMART plans if strategy implementation is to be successful. Strategic management knowledge can be enhanced by training, evangelization and proper communication.

4.5.3 Organisation Dimension

4.5.3.1.1 The study has revealed that the nature of the organisation set up and organisation dynamics are important determinant factors for Organisation core category encompasses several factors: F5, F6, F7, F10, F11, F12 and F13. A conceptual view of the Organisation observed during the study is presented in

Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4 Conceptual view of the Organisation Dimension, Source: Author

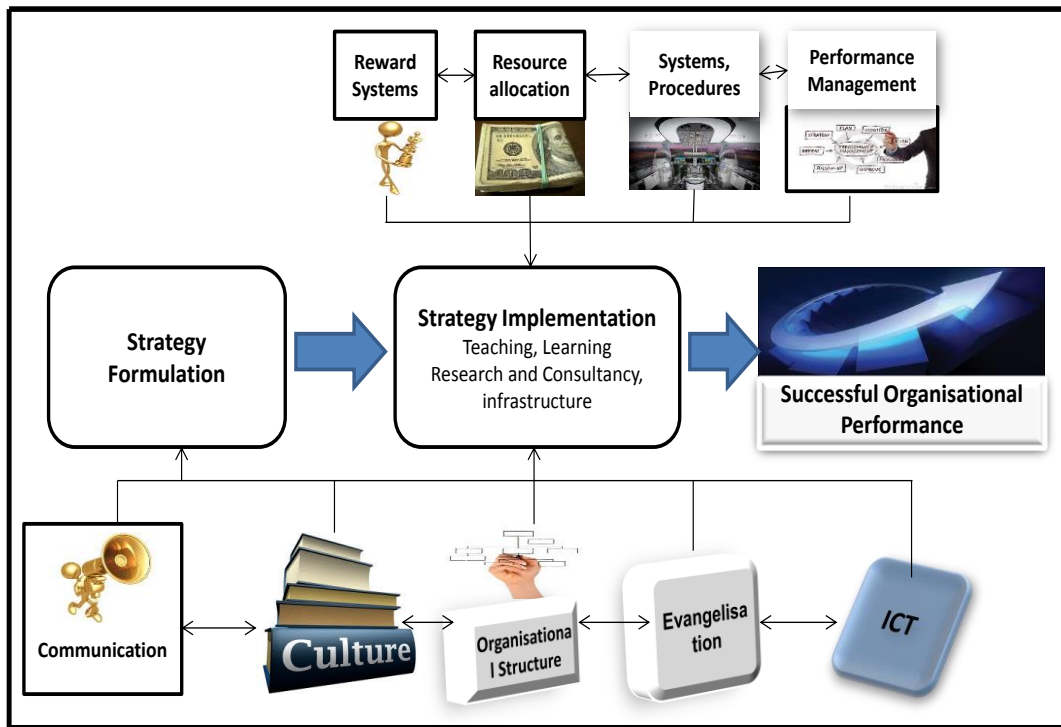


Table 4-8 presents the substantiating codes for the organization core category. The detailed analysis of the various Organisational core category are presented in tables (4-8 to 4-17).

Table 4-8, Organisation Dimension: Constituent factors and Substantiating codes.

4-7 Constituent Factors
Financial Resources (F5), Regulations, Systems and Procedures (F6), Culture (F7), Communication (F8), Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) (F9), Performance Management (F10), Organisation Structure (F11) Reward Systems (F12) and Evangelisation (F13)
Substantiating Codes
<p>One of the challenges we have is that as a federal system, most decisions are made through committees, sometimes this system delays decision making. (31k).</p> <p>We have a lean structure which helps speedy decision making process(8j)</p> <p>Our policy is to use first names when calling each other...This ensures that all staff members treat each other as colleagues.....This builds employee motivation. (8i).</p> <p>Performance management is one of the greatest challenges that we have in this University....Some of the performance challenges we have with staff is because we do not have a system to appraise and where necessary caution our staff (15c)</p> <p>....Because of lack of a system each staff member is doing things without follow up and monitoring.. There is no tool to appraise staff performance. (1f)</p> <p>Our structure enables us to make decisions quickly...(4ag)</p>

4.5.3.2 Resource Allocation (F5)

The majority of the respondents believe that lack of resources is one of the biggest impeders to strategy implementation. They believe that inadequate resources have led to HEIs failing to implement planned projects. Table 4-9 presents substantiating codes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-9 Resource Allocation (F5): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Quotes
We always do not get what the government promises us (9a)
....as a public institution we rely on government for funding, our main problem is that government always gives far much less than we require..... We are not even allowed to raise our own funds through charging higher fees.....Our institutions lack basic infrastructure yet we have spent so many resources in recruitment of staff....1(c)
One of the reasons for successful strategy implementation is linking of the strategic plans to annual work plans and budgets. We always make sure that we plan based on funding that we will be able to raise (8c)
....We always develop ambitious plans....the problem is that we do not have the wherewithal to implement them....Four years ago we decided to increase students' fees by 150%. However, the decision was reversed by government despite us failing to offer a better service due to lack of funds...We spend over U\$5,000 per student per year. while students only pay a contribution of about U\$100 per year....This situation makes us fail to implement most of our strategies.(3a)
Our problem is, we rely too much on government funding which is often erratic, maybe we need to plan with the hindsight in mind that government will not make available to us the resources that we require.(1c)
Our strategic plan is reviewed every month looking at the market trends and what our competitors are doing. As you are aware, this industry is very competitive and we always have to think ahead of our competitors.....Allocation of resources or rather our strategies are not usually affected by resources because we make plans based on the resource envelop....Two years ago the Malawi branch was the best performer in the whole African region. What this implies is that we surpassed our set targets...All our Malawi staff members received hefty

bonuses for the exceptional performance...(17d).

Lack of Financial resources is one of the greatest challenges facing universities in Malawi....However, we have to understand that Malawi as a country is a poor nation and we cannot expect the universities to be well funded when there are so many competing priorities.....You will have noticed that Higher Education still got a very big allocation percentage- wise in the 2012/2013 as well as 2013/14 financial years despite the many competing priorities (5c)

The cost of implementing our strategic plan is U\$260 Million Billion. This year government only gave us U\$8Million .It is therefore very unlikely that we will successfully implement our strategic plan due to lack of resources from the government....We cannot manage to generate adequate resources from our entrepreneurial activities because government always regulates the fee structure for generic students....(20e)

Last year, we beat our target by 60% ...We planned to open two more branches which we did despite the fact that the country had a problem with foreign exchange and fuel which affected business...As a profit making company we always have to ensure that we have put controls and systems in place...we have a lean structure and every employee is supposed to ensure that they work towards minimizing costs and maximizing revenue...For the past three years, we did not give bonuses to our employees because of huge losses that were made after we lost some cases where we had to compensate the plaintiffs.... (8e).

“We now have four public universities and over ten private universities. The implication of the foregoing is that these institutions will have to fight for the limited government resources. We anticipate a fight of the survival of the fittest. Universities therefore need to think and act strategically to survive in this environment which has become turbulent.”(41da)

The public universities have structural problems which government needs to rectify... Just imagine recently, there were strikes over monthly allowances at two of the public universities where students who pay tuition of \$140 per year were demanding that their monthly stipend should be increased from \$100 per month to \$180 (21f).

.....There is a lot of moonlighting in the public universities in Malawi...Lecturers do generate a lot of money through private consultancies that are done during normal work hours...There is a research and consultancy policy which provides guidelines on the modus operandi but unfortunately this is not followed....(21g)

The biggest resource in a university institution is the human resource. The human resource is an important resource which if managed effectively can lead to successful organisational performance. As a new Vice Chancellor, I will make sure that we improve the way we handle our people. 44 d

I don't think government should be blamed for the failure of universities to perform. Just imagine, in Kenya, the University of Nairobi gets only 30% of its budget from government. At Kenyatta University and Moi University the situation is the same government contributes only about 40% . Most of the infrastructure projects for example in the public universities in Kenya are not funded by government but by the universities income generating initiatives including public private partnerships. 48c

We recently visited the president at state house. She challenged us to help in resource mobilization. She explained that just across the border public universities are aggressive in research, consultancies and resource mobilization.(49g)

Properties

1. Financial Resources are key to effective strategic management in any organisation.
2. HEIs need to be entrepreneurial if strategic management is to be successful.
3. The proliferation of HEIs implies that government can no longer afford to allocate adequate resources to HEIs in the manner that it did in the past. HEIs need to identify alternative sources of funding.
4. HEIs need to exploit research and consultancy opportunities as alternative sources of funding.

Strategies

1. Lobbying funding agencies can be an important strategy for resource mobilization. HEIs should not just rely on the government for funding. They should come up of recourse mobilization strategies and efficient utilisation of the limited resources.
2. There is need to put in place financial control systems that ensure prudent use of available resources and to guard against pilferage.
3. Recruitment of competent and qualified staff to manage resources is an important strategy in HEIs.
4. Developing systems that improve performance such as Performance Management can help HEIs justify for more resources.
5. HEIs should strengthen internal and external audit systems. The Audit function will help ensure that HEIs has good financial management systems and procedures.

Discussion

The study has found that public HEIs in Malawi mostly depend on government for funding; however, the study has revealed that HEIs need to review their modus operandi to remain competitive in this dynamic environment. While most of the respondents in the HEIs argued that lack of adequate funding from government was the main impeder to strategy implementation, the study has revealed that the major problem related to financial resources is not just failure

of the government to provide adequate resources but failure by the HEIs to mobilise resources. For example, a Finance Manager at one of the constituent colleges of one of the public universities highlighted that 30% of the budget could be financed by resources generated through research and consultancies by the institution and individual staff members. However, the institution only manages to collect less than 10% of the total expected amount. This according to the respondents is due to the following reasons:

1. Lack of knowledge on the part of the staff members on the research and consultancy policy that outline how research funds are handled and what percentages are to be remitted to the institution.
2. Unwillingness of staff members to remit funds to the institution.
3. Weak monitoring and control mechanisms.
4. Trust issues. Staff members believe that management will misappropriate the funds.

Other than resource mobilisation capabilities, prioritization of the available limited resources was another impeding factor to strategy implementation. It was found that sometimes organisational leaders failed to prioritise the limited resources available. For instance, an official from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology noted that a few years ago, government gave one of the universities funds for rehabilitation of infrastructure. However, the funds were not used for the intended purpose, so much so that after five years, the buildings have not been rehabilitated. In contrast, an analysis of the findings depicts a different situation in the two benchmark organisations. Two respondents in both organisations explained that strategy was formulated based on available resources as such there were no major issues during implementation. If there were issues, they came due to the changes in the external environment which may not have been anticipated such as inflation or changes in government policy.

The above cases (resource mobilisation and prioritisation) prompt the need to re-think the way HEIs manage resources. Literature reviewed emphasises the need for organisations to develop SMART objectives based on thorough

analysis of both internal and external resources. Failure to analyse the external sources of funding will lead to the formulation of strategies that will not be implemented. Failure to prioritise resources will conversely affect strategy implementation. This is a general problem when organisations do not take a systematic approach to strategy formulation (Johnson et al 2009; Okumus, 2011).

While public HEIs in Malawi still rely on government funding after 50 years of their existence, a lot of HEIs in many African countries and beyond have been aggressive in resource mobilisation. For instance, HEIs in Malawi only manage to generate less than 10% of their annual budgets. For example, a Vice Chancellor of one of the HEIs explained that while HEIs in Malawi mostly relied on government for funding, other Universities like Makerere in Uganda, for example, generate over 30%, the University of Nairobi generate over 70%, while the University of Manchester generates over 40% of annual budget.

Financial Planning is another factor impeding successful resource allocation in HEIs. It was mentioned by seven deans in two HEIs, during the research, that often times, there is no clear link between the annual budgets and the strategic plans so much so that institutions tend to implement objectives that are outside the strategic plans due to lack of a consensus between the budget and the plans. This was also attributed to lack of knowledge vis a vis training on strategic management and also lack of clear performance management systems that would have explained the link between the strategic plans, the budgets and organisational performance.

Other factors mentioned that had affected financial management vis a vis strategy implementation were lack of trained personnel and lack of up to date financial management systems. Most respondents highlighted the need for improvements in the financial management systems in their organisations. It was observed, for instance, that most HEIs still used manual accounting systems that created delays in serving the internal customers. It was also observed that there were challenges with regard to capabilities of personnel within the finance departments. At one point, it was actually suggested in one public university

that the finance division be restructured in light of the Human Resources challenges that were being faced. In contrast to HEIs, successful performance in the two benchmark organisations was partially attributed to good finance management practices.

In the two benchmark institutions, training was provided to finance personnel, the systems were audited and there were clear links between strategic management and resource allocation to fuel the strategy implementation. Furthermore, the success rate in the private sector could be attributed to the organisational culture, availability of effective systems and procedures as well as incentives given to staff members. For instance, employees in the benchmark organisations were promised bonuses when they successfully implemented the strategies. This therefore motivated them to work hard unlike in the universities where there are no performance related incentive systems.

The issue of inadequate allocation of funds is likely to increase as more public universities are created in Malawi. The study found that the continued reduction of funding to higher education institutions which had led to poor performance was partly due to the increase in the number of universities. For example, a respondent at one of the public universities explained as below:

“We now have four public universities and over ten private universities. The implication of the foregoing is that these institutions will have to fight for the limited government resources. We anticipate a contest of the survival of the fittest. Universities therefore, need to think and act strategically to survive in this environment which has become turbulent.”...Just imagine this year we only got 70% of what we requested from government.

The inadequate funding of the public HEIs calls them to look at the resource based view as a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Mahoney and Pandian 1992 cited in Hooley and Greenley 2005; Finney et al. 2005, 2008). According to the resource based view (RBV), if a firm is to achieve a state of sustainable competitive advantage, it must acquire and control valuable, rare,

inimitable, and non-substitutable resources as well as firm specific. In a university, this will be achieved through maintaining quality staff, unique programmes that create value and development of unique systems and procedures such as academic systems, human resources, performance systems, financial systems and ICT systems. The need for a RBV approach in HEIs is well articulated in this study. Many respondents argued that while the issue of inadequate funding from the central government could not be disputed, HEIs needed to review the way in which they conducted business.

Additionally, the World Bank has also noted the need for efficiency in managing public universities if such institutions are to contribute to economic growth. For example, a World Bank study reported that the HEI sector in Malawi was the most inefficient in the SADC region. The observation by the World Bank confirms the need for HEIs to adopt the RBV if they are to be successful. (World Bank, 2010)

All in all, financial resources are an important factor for strategy implementation. HEIs need to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to ensure availability of resources to implement strategy.

4.5.3.3 Systems and Procedures (F6)

Most respondents believe that proper systems and procedures create a conducive environment for successful strategy formulation and implementation. The majority of respondents believe that lack of adequate systems and procedures led to poor organisational performance. Table 4-10 presents the substantiating codes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-10 Systems and Procedures (F6): Substantiating codes

Table 4.9	Substantiating Quotes
	It's high time we reviewed the conditions of service for our staff members.....Since establishment 14 years ago we have not reviewed our regulations (5g).

One of the biggest challenges that we have as a system is delays in reviewing our statutes. For example, we still have not embraced the Pensions Act...we need to review our Act before embracing this new law. We do not have a proper performance management system which links the budget, work plans, strategic plans and employee performance.(3ca)

. Accountability is one of the major challenges that we face.....our managers are not accountable hence they do not care what happens. The federal systems that our university follows, makes it practically impossible to review our conditions of service with the required speed.....Too many committees to review proposals....We need to come up with proper systems and also to computerize our information management systems if we are to make progress. (3cd)

Off course we do use a balanced scorecard as a performance management system ...this ensures that there is a correlation between the organizations objectives and the performance targets of all employees in the institution...(8l)

I can say we have systems but they are not used because people do not know them. Sometimes because of lack of appropriate knowledge, systems are used haphazardly (6j).

We are trying had but we are not up to the standard. We do not submit monthly reports as required.. For instance, we have not had external audits for some years now.. Operationally we do not have an internal audit department..(4ba)

Properties

1. Developing systems and procedures help simplify work processes.
2. Systems help employees to work in a coordinated manner for the realization of the organisational goals.

Strategies

1. Organisation leadership needs to communicate to all members about the systems that are to be introduced in the organisation.
2. Higher Education Institutions are complex in nature. Managing change in such organisations can be complex. Thus communication is important as new systems are introduced.

Discussion

Once strategy has been developed there is need to put in place systems that should provide the guidelines on how different aspects of the value chain system should be managed. A majority of the respondents in the HEIs explained that lack of clear systems and procedures impeded strategy implementation. For instance, all the Deans in two HEIs observed that HEIs in Malawi in general did not have adequate systems and procedures to manage academic matters, human resources, issues, general data and records as well

as finances. It was also reported for example, that a procurement audit in one of the HEIs, revealed that the institution was not auditable because there was no proper procurement system in place.

Lack of proper systems and procedures was also noted in another HEI where respondents argued that their financial audits were usually qualified because of poor financial management systems. In contrast, many respondents in the two benchmark institutions intimated that their success was largely due to the systems and procedures that were put in place. For example, it was a policy that employee performance should be appraised bi- annually to ensure that performance was being managed.

4.5.3.4 Organizational Culture (F7)

The culture of an organisational has an influence on both strategy formulation and implementation in an organisation. The study found that organisational culture influenced their organization’s performance. Table 4-11 presents the substantiating quotes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-11 Organisational Culture (F7): Substantiating quotes

Table 4.10	Substantiating Quotes
	In our university we have small groupings which talk the same language and can have a big influence on decision making in the university... (1h).
	Generally, there is a culture of mistrust between management and the unions in the university.... This has mostly been demonstrated during strikes and salary increase negotiations... (1i).
	There is a culture of lack of fear of institutional authority among all members of staff both clerical, technical and support and academic staff. This has been exacerbated by lack of systems and procedures (4j)...
	You see, in this university, just like in all the other three public universities, .we have three categories of staff. The Academic, Administrative and the CTS staff. These three groups subscribe to different beliefs and philosophies which sometimes derail progress towards collective effective performance. Take for example, the past four or so years where the university has been fighting against the CTS staff over salary scales and recognition of CTS staff with postgraduate qualifications..The culture of mistrust between the two groups affects performance of the institution.(9m).

There is a culture of mistrust between us students and management...we sometimes feel that management deliberately tries to undermine us as a body (7c).

There are a lot of similarities in the cultures of our public universities because the leaders all come from one university. More so, the majority of the lecturers have come from the same system. This affects performance in these public universities.(10g)

The new university which will be opened soon has an opportunity to create its own culture. We hope it will not follow the paths taken by the others. This university needs to create its own conditions of service different from the ones in the other three universities.(16fd)

There is a culture of mistrust in HEIs.(44f)

Properties

1. Each institution has unique behaviours that differentiate it from the rest.
2. Shared beliefs and understanding within an organisation play an important role in guiding performance.
3. Culture is partly determined by leadership. It is the road to understanding leadership and the organisation.
4. It is the way in which shared meanings are established, negotiated and retained or suppressed.
5. Culture is thought of as the artefacts of the organisation such as organisational routines, systems and structures. Often times these are taken for granted.

Strategies

1. Effecting changes in organisational culture will help enable organisations to manage change.
2. The culture web proposed by Johnson et al (2003) is an important framework for managing culture in organisations. It has proved to be a useful device for achieving some clarity on what constitutes the culture of an organisation, why this is significant in strategic management and the ways it might be possible to manage change.

Discussion

The study has found that strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Malawi is to a greater extent influenced by the shared traditional beliefs, values, norms, expectations and attitudes of the staff members within these institutions.

Many respondents (both in the HEIs and the benchmark organisations) especially those responsible for people management revealed that shared traditional beliefs, values, attitudes and norms influenced the behavior of many employees in the organisations. Surprisingly, for instance, some employees even argued that cultural beliefs such as beliefs in witchcraft (even though the law of the land does not recognize the existence of witchcraft practices) influenced the way certain decisions were made in some HEIs. A classical example is a situation at one of the public universities where certain decisions were not made against certain people because they were believed to be practicing witchcraft.

Another example is traditional beliefs towards respect to the departed. In general, the conditions of service for both HEIs and private sector organisations provide for compassionate leave for bereaved staff members to attend funerals when a member of the immediate family has passed away. Additionally, where a close family member other than a member of the immediate family has passed away, a staff member can apply for holiday for a specific number of days.

However, what happens in reality is that staff members use tradition as an excuse to attend funerals whenever anybody known to them (whether member of the immediate family or not) have passed away. Compassionate leave is often times granted regardless of who has passed away. Human Resources managers are afraid to caution these people because culturally, the practice is accepted although it is against the conditions of service. In an extreme example, one respondent narrated that a certain Human Resources Director at a certain multinational company was dismissed because local people thought his management style was not compatible with the culture. All what this HR practitioner was doing is to implement the conditions of service as provided for in the regulations.

This finding (impact of culture on performance) is in accordance with research by Van Der Maas (2008), Johnson and Scholes (2004) Mintzberg et al (1998). They propose that performance in organisations is influenced by the shared

beliefs among groups. Every organisation has its own culture. Organisational culture is similar to an individual's personality; it is the shared values, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and norms learned by becoming a part of, and working in an organisation over time. Pearce and Robinson (2003) believe that much as personality influences the behavior of an individual, shared values and beliefs within a company set a pattern for activities, opinions and actions within the firm. A company's culture influences how employees and managers approach problems, serve customers, deal with suppliers, react to competitors and otherwise conduct activities now and in the future. Comparing the success of Japanese and American automakers, Robert Waterman cited in Pearce and Robinson (2003) illustrated the importance of culture:

“It has not been just strategy that led to big Japanese wins in the American auto market. It is a culture that inspires workers to excel at fits and finishes, to produce moldings that match and doors that don't sag. It is a culture in which Toyota can use that most sophisticated of management tools, the suggestion box, and in two years increase the number of worker suggestions.”

The study has also found that the coerciveness of cultural beliefs also influence the extent to which change can be achieved in organisations. The emphasis on autonomy from external control and manipulation affects the degree to which HEIs with deep rooted traditional beliefs view the importance of policy reviews. The study found that it was difficult to achieve change in the HEIs that had deep rooted historical traditions compared to the HEIs which were relatively new.

The study also found that in the HEIs with deep rooted cultural beliefs on how universities are managed opined that it was difficult to change academic institutions with deep routed historical beliefs on how some functions or processes are supposed to be done. For instance, it has been difficult to amend the Act of one of the universities because of old traditional beliefs on how a university is supposed to be managed. Different reasons for the refusal were given that ranged from lack of proper consultation, to not wanting structural

changes which would give management more authority in managing faculties and also political interference.

In contrast, the respondents in the newly established universities argued that it was possible to make changes to the university Act (the same change which failed in the old universities) because the new institution wanted to do things differently.

The above findings are consistent with the extant literature reviewed. The unique culture in HEIs can be located in the HEIs long history of resistance to change under external pressure (Benjamin, 1994; Bok, 1986; McConnell, 1992 cited in Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009). In recent times, organisational culture issues in HEIs have attracted a lot of research interest. For instance, Cameron and Freeman (1991) compared 334 higher education institutions, investigating the relationship between organisational culture and effectiveness. Their empirical results proved that culture type is a significant factor in determining organisational effectiveness. Different culture archetypes are found to be associated with different aspects of organisational effectiveness (Cai, 2008). Several implications serve to underline the paramount importance of university culture in the university setting, and the most important of them is that culture is intricately tied with performance and quality.

The study has also found that a strong organisational culture can also be beneficial to organisational performance. Strong organisational culture can influence opposition towards change of policy which is inevitably deemed ideal in certain situations. One respondent explained the following:

“The culture in this university is different from that of the other public universities. For example, senior administrative staff in the other universities have higher salaries compared to academic staff such as Professors because of the nature of their duties and responsibilities. However, in my university which is relatively new with weaker organisational culture compared to the other public universities which have deep rooted cultures, Senior Administrative staff have lower

salaries compared to Professors, despite the fact that their roles are different.” The salaries for senior academic staff are low just because academic staff believe that they should be paid more compared to administrative staff regardless of the amount of work done”

Therefore, strong organisational culture can have both positive and negative influence depending on underlying organisational dynamics. From the above findings, in one scenario the strong organisational culture failed to bring about positive change that would have restructured the recruitment criteria for academic management positions. Conversely the strong organisational cultures has also helped in ensuring that senior administrative staff are remunerated based on the amount of work they undertake where as in another university, Professors regardless of their contributions to the organisational goals must be paid higher salaries compared to administrative staff in executive management positions.

The study has also found that culture in the public HEIs was underpinned by the complex nature of HEIs. Many respondents argued that the complex nature of public HEIs influenced how strategy was implemented. For instance, when you ask anyone, about who is the customer for a university or rather what a University’s objective is, you will get a myriad of responses. Public HEIs are essentially different from private sector organisations in a number of dimensions such as diversity of their goals, access to resources, and the nature of organizational goals. An HEI clientele includes students, parents, funding organizations, the government and the society as a whole. Thus satisfying the needs of all these stakeholders can be challenging and requires an organisational culture that fits this arrangement.

Interpreting and understanding organisational culture is an important activity for strategic management in an organization because it affects productivity and learning. Cultural assumptions can both enable and constrain what organisations are able to do. Understanding the behavior of individuals and groups within the organisation will help the manager to establish the values, beliefs and attitudes of the people within the organization. This knowledge (of

organisational culture) will then help the managers to, among other important activities, manage strategic change. Evidence from research by Peters and Waterman (1982) for example, suggests that there are some strong similarities in the cultures of a number of highly successful American companies. From Peter's research and other findings including those of Gardener (1985) and the findings of this study, it can be concluded that culture is a highly significant factor in the success of an organisation vis a vis in achieving competitive advantage. Therefore, management should take into consideration organisational cultural issues such as beliefs and shared traditions among staff when managing change.

4.5.3.5 Communication (F8)

Most respondents believed that lack of formal communication systems was one of the challenges affecting both strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Table 4-12 presents the substantiating codes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-12 Communication (F8) : Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
When there is communication breakdown, people live with suspicions,.Communication is one important aspect in managing the Institution.(1h).
Our desired future aspirations have not been communicated to employees... most staff members do not know the institutions strategic plan...
We have recruited a Public Relations Officer to help the university in branding.
Higher Education Institutions in Malawi are very weak in both external and internal communication...We do not market ourselves well through proper communication. There is lack of communication in the system in terms of what is happening. People for example attend meetings but would not talk about what their departments are doing..(3ca)
Our major weakness as a federal university which is not helped by its geographical dispersal is communication...If you are geographically dispersed as we are, you create too many layers through which information has to pass to get to the targeted audience...(3cb)
We need to establish a communications office to manage public relations...There are a lot of negative stories out there that reflect badly on us.... (3cc)
Communication is one of the issues that affect our achieving our objectives...we need to

develop a good communication strategy..... last time there was a strike in this institution management did not handle the communication with the public well, there is actually need to recruit a communications specialist to handle our relations with the public.... ..(16c).

Every employee in our organisations knows the vision and mission of the institution and we all move together towards the achievement of the desired goal...The screen savers on all the computers in my organisation highlight the vision of our organisation such that whenever I start my computer; I am welcomed by the vision and mission statements. We have done a lot of advertising of our vision and mission.....Communication is crucial in our industry... (8d)

We have a marketing department responsible for marketing, public relations and communications...this department ensures efficient and effective flow of vital information within and outside of the organisation...(17d)

I feel we academics are not very good at communicating....Sometimes we retaliate due to lack of information...Our students have ever gone on strike because we have not been able to provide information on some aspects....I also believe that people do not support the quota system (equitable access to higher education because of lack of relevant vital information...Our University recently launched the strategic plan ...up to now we have not been given copies let alone been told at departmental level what the departments role would be regarding the implementation (22b).

Despite having formal strategic plans we don't think that management thinks we should be involved.....Getting the whole institution to buy into the plan is a very challenging task...We have proposed to management to recruit a communication specialist to handle all communications...We need to put up a communication policy which will help in communicating the strategy

.....communication is one of the greatest challenges that the college faces. Students strike not because they want to, but mostly because management has not communicated properly (23d)

With the new strategic plan launched recently, our plan is to deliberately discuss the plan during management, faculty and all other college meetings.....Our success in strategic management lies in our ability to involve all the staff members in the process of strategy formulation. Once formulated, all managers are requested to discuss the plan in their respective departments (24c).

We have a vibrant intranet system that supports our internal communication. Our team of ICT experts has made sure that we move from paper communication to the current paperless office where all memos are sent through the intranet (17e)

I worked in the private sector where all communications were done through email. You hardly used paper memos ...(1h)

We have asked our ICT department to look into the issue of having a paperless system...we buy too much paper in this university....(22j).

Properties

1. Lack of proper communication systems can affect an implementation effort.
2. ICT infrastructure can help improve communication in HEIs.

3. When organisational members are well informed about the need and rationale of strategy, they are very likely to be committed.

Strategies

1. Two way communications with organisational members is most effective way to inform employees about strategy and organisation developments. Through informal meetings, management gets much more information and feedback from members.
2. Management needs to give organisational members as much information as possible to gain their understanding, trust and commitment.
3. Creation of an office to manage public relations, marketing and communications can help improve communication in HEIs.

Discussion

The study has found that presence of a clear and well-coordinated communication strategy in an organisation can help improve the organisation's image thereby facilitating achievement of organisational goals. Many respondents in the benchmark organisations attributed the positive image that their institutions had with the public and stakeholders to good communication strategies and policies. For example, both organisations had developed a communications strategy and had designated an office to handle public relations. These officers were well grounded in the business of their organisations so that they were able to provide all necessary information to the public. In contrast, the respondents in the HEIs attributed the poor public image to lack of a formal communications strategy to handle public relations. For example, students had often times given force information to the public which was not challenged due to corporate arrogance on the part of the organisational leadership and lack of coordinated approach to handling communications due to lack of communications policy.

The importance of corporate communications to successful organisation performance is consistent with reviewed literature on organisational communication. Forman and Argenti (2005) rightly note that, although an entire discipline is devoted to the study of organizational strategy including strategy

implementation; little attention has been given to the links between communication and strategy. They suggest that business communication researchers have become increasingly interested in the contribution of corporate communication to a company's ability to create and disseminate its strategy in the last decade. However, very few authors have investigated the link between corporate communication and strategy. Investigating the link between corporate communications and strategy in HEIs could therefore be an area for future research.

Poor communication channels are another important factor that emerged during the interviews. While the private sector organisations boasted of good communication channels supported by good ICT infrastructure, most HEIs complained of poor communication approaches. For example, most internal communications were done using paper memos. This was not only cumbersome but expensive and tedious looking at the amount of paper used and messengers running around the place to distribute mail. Besides failure to communicate on the part of management, there is need to develop a clear communication platform that will support flow of information. Using the email or even mobile phones can save the purpose.

All the Deans interviewed believed that failure to communicate to organisational members on important organisational activities was one of the impeders to strategy implementation. In contrast, the respondents in the two benchmark organisations attributed the clear understanding of the organisation strategy to communication mechanisms put in place.

The importance of communication in achieving superior organisational performance cannot be over emphasised. For example, based on interviews with 21 presidents and 25 governmental agency heads, Alexander (1985) points out that communication is mentioned more frequently than any other single item promoting successful strategy implementation (cited in Yang Li et al, 2008). The content of such communications includes; clearly explaining what new responsibilities, tasks, and duties need to be performed by the affected

employees. It also includes the “why” behind changed job activities, and more fundamentally the reasons why the new strategic decision was made firstly.

The study has also found that successful strategy implementation is influenced by proper communication during strategy formulation. The respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that the email questionnaires sent to all staff members requesting them for input led to development of strategies which owned by everyone. This further led to successful strategy implementation. In contrast failure to communicate to all members about strategy formulation in HEIs resulted in organisational members not knowing the institution’s vision and strategic thrust. For instance, many respondents in the HEIs (especially those that did not hold leadership positions) argued that they had not seen the institution’s strategic plan though they knew that such documents existed. The need for communication is supported by extant literature reviewed. Communication in an implementation effort needs to start during strategy formulation.

All members in the organisation need to be aware of the strategic developments or projects that are being undertaken. This is the first level to get employee buy-in. If employees are communicated to about the developments taking place in the organisation, it is more likely that they will support the efforts. Numerous scholars in the field of strategy implementation have stressed the importance of effective strategy communication (see e.g.; Miller *et al.*, 2001; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Noble, 1999; Kotter, 1995; Alexander, 1985 cited in Van Dar Mass 2008). They found that effective strategy communication can have a positive influence on strategy formulation and implementation performance.

Another important factor that emerged from the interviews is the need to communicate the implementation plan to all those involved in implementation. This observation is in tandem with the strategy implementation literature which states that organizational members need to understand what is happening (e.g. Hambrick & Cannella, 1989; Alexander, 1985). Kotter (1996) observes that while a great vision can serve a useful purpose even if it is understood by just a

few key people, the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have common understanding of its goals and direction. Kotter (1996) underscores the importance of communication: the shared sense of a desired future.

4.5.3.6 Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) (F9)

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) is considered as a driving force behind performance in HEIs in the 21st century. Many respondents believe that lack of adequate ICT facilities such as networking technologies; software development, computer equipment and the internet have significant impact on teaching and learning vis a vis strategy implementation in HEIs. Table 4-13 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-13 ICT (F9): Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
<p>`We have a fully-fledged ICT department headed by a Director who sits on executive management committee. This only shows the importance that our management places on ICT.(10da)</p>
<p>Most of the systems are ICT driven. You talk of performance management systems, accounting systems, administrative systems...(5qs)</p>
<p>The external auditors have recommended that we develop an ICT Policywe hope this will help us address most of the ICT issues we have in this university.(8kj)</p>
<p>Government need to invest a lot of resources in ICT. For example , the cost of internet in neighbouring countries is half what we pay here.(17j)</p>
<p>We do not have an effective management information system to help us manage academic and students records.....delays in releasing examinations can be attributed to our ICT infrastructure.(9cv)</p>
<p>a considerable number of our staff are computer literate ...our aim is to ensure that we provide relevant trainings to our staff members.....(7am)</p>
<p>we have recently submitted a proposal to the world bank to introduce open and distance learning through e-learning.(3k).....</p>
<p>....We are in the process of developing an ICT policy in this university....Without an ICT policy we can not persuade staff to say, use emails as official source of communication...Think</p>

about it , we still are using paper memos as official source of communication...Sometimes if we use email to invite faculty to meetings they argue that they did not attend because they did not receive invitation letters for the meeting.... (32h)

.....All communications are done through the internet, We have tried had to minimize paper communication. We had to put up a good strategy to ensure that we successful implement the ICT policy.....(33d)...

Properties

1. ICT infrastructure plays a major role in implementing different strategies in HEIs.
2. There is need for different technologies for various functions in an HEI's value chain system.
3. Availability of support infrastructure such as good Internet Service Provision (ISP) is critical to better implementation of ICT.
4. HEIs should encourage staff members to take advantage of available ICT infrastructure to improve operations at various organizational levels.
5. Availability of trained ICT personnel can contribute to effective and efficient use of ICT.
6. Long term Investment in ICT infrastructure is crucial to achievement of superior performance.

Strategies

1. Enhancing ICT governance is crucial to effective and efficient use of ICT infrastructure in HEIs. There is need to develop ICT policy that guides the manner in which ICT should be used in an organization.
2. Implementing a mailing system using ICT infrastructure like the internet technologies can improve communication in an institution. Organisations can cut down costs in stationery through adoption of ICT infrastructure.
3. Training on the usage of ICT infrastructure should be provided to all organizational members. Furthermore details of all available ICT services and products in the organization should be provided to employees so that they are able to use them.
4. Resistance to use of ICT can be reduced by improving security and sharing of the benefits of ICT with all staff members and students.

5. HEIs need to lobby government for improved national ICT infrastructure.
Poor national ICT infrastructure affecting ICT strategy implementation in HEIs

Discussion

The study depicts the crucial role of ICT in strategic management in HEIs. Many respondents in HEIs as well as the benchmark organisations have stated that ICT is an important determinant of performance. Likewise, some studies opine that HE is one of the most important sectors for developing the human capital of countries to support innovation and find new solutions for sustainable and equitable growth. InfoDev (2010) suggest that ICT can be used to improve the quality of education by enhancing educational content development, supporting administrative and financial processes and increasing access to education via E-Learning.

The study has found that lack of adequate ICT infrastructure, training and poor internet connectivity affected performance of their institutions. In contrast, many respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that the heavy investments that their organisations made in recruiting and training ICT staff and procurement of ICT software and hardware contributed to achievement of organisational goals. The importance of ICT in SM has been confirmed in the literature. For instance, Hoffman (2001) argues that successful implementation of ICT must focus on infrastructure, attitudes, staff development, technical and administrative support, sustainability and transferability.

The study has also found that some academic staff in HEIs shy away from ICT deliberately. Some respondents in the HEIs argued that they shied away from using technology in teaching and learning because they have not been provided with relevant training to re-tool them. Surprisingly the extant literature supports this finding. Mumtaz (2000) came to similar conclusions in his study. In a study involving teachers, he listed the following factors that prevent teachers from using technology:

- i. Lack of teaching experience with ICT

- ii. Lack of site support for teachers using technology
- iii. Lack of help supervising students when using computers
- iv. Lack of ICT specialist teachers to teach students computer skills
- v. Unavailability of computers
- vi. Lack of time required to successfully integrate into curriculum
- vii. Lack of Financial support.

A similar observation was made by Muanga and Mutimucuo (2011) and the World Bank (2010). For example, Muanga and Mutimucuo (2011) found that most experienced Mozambican lecturers had inadequate ICT skills because ICT had never been part of their initial training. Poor ICT usage in HEIs in Malawi has also been confirmed by the World Bank (2010). The World Bank (2006) reports that lack of ICT infrastructure in Malawi is one of the factors impeding performance. They go on to assert that Malawi has the poorest ICT infrastructure in the SADC region

Several other factors can affect usage of ICT in HEIs. For example, placement of ICT in the organisation structure, investment in ICT and training in ICT. The study found that in organisations where ICT was represented at senior management level, performance was high (e.g one of the colleges and the two benchmark organisations). Secondly, organisations which put significant investment in ICT such as management information systems, accounting systems, students management information systems, procurement management systems, stores management systems, curriculum management systems, e-learning systems (e.g the two benchmark organisations and some colleges) reported improved performance compared to those that did not. Thirdly, Organisations that placed considerable efforts in learning and development and evangelisation in ICT (e.g the two benchmark organisations and two other colleges) reported improved overall performance.

In a nutshell, the research has found that ICT is an important factor for strategy formulation and implementation. HEI Managers need to invest significantly in ICT. Furthermore ICT as a function, needs to be represented at decision

making level so that its importance is understood at cooperate level. Continuous training should also be provided to all staff members.

4.5.3.7 Performance Management System (F10)

Performance Management (PM) is identified as a key factor influencing the HEIs capability to improve performance. The majority of the respondents believed that lack of a clear performance management system affected performance at individual, departmental/faculty and organizational Table 4-14 presents the factors substantiating quotes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-14 Performance Management Systems (F10): Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
The nature of a university does not need us academicians to be policed by administrators.....we manage our own time. We teach, mark, prepare for teaching and also conduct research.(3cv)
.....It is true we do not have an efficient performance management system. Just imagine we don't know whether our strategic plan you talked about, has been successful in the past.....we need a system which is able to link the strategy, performance of individuals and achievement of goals.....(15d)
Yes performance management.... I know is a headache to the university. Recently, we the lecturers cried foul when council of the university championed the review of the university Act which was going to bring some performance management system in the university....we as lecturers feel that we need to be independent and manage our time but is this sustainable? I don't know.(7l)
.....In our university, you only are appraised,....if you want to be promoted.....as long as you do not want the promotion, nobody is going to bother you.....this system has led to laxity on the part of employees.(7lj)
.....we did not have a performance management system in place as a university since we became one 14 years ago...Lack of a Performance Management system has greatly affected usThere is a lot of moonlighting by our staff members.... Staff cannot account for what they do since there isn't a tool to appraise them. (3v)
A few years ago, the university tried to introduce a form of a 360 degree feedback type of appraisal system, where students were supposed to appraise staff members.....these did

not go down well with staff members so much so that the system was abandoned... (1l)

We have a lot of challenges with our lecturers...we feel some lecturers do not teach well...some miss classes, some do not complete syllabi... we have tried to complain through the dean of students but we are always assured that things will change but nothing is done as far as we are concerned.. (2c)

Performance management is one of the greatest challenges that we have in this University....Some of the performance challenges we have with staff is because we do not have a system to appraise and where necessary caution our staff (15g)

Before joining the university, I was working for one of the Water Boards where performance appraisals for all staff were conducted every year, using a clearly developed performance appraisal tool. However, I have been in this university for three years but I have never been appraised....(4g)

The issue of performance management has got to do with democracy.... The majority of the people in this country think freedom is being irresponsible and not being accountable. The moment somebody starts demanding that people should be accountable becomes a problem. There is a lot of moonlighting that takes place in this university for example...but Heads of Department do not report this for example.

...To make it worse, because Heads of Department are voted in a popularity contest, they do not feel that they are responsible to their Principals. Unlike in the private sector where you are responsible to a Supervisor.

There is no will to implement Performance Management in this university. This has been made worse by the fact that the academic leaders have not been properly trained in issues of this nature...(3d)

We have had several reviews of the performance management system in this institution. The industry we are operating in, is very competitive so we cannot survive without performance management.(53j).

Our performance management system has helped us improve performance. We are one of the few organisations in Malawi with a performance management system.(52d)
As government, we recently launched a performance management system aimed at improving the performance of government. (49 b).

We have adopted a balanced scorecard as a performance management tool in our institution. The balanced scorecard is a tool used to measure performance. It uses qualitative indicators to measure performance. I would say it has helped us so much in evaluating the performance of our strategic plan. (51g)

Properties

1. Performance Management is a key factor for successful performance in HEIs.
2. It helps translate the vision, mission and strategy into clear measurable outcomes, indicators and performance levels that define success and that are shared throughout the organisation.

3. It helps in aligning individual, corporate and cross departmental initiatives and to identify entirely new processes for meeting customer and shareholder objectives.
4. Provides a tool for assessing, managing and improving performance of business processes and systems based on the agreement of objectives and development needs
5. Allows the agreement of new objectives and development plans hence providing a strong development dimension.
6. Ensures that the process is concerned with the behaviour/style in which results are achieved the assessment of which is best done with reference to agreed competence dimensions.
7. It ensures that performance management is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than command
8. Helps to improve results from the organisation, teams and individuals by managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competence requirements
9. Performance Management enhances communication, relationship building, and employee development and employee evaluation.

Strategies

1. Developing a performance management system in an institution especially an HEI can be a difficult and complex task. Management needs to involve all organizational members in the process.
2. HEIs have multiple stakeholders e.g. students, the government and the citizenry. Therefore, the performance management system should be designed in such a way that the needs of these stakeholders are met.
3. For a performance management system to be successful, leadership needs to empower the Human Resources Management department to champion the process.
4. A Balanced scorecard is an effective system for measuring organisational performance.
5. Training is a very important success factor for Performance. All line managers and employees will need to be trained on how the system

works. This is because there is continuous interaction regarding performance between staff members and their supervisors.

6. The PMS should be owned and driven by Line Management; the Human Resources Department's role is to facilitate the processes.
7. The PMS should ensure that it places emphasis on shared corporate goals.

Discussion

The study reveals that PM is one of the most important factors affecting performance of HEIs. In most of the organisations that participated in the study, PM is mentioned as one of the critical factors influencing SM. Many respondents in the HEIs attributed their institutions inability to implement strategy partially to staff inefficiencies due to lack of objective performance assessment tools. Surprisingly, while many respondents believed in the need for a performance management system, some respondents argued that there was no need for academic staff members such as Professors to be appraised. One senior academic explained the following:

"I have worked in this university for over twenty five years. I am hearing that all staff members including Professors need to be appraised on an annual basis. I was of the view that only administrative staff and the Clerical, Technical and Support staff (CTS) are the only ones who need to be appraised...."

The above quotation confirms the performance challenges that HEIs have had in Malawi for some time. The study has established that staff members in HEIs in Malawi are only appraised if they want to be promoted. There is no mechanism to appraise all members of staff to measure their performance against set targets. Thus failure to implement strategy has been attributed partly to failure to translate the strategic plans into goals that are to be achieved by individual staff members. In contrast all the respondents in the two benchmark organisations not only confirmed the existence of a performance management system in their organisations but also attributed successful strategy implementation in their organisations to the effective systems of evaluating performance of the individual staff members. The research also found that a

balanced scorecard was used as a performance evaluation tool in both organisations.

Several authors note the significance of this factor in successful management of organisations (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; Brumbrach, 1988; CIPD, 2003; IRS, 2003; Kaplan, 1995). However, the literature on SM in public sector organisations late alone HEIs, is still limited compared to that of the private sector where much of the research has been undertaken. Furthermore, the need for an appropriate performance measurement system in HEIs, based on ideas generated in the private sector, has been identified and realized for a long time (Johnson et al, 2006).

Since the early 1980s, the public sector has experienced major reforms that emphasize a private sector style of management for organizational effectiveness and economic efficiency (Burrows & Harvey, 1992). Actually, it is now acknowledged that the private sector is an important source of management innovation in the public sector; Bevir et al., 2003; Johnson et al, 2008; Ramia & Carney, 2003). Moreover, universities are unique organisations with unique cultures and systems which make it difficult to apply systems available in the private sector. However, the foregoing seems to contradict the new public management thinking where public sector institutions including universities are encouraged to adopt systems and models which have proved successful in the private sector organisations such as performance management.

The need for PM in HEIs in Malawi cannot be overemphasized. For instance, the President of the Republic of Malawi Her Excellence Dr Joyce Banda highlighted the importance of PM in HEIs in her graduation speech which took place on 3rd December 2013. She emphasised the need for public universities to seriously consider performance management as a strategy to improve performance. The President's sentiments were also echoed by the Vice Chancellor of UNIMA in his remarks during the same graduation ceremony in support of the president's contribution. He noted that one of the reasons for failure to improve performance vis a vis strategy implementation was failure to

translate the organisation's visions, mission statements and strategies into clear measurable outcomes that can be implemented by individual staff members, sections, departments and faculties.

Lack of effective systems to measure organizational and individual performance has also been attributed to the culture prevalent in university systems. The predominant characteristics of universities are: the extraordinary amount of autonomy and professional discretion enjoyed by faculty, decision-making by discretion, compromise and bargaining, and the limits on managers' formal legitimate authority which have led to failure in implementing strict performance management systems.

Another unique characteristic of a university which impact on performance management is its complex clientele (students, parents, employers, staff members, government, funding agencies, and the society as a whole (Burrows & Harvey 1992). Developing a performance management system to satisfy the needs of all these stakeholders can be challenging task (Sayed, 2013). However, the role of management is to ensure that all organisation's members are informed about the sense of urgency to change.

The study has established the important link between performance management and successful performance. The respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that successful performance in their organisations was attributed to among other things the performance management systems (the balanced scorecard). The balanced scorecard helped the entire organisation to keep focused and to concentrate on the critical issues related to performance. In so doing the organisations were able to manage performance of the individual employees. Coincidentally, many respondents in the HEIs institutions also believed that lack of proper performance management systems in their institutions affected performance vis a vis achievement of strategy.

In a nutshell, the research has found that performance management is an important factor for successful performance in HEIs. HEIs need to ensure that they develop performance management systems if they are to be successful.

4.5.3.8 Enabling Organizational Structure (F11)

The study revealed that the way in which tasks are allocated in an organisation, the reporting lines, and the formal coordinating mechanisms and interaction patterns influenced organizational performance. Table 4-15 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-15 Enabling Organisational Structure (F11) : Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
Our structure is not different from other public universities in Malawi...we need to reinforce certain lines of reporting....You can have the best organization structure but if people do not want it to work, it will not work. Likewise if people want things to work it will work (3k).
...One weakness though, is that we do not have a stable structure with well-structured staff establishments. That is why you find that today one works up and wants to recruit a staff member in their department without even looking at the budgetary provisions...We are always increasing staff establishments which unfortunately is fast getting out of hand.. (4n).
While we are always recruiting academic staff, my feeling is that the structure for support staff has not developed in line with the growth of the university....we are not efficient in most support departments because we are understaffed and do not have clear structures (4m).
Most decisions are made by executive management..... it's a centralized system..(56c).
Our structure is different from other universities, in our university, executive management includes Deans. In the other universities Deans are not part of management. (54f).
Our vision is to give more powers to deans of Faculty. Actually, our original idea was to have executive deans, where faculties were to operate like schools. (54a)
With this arrangement more decision making roles would be in the hands of the faculties. The

Properties

1. Organisations vary in their complexity. Some have formalized structures while some have informal structures.
2. Organisational structure consists of units, functions, divisions, departments and formally constituted work teams into which activities related to particular processes, projects, products, markets, customers, geographical areas or professional disciplines are grouped together.
3. The structure indicates who is accountable for directing, coordinating and carrying out these activities and defines management hierarchies the 'chain of command' thus spelling out, broadly, who is responsible to whom for what at each level in the organization.
4. Formulating and implementing strategy in HEIs needs to be supported by well defined roles for HEI managers at all levels.

Strategies

1. Devolution of power to faculties and departments is an effective strategy for enhancing performance. Other than executive management handling all SM issues, autonomy to faculties and departments with adequate capacity building is the most successful and sustainable way of improving performance in HEIs.
2. SM should cascade across all levels in the organisation. This ensures buy-in at all levels of the organisation.
3. Management should play a coordinating role in SM. Operational aspects (actual strategy implementation) should be leveraged by the respective faculties and departments. More decision making roles should be given to faculties and departments.
4. The organizational structures should be clearly defined and communicated to all organizational members. This can be part of the evangelisation process.
5. Strategic Management should be represented at top management level in an HEI for gaining access to various high level decisions, resources

and activities that would help improve SM effectiveness. The representative or SM coordinator can be the Vice Chancellor, deputy Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Finance Director, Professor or Dean depending on the structure of the organisation.

6. SM implementation committees can also help facilitate strategy formulation and implementation. These teams should effectively utilize the informal organisational structures such as trade unions for implementing SM activities and programmes.

Discussion

The study found that for strategic management to be successful there was need to transform the organisational structure in a manner that it is able to support implementation of strategy. There were, however, dissenting views among respondents regarding the type of structure ideal for HEIs. Some respondents preferred having a functional structure as it promoted efficiency through specialisation and showed improved development of functional expertise. Other respondents suggested that a simple structure was ideal for HEIs due to the complex nature of university institutions.

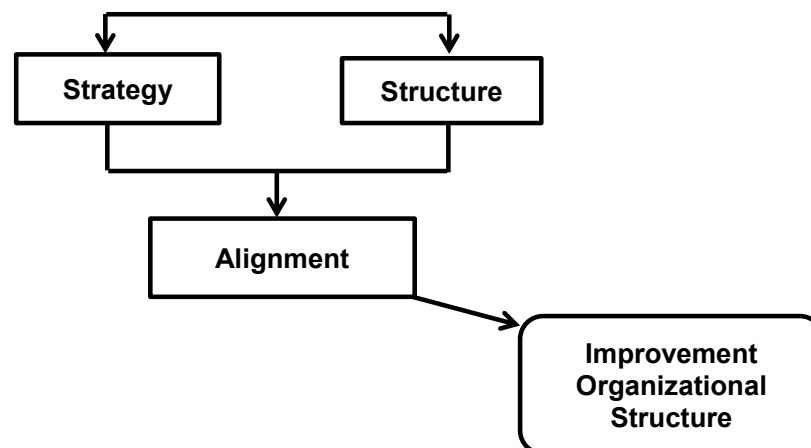
The findings of this study are consistent with the research on organisational structures. It goes almost without saying, that one of the highest priorities of strategy implementation is building an organisation capable of effective strategy execution. Eccles et al (1997) list some of the main functions of organizational structure which provide: a formal allocation of work rules; channels for collaborative working; boundaries of authority and lines of communication; a means of allocating power and responsibility and prescriptive levels of formality and complexity.

Accomplishing the strategy therefore requires that an organisation be structured rather than allowed to evolve. Drucker (1993) supports the notion of structured organisations. He argues that the only things that evolve in an organization are disorder, friction and malperformance. Therefore, for strategy to be successful there is need for a good fit between the structure of an organization and the strategy. Mintzberg et al (1998) supports Olsen (1993)'s assertion that without

co-alignment between structure, strategy and the environment, organisations may experience difficulty in achieving long-term success as in **Error! Reference source not found.**

The study has also found that there are no hard and fast rules for building a strategically effective organisation. However, a strong case can be made that the pivotal consideration for all decisions on organisational structure and processes should be the extent to which each organizational alternative contributes to the accomplishment of strategy. In other words, the choice of structural form and process should be aligned with the needs of strategy (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). Chandler (1962) long argued that changes in an organisation's strategy bring about new administrative problems which in turn require a new or refashioned structure, if the new strategy is to be successfully implemented.

Figure 4-5 Structure and Strategy Relationship, Adapted from Eccles, Teare & Costa 1997



The above assertions have been confirmed in this study. For instance, one respondent explained that a few years ago, his university outsourced some of the non-core functions such as security, catering maintenance of grounds and cleaning services. This development brought a new administrative problem of

systematic procurement of private companies and supervision of these out-sourced companies. This development necessitated the need to change the structure of the organization to fit the new arrangement. Another respondent explained the following in support of the above assertions:

“Following the restructuring in the university which resulted in the outsourcing of some functions, it has become necessary to review our organization structure. We have had to strengthen the office which will be handling the outsourced services. Last financial year, we had problems with the outsourced services. We now have a liaison office which is responsible for managing all outsourced services. The outsourcing function has necessitated the need to align our structure to ensure that we achieve our objectives.”

The extant literature reviewed recognizes the importance of the organizational structure in successful SM. Hrebiniak (2005) for example, opines that managerial authority and control and organizational structure alignment hold central importance for successful implementation. These sentiments are shared by many other authors (Skivington and Daft, 1991, Watson, 2013; Amjad, 2013 and Pettigrew 2014). They suggest that task and authority centralization within the organizational structure provide the vehicle for successful implementation.

Institutions, therefore, need to create structures that are consistent with the organizational and control needs of the strategy. Different types of structures have advantages and disadvantages. Considerable research has been done on which is the best organisational structure, and the collective answer is that it depends on the strategy of the firm. The structural design ties together key activities and resources of the firm; as such it must be closely aligned with the needs of the organization’s strategy. Successful formulation and implementation of strategy needs organisational activities, responsibilities and interrelationships organised in a manner that is consistent with the strategy chosen. If the structure and strategy are not coordinated, the result will probably be inefficiencies, misdirection and fragmented efforts.

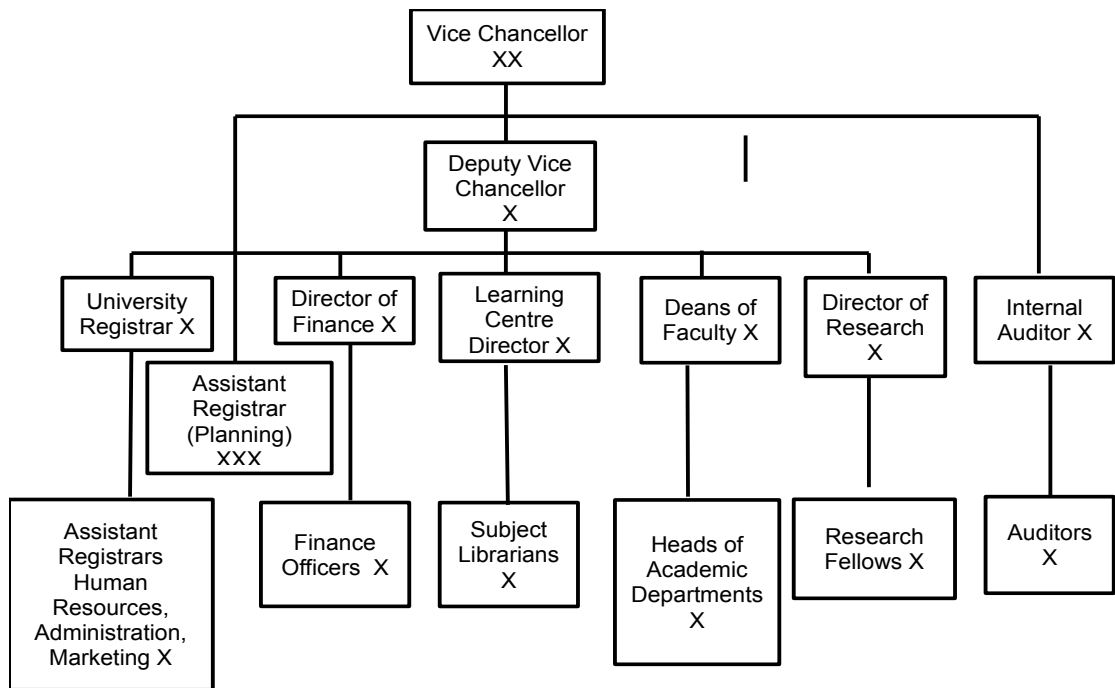
Figure 4-6 depicts a proposed HEI organisational structure with SM roles for various senior officers. The study found that in HEIs, SM was domiciled in the Deputy Vice Chancellor's office. However, no office was sanctioned to specifically manage the SM function. In contrast, in one of the two benchmark organisations, while the Chief Executive Officer was responsible for, the Marketing Manager was charged with the responsibility of coordinating strategy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, all Executive Management members had SM roles embedded in their job descriptions to manage SM at departmental level. The Marketing Manager was also responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the SM function.

In the proposed organisational structure, the deputy vice chancellor is given the overall responsibility of coordinating SM. Within his office an Assistant Registrar (Planning) is given the responsibility of managing the entire SM function that is formulation and implementation. On formulation, the major responsibility is coordinating the process and ensuring that all organisational members are involved in the process of strategy formulation. He should also ensure that all necessary information internal and external is collected for the process.

Once strategy has been developed, the Planner should ensure that all Heads of department have developed workplans. His office will also ensure that those workplans are being implemented. Furthermore the office will also coordinate monitoring and review meetings. It is further proposed that to ensure that strategy formulated is implemented; all the Heads of department should have SM roles imbedded in their job descriptions. It will be the role of the Assistant Registrar (Planning) to ensure compliance on the part of the HODs. This proposed structure ensures that all senior managers have SM roles imbedded in their job descriptions.

In the figure 4-5, x means the officer has some strategic management responsibilities embedded in their job descriptions. xx means the job holder is accountable for strategic management while xxx means the job holders main responsibility is planning and strategic management.

Figure 4-6 Proposed Organogram for an HEI, Source: Author



4.5.3.9 Reward Systems (F12)

The study signifies the role reward systems play in strategy formulation and implementation. Many respondents believed that an organisations success lied in its ability to reward staff for good performance. Table 4-16 presents the substantiating quotes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Properties

1. Effective Management is needed from all levels of the organisation to reward employees across the organisation for exceptional performance.
2. Although financial rewards are important, indirect rewards such as recognition play a major role in employee motivation.
3. Rewarding employees for effective performance is an important strategy to enhance organisational performance.

Table 4-16 Reward Systems (F12): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Codes
...We cannot maintain good talent because we do not have deliberate systems to retain them. (28c)
The problem is we do not have an effective reward system.....We need to motivate our staff members (29f)
The Professional ranks need to be well rewarded. Currently, the university has not put in place a mechanism to utilise the Senior Academic staff members' vast experience.(28f)
There is no reason to work hard because there is no staff recognition...If you work hard you will be recognised the same as those who are busy moonlighting.....(28fa)
Some staff members teach large classes and do not even have time to conduct research and to publishsome don't teach and have all the time in the world (30g)
The University needs to develop a system to ensure that those who do not work hard are apprehended and those who work hard are rewarded..... We have some staff moonlighting while some are teaching very large classes without recognition. (31d)
We have talent management policy aimed at rewarding potential talent...(28b)
Our employee of the month award is proving to be successful... Staff do nominate departmental employee of the month. This is done by the employees themselves by looking at their peers who have made a difference in their area. (29g)
We have a reward management policy which is aimed at rewarding those who have made a difference. those who go an extra mile for the sake of achieving the organisations goals.(31h)
Government recently approved our new conditions of service which included a unitary salary structure. Our conditions have been developed in such a way that staff members are motivated as we strive to become a world class university. We believe that if we remunerate our staff well with a good performance management system which we are in the process of developing, we will achieve our goal of becoming a world class university. (32v).
We have employee of the month, employee of the quarter and employee of the year awards (29m)
The CEO always appreciates staff that have performed exceptionally well. For example, recently, when we had an attempted robbery which was curtailed by the security personnel, the CEO wrote a memo copied to all staff commending the security for their bravery and commitment to the institutions cause.(29k)
Apart from the monthly, quarterly and yearly awards, we also have a bonus system. The bonus system aims at rewarding the staff members for their input in helping the organisation achieve superior performance.....Whenever we have exceeded our targets, we award our employees with a bonus. This bonus reward is linked to the employee's performance. (29l).
The reward system in the university is eschewed towards academic and administrative staff. There are no incentives for support staff. This really affects their motivation to work hard. (32g)
Government plans to standardize the salary structure among public universities. We feel this move is retrogressive unless mechanisms will be put in place to incentivise best performers. (32i)

Strategies

1. The PM system should provide mechanisms and strategies to recognize exceptional performance.
2. Establishing the organisational rewards for exemplary performance can motivate employees towards helping strategy implementation. Furthermore, managers at various levels need to recognize exceptional performance.

Discussion

The study has confirmed that rewards in general motivate employees to improve performance in organisations. Many respondents in the two benchmark organisations contend that the reward systems in their institutions motivate employees to work hard. In contrast respondents in the HEIs attributed the low work morale, high level of moonlighting and absenteeism to lack of reward systems.

The findings of this study confirm a general belief in SM literature that organisational rewards motivate employees to perform beyond the threshold level of performance (Armstrong, 2009). An effective reward system can have a positive influence on successful strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. For organisations to enhance performance they need to manage performance by rewarding those who perform above average and taking corrective action against those whose performance is deemed to be below average. Individuals whose performance is below average can be put on a special performance improvement programme. Furthermore, the non-performers can be retooled to help them improve performance. In extreme circumstances the staff member can be transferred, demoted or even dismissed.

While HEIs are striving to develop reward systems and performance management systems to enhance performance, there is need to ensure that there is thorough consultation of stakeholders such as labour Unions and dominant groups and individuals within the institution. Most often, labour Unions have opposed performance-based incentives preferring reward systems

which reduce wage inequality such as those that pay for jobs instead of personal characteristics like individual performance or behavior. Furthermore, Unions tend to oppose individual incentive systems preferring collective reward systems (Ng and Maki, 1994). While Unions can be a stumbling block to introducing change in public sector organizations, their role cannot be over emphasized. Involving unions in change management may have a positive influence on the commitment of unions and organizational members. (Huy, 2002; Garen, 1999).

The research also supports the assertions that private sector organisations are better placed to implement strategy, due to the enabling environment to develop good systems and procedures that motivate employees to perform better. For example, the study found that both the two benchmark organizations involved in this study had reward systems in place such as annual bonuses, monthly awards, flexible salary structures and flexible conditions of service. Most respondents in these organisations believed that their ability to meet targets was down to the reward systems that were put in place. They narrated that staff members worked hard to beat the set targets so that they should get a bonus at the end of the year. One staff member explained as below:

“The past two years, we have not been given bonuses because we failed to meet our targets. We are all working hard this year so that we should get a bonus. Our performance mid-year suggests that we have exceeded the target. This means this year we will likely get a bonus. Everyone is looking forward.”

Another responded explained as below:

As one of the good performers I received a bonus equivalent to three times my monthly salary.....Those who had better performance rating than me got even higher. I intend to work harder this coming financial year.

In contrast, due to governance policies, it is difficult to develop flexible salary structures in public HEIs.

All in all, reward systems are one important factor for strategy implementation vis a vis successful performance. While it might be difficult to emulate what the private sector is doing to reward staff members, Higher Education Institutions should ensure that they develop reward systems linked to performance management systems.

4.5.3.10 Evangelisation (F13)

Lack of knowledge among HEI members of SM initiatives has been mentioned as a factor influencing strategy implementation. Evangelisation is therefore important to enhance the employees knowledge and understanding of organisational initiatives aimed at performance improvement. Table 4-17 presents the substantiating quotes for this factor. A brief analytical discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with the contemporary strategic management literature. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study.

Table 4-17 Evangelisation (F13) Substantiating quotes

Table 4.17	Substantiating Quotes
	When I was appointed Principal of this college, I sold my vision to all the staff members both the CTS and Academic and Administrative staff.....(4ga)
In so doing I ensured that we all walked together towards creating a world class university....I was amazed with the support I got from Heads of Department and Deans for this effort....(4gc)
	Providing training is really important to make people understand what is going on...This also improves the level of communication...(4gb)
	...I have asked all Deans and Heads of Department that whenever they are having departmental and faculty meetings they should always spend at least 20 minutes to discuss the strategic plan implementation.....(56h)
	..The strategic plan is uploaded on the Local Area Network for everybody to see.....The mission and vision statements are also displayed in all offices.....(45y)
	We have introduced a monthly newsletter where we aim to ensure that in every issue we write something about strategic management or what is happening in the efforts to

implement our strategic plan.....(17f)

It is not easy to change people's behaviors and attitudes.....There is need for some sort of civic education if you know what I mean...(3ab)

....Before the process of budgeting as well as strategy formulation, our training department comes up with short courses on strategy formulation, where all those staff members involved in the process are trained....The process has proved to be successful..(5a)

One of the areas covered during leadership programmes for staff is strategic management....(15r).

One of the roles of our deputy vice chancellor is to champion strategic management.... His office is charged with the responsibility to reach out to all the staff members on the benefits of strategic planning.....To achieve this, a strategy implementation taskforce has been constituted to ensure that the plan is implemented. In so doing we believe we will be successful (6bc).

I don't know if we have a strategic plan around this place...You are right....some of us have always assumed that strategic management is to be done by senior management. The problem is we have not been trained in the process.(13)

....With the questions you have asked me, I really don't think I know what strategy is all about..I think we need to be oriented on this thing....The thing is, we think we academicians know everything....(9d)

Properties

1. Building employees trust through involvement and training is important to ensure their commitment. Employee commitment is an important factor to evangelisation.
2. Deliberate efforts should be made to encourage employee learning and development in HEIs.
3. Constant SM evangelisation by HEI Managers such as Deans and Heads of Department across the organization is needed to develop an effective planning culture.
4. Evangelisation of SM concepts, processes and programmes is one of the key functions of Managers in HEIs.
5. Employees need to understand the individual and organizational benefits from SM activities if they are to support the process.

Strategies

1. ICT devices such as e-magazines, Management Information Systems, news sharing on the Local Area Networks, BBM, E-Newsletters,

Facebook, and Twitter should be used in HEIs to enhance evangelisation efforts.

2. Considering that changing employee behaviours towards successful SM is complex and time consuming task, organisations should take a long term perspective to SM evangelisation.
3. Constant employee interactions and persuasion should be encouraged.
4. SM evangelisation should be carried out at all levels of the organisation hierarchy. Senior Managers such as Deans and HODs should market SM and should encourage the organisation to consider SM a critical factor for success. This can be done at departmental or faculty level.

Discussion.

In the organisations understudy, sharing the vision of the institutions has been an important factor for improved performance vis a vis achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. Many respondents in both the HEIs and the two benchmark organisations have suggested that organisational leaders should always inform employees about how strategic management can improve both individual and organisational performance. Organisational leaders need to take a leading role in the evangelisation process if strategic management is to be successful. Various strategies should be put in place to enhance the learning process such as production of newsletters, get togethers and meetings where strategic management issues can be discussed.

Some respondents especially in the two benchmark organisations explained that their Chief Executive Officers were actively involved in the process of evangelisation by giving monthly monetary rewards to individuals and departments that excelled in performance. Other studies at Bristol-Myers Squib Company, and Russell Reynolds Associates (Paul, 2003) cited in Kandadi (2006) indicated a similar view that employee recognition from senior management directly motivates people to participate in organisational activities and enhance knowledge culture in organisations.

4.5.3.11 Total Quality Management (TQM) (F14)

Quality assurance is mentioned in this study as a factor affecting strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. The study confirms that TQM is an emerging source of sustainable competitive advantage in HEIs. Table 4-18 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-18 Total Quality Management (F21), Source: Author

Substantiating Quotes
A good number of our fellow students who were withdrawn on academic grounds have successfully appealed and are now back in college. (21ad)
Most of the systems are ICT driven. You talk of performance management systems, accounting systems, administrative systems...(7yu)
We do not have an effective management information system to help us manage academic and students records.....delays in releasing examinations can be attributed to our ICT infrastructure. (10d)
There are a lot of rumours about examination leakages and students getting examinations from lecturers.(23f)
We always complain about delays in releasing examinations. We suspect that there are problems in processing the examinations. (24k)
We have a lot of challenges with our ICT systems. We have a system which is not efficient.. Just imagine we still produce student's academic transcripts manually. We have a problem where we make a lot of mistakes.(6da)
We are ISO compliant.... We take TQM as an important performance factor. (45m)
One of the challenges we have is failure to review our curricula on time....(19d)
We have infrastructure problems around this place. Due to inadequate security, most of the classroom furniture has been stolen and students learn whilst standing up.(16dg)
Due to funding challenges we are unable to procure furniture for classrooms. Some students learn whilst standing up due to inadequate furniture.
Government promised us funds to rehabilitate infrastructure. The funds were diverted to salaries yet the status of infrastructure is pathetic.(11d)
Lack of adequate systems affects performance. We need to have finance, academic and operational systems.(26s)

Properties

- 1) Higher Education Institutions have unique cultures and unique ethos.
- 2) Quality Assurance is an important factor affecting performance.
- 3) HEIs need to adopt a mentality of continuous improvement.
- 4) Students should be assessed based on objective assessment criteria.

Strategies

- 1) Sharing important information with employees (e.g. vision, mission statements, budgets, current trends in the industry etc) will also enhance mutual understanding between management and employees. One of the causes of mistrust is lack of information on part of employees.
- 2) It is important to ensure that employees are properly trained and developed to levels appropriate to their roles in the skills they need to carry out their present jobs at an acceptable standard and prepare them for future roles in line with Career Management discussions.
- 3) HEIs need to put in place systems, policies and procedures that would enhance performance.
- 4) Encouraging employees and teams to work together. Creation of flat management structure with broader responsibilities, greater decisional discretion and flexibility.
- 5) Documenting standards, guidelines and policies is an important quality management aspect.

HEI Managers need to ensure that policy documents are in place and that all procedures for various institutional functions are in place.

Discussion

The study depicts the crucial role that quality assurance play in performance of higher education institutions. Many respondents believed that lack of commitment to quality affected strategy formulation and implementation. The study found out that in the two benchmark organisations quality assurance which was referred to as Total Quality Management was considered as a key factor for improved performance. Quality management systems and procedures were laid down for all processes of the organisations value chain system.

Continuous improvement in all the organizational processes was encouraged by the organizational leaders. Such quality management systems that were adopted in the two benchmark organisations are the Balanced Scorecard and ISO 2000. In contrast, lack of quality assurance mechanisms was attributed to poor performance in most of the HEIs. Some of the examples relating to quality that were mentioned by the respondents include the following:

- a) Failure to recruit staff based on approved recruitment policy.
- b) Lack of performance management systems (performance appraisal and ineffective criteria for performance)
- c) Failure to review curricula. Many HEIs take too long to review curricula.
- d) Poor infrastructure and failure to rehabilitate the available infrastructure due to lack of financial resources.
- e) Poor ICT infrastructure and lack of Management Information systems.
- f) Management of examinations. This includes late release of examination results, failure to put in place systems to prevent examination leakages and student cheating, high rates of student failure, high rates of appeals for remarkings, high rates of re-admissions due to mistakes on the part of lecturers.
- g) Inefficient utilization of public resources. For example HEIs in Malawi have the worst student to lecture ratios in the SADC region. The SADC average is 1 lecturer to 25 students while the ratio in Malawi is 1 lecturer to 10 students (World bank, 2010)

All the above quality issues were prevalent in HEIs which participated in the study. The above challenges being faced in HEIs call such institutions to adopt quality management principles prevalent in private sector organisations. In the last decades, the above factors (a-g) have contributed to rising public concern over higher education institutions quality. (Rosa et al 2010). This has led to the need to enhance quality measurement and improvement. Sarrico et al (2010) propose the need to import models from the private sector into higher education as proposed in the concept of new managerialism or new public management.

While some researchers propose the use of private sector models in HEIs, there has been a lot of debate on the applicability of quality management principles, methodologies and tools to the higher education sector (Lane 2002, 1995; Roberts and Goldfinch 2013; Maassy, 2003). However many authors claim that although HEIs were not companies, some of the basic principles and tools that have been successful in the private sector could be applied as long as they were instrumental at the service of institutions. Higher Education Institutions need to react to increasing pressures and demands from stakeholders in a time of declining resources combined with HE rising costs, increased population and increasing pressure to provide high quality education by a more demanding citizenry which want more for less.

According to Rosa et al (2010), quality management is not a management approach easily applied to HEIs because the academic culture of these HEIs is quite strong and resistant to its change. Terms such as Performance Management, Business Process Re-engineering, and Total Quality Management (TQM) do not resonate in HEIs. For example one respondent in one of the HEIs observed that the term TQM had to be changed to Quality Assurance and Performance Management to Performance Appraisal and Criteria for promotion because the two terms were deemed not to be friendly to the academe. For Maassy (2003) cited in Rosa et al (2010), the greatest resistance to quality process improvement concern professors who think TQM is just another business oriented fad.

4.5.4 Managerial Factors

The study has revealed that the nature of the organisation's management can also influence strategy formulation and implementation. The Management core category encompasses several factors: F14, F15, F16, F17, and F18. Figure 4-7 presents a conceptual overview of the managerial dimension factors observed during the study.

Figure 4-7 Conceptual view of the Managerial Dimension, Source: Author

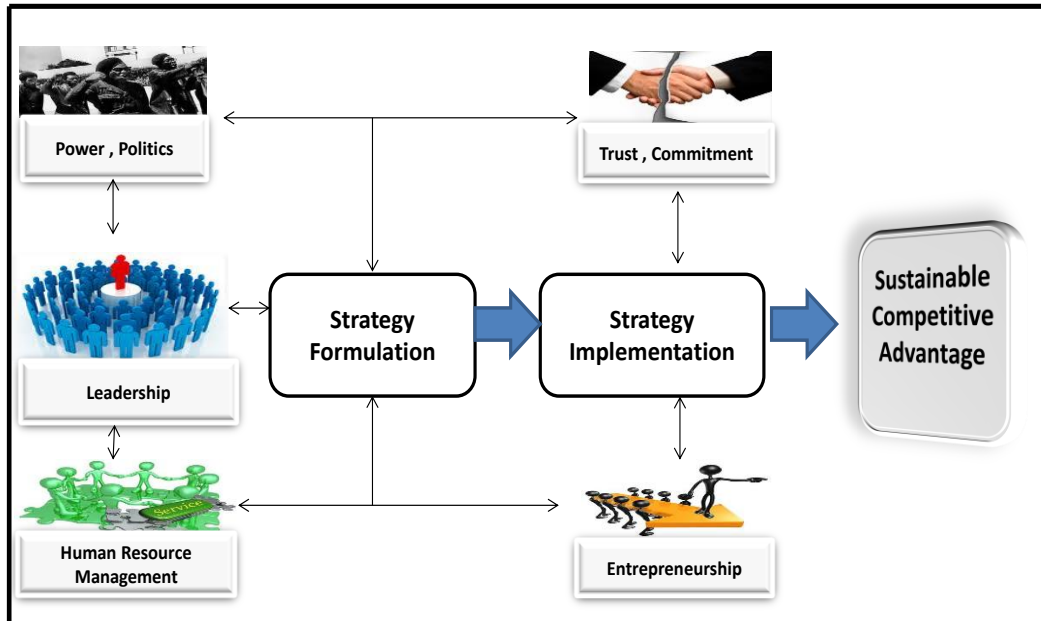


Table 4-19 provides detailed analysis of various SM Factors and Organisation core category. The detailed analysis of the various Managerial core category factors are presented in tables (4-18 to 4-22).

Table 4-19 Manager Centred Factors : Constituent Factors and Substantiating codes

Fig 4.18 Constituent Factors
Leadership (F14), Politics and Power (F15), Trust and Commitment (F16), Commodification and Entrepreneurship (F17) and Human Resources Management (F18).
Substantiating Codes
Leadership has been one of the challenges in this University....We now have a new set of Managers....The whole top management i.e. Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University Registrar and Director of Finance, is new... (3m).
We have serious leadership problems around this place.... We have staff and students striking every now and then we don't understand why our leaders are not able to ensure that we do not have these strikes.(14a).
The success of our organisation lays in its strong leadership....our leaders are inspiring and really work had for the company to succeed.(12a)
Due to the academic freedom impulse, there is no trust between staff members and the university management. We staff members felt that the university management betrayed us during the academic freedom saga where instead of being on our side, management was on

the side of government (16a).

One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation. We believe our staff are not motivated to help achieve this plan (34s)

4.5.4.1 Leadership (F15)

The study illustrated that inspiring followers to achieve a common goal was key to strategic management success. By communicating the vision and mission to organisational members, leaders can give direction to organisational members during strategy formulation and implementation. This can give members confidence, clarity and security about what they are trying to achieve. Furthermore, the study revealed that the provision of support, involvement, flexibility and empowerment is required at various levels of the organization. Table 4-20 presents the substantiating quotes for this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-20 Leadership (F15) : Substantiating quotes.

Substantiating Quotes
We have serious leadership problems around this place..... We have staff and students striking every now and then. We don't understand why our leaders are not able to ensure that we do not have these strikes.(14a)
The success of our organisation is as a result of the strong leadership we have.our leaders are inspiring and really work hard for the company to succeed.(12a)
A University is a complex system with employees who are experts in their fields, as such, they are their own bosses... they may report to an HOD but they manage their own time and work with little control from management (1b)
Universities are professional bureaucracies with employees who are their own bosses. This ofcourse has brought a lot of challenges in the system. In a system there is need for order we need to change our approach. Academic staff need to be answerable to their Heads of Department and Deans. A professor should be able to listen to a Head of Department who is a Senior Lecturer...(4ed)
...The implication of the foregoing is that employees in a university have more autonomy and have less "respect" to authority which sometimes makes it difficult to manage such institutions.....(1c)

...a good example is the conduct of lecturers during strikes, such as the academic freedom saga. We have had leadership challenges the past three years where we had leadership which was dictatorial...the leadership imposed decisions on faculty...this created a gap between top management and the rest of the organization..... (1a).

Basically, our university leadership does not consider the needs of the students...(26k)

Leadership is about consultation.... We believe that management needs to do more and to consult the student's body especially in decisions that will directly affect their studentship.... (2ac)

For Academic Institutions, by nature, you deal with a collegiate institution where all lecturers are experts in their fields (3a).

There is need for collective agreement and consultation to move forward....In today's world you need occasions where people make decisions based on what those whom they lead want...(3g).

Our university has not had stable leadership in the last three years...however; things seem to be working because our leaders are listening leaders. (5ag).

Servant leadership would not work in a university nor would transformational leadership because change in a university is never revolutionary, it is evolutionary..

In the Private Sector you can have heroes, Charismatic leaders. In a professional beauraucracy like a university, you are largely equals and leaders are seen against that background. Hence, there is a limit to which leaders can influence things so profoundly to bring about the change seen in highly integrated institutions.

Leadership is about articulating your role and ascertaining yourself as a leader. Leaders need to be learners (5a).

To begin with, our leaders in most Higher Education Institutions are Academics, but they major setback is that the majority of them have greater loyalty to their discipline of specialization than management.....5(ab).

... They are reluctant managers. They have become managers because the business of the academe is largely theirs, so they look at management or leadership more as a temporary thing where after a four year term of office a Principal will leave and others will come. Unlike career managers who accept this as their normal work.

.....Unlike the western world where those who take up leadership accept that going into management means focusing on management.....(5ac)

The other problem is that even though most managers are academics, they do not understand their own institutions because one thing a leader need to do to lead well, is to understand their environment. For example, primarily, loyalty of academics is to their discipline not to their faculty, department or college as that's where their recognition comes from.....(5ad)

Thus these academics need to move from this cocoon of thinking, to become greater leaders and making them do that takes longer and cannot be done by one person hence the need for those in leadership to create collective leadership.(10bd)

.....There is need to invest in leadership of our Principals and Vice Chancellors, because we make the wrong assumption that if they are professors, they are leaders yet they are leaders in their areas of specialty and not in management.....

.... most academic leaders do not acknowledge or value career managers who can be filling the gaps in them..... For example, instead of acknowledging that an administrator has done strategic management though he is not a Professor and can be given a responsibility to lead the process, they would rather identify an academic who has no experience in Strategic Management to provide the leadership.... (6g)

I have been an Academic for 30 years as a Professor of Chemistry but I have realised that Africa continues to lag behind because we do not have leaders and managers in our institutions.....(3a)

We are quick to blame politicians that they are mismanaging our country yet most of the Politicians are your former students.. What did we teach them so that they mismanage the country? (3ba)

Properties

- 1) Strategic management initiatives need to be supported by organisation leadership.
- 2) Lack of employee empowerment, dictatorial tendencies and top down structures are some of the ineffective symptoms of effective management of HEIs.
- 3) Existence of an environment where employee questioning is appreciated is an important factor for success.
- 4) Management should create an environment that ensures trust among all levels of employees.
- 5) Leadership should develop communication policies to ensure achievement of organizational goals.

Strategies

1. Organisational leadership should provide continuous support to organisational members.
2. HEIs should develop leadership development programmes to develop current and future Leaders. This should not just look at current employees holding leadership positions but should also consider planning for succession. Talent and Career Management committees should therefore be established to help identify potential leaders.

3. Work plans should be developed at all levels of the organisation. Leadership role is to ensure implementation of these work plans based on approved budgets.
4. Coaching and mentoring of staff should be encouraged. This helps in developing of leaders and employee confidence building.
5. Strategic management initiatives need commitment and support from organisational leadership if the processes are to be successful. Implementation of strategy depends on effective participation of all employees in the organisation.
6. Leadership needs to create an environment where employees will be able to express themselves so that they can positively contribute to the success of the organisation.

Discussion

The study found that Leadership is one of the crucial factors influencing performance in HEIs. A Manager's ability to influence academicians to operate in a specific way was not an easy task. Leadership is widely described as one of the key drivers of effective strategy implementation (Northouse, 2014; Pearce & Robinson, 2007; Hrebiniak 2005; Lynch, 1997; Collins, 2001; Thompson & Strickland 2003; Freedman & Tregoe, 2003; Kaplan & Norton, 2004;). Nevertheless, lack of strategic leadership attributed by the top management, has been identified as one of the major barriers to effective strategy implementation (Alexander, 1985; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2004; Hrebiniak, 2005). For the employees to buy into management's thinking and aspirations there is need for proper communication, development of trust and commitment, fairness in resource allocation and subordinate motivation.

The need to involve lower level managers in strategic management cannot be overemphasized. While the literature reviewed highlighted the important role that senior management played in organisational performance (Pearce & Robins, 2007); Thomas & Strickland, 2001), the majority of respondents especially middle and front end managers in this study believed that success of strategy implementation depended mostly on the involvement of lower level managers who were the actual implementers, the foot soldiers. Similarly,

respondents in the two benchmark organisations asserted that the visionary and transformational leadership in their organisations was the source of good performance prevailing in the institutions.

The study also found that the quality of organisational leaders was partially determined by Human Resources policies in an organisation. For example, most Leadership categories in most of the HEIs that took part in the study such as Heads of Department and Deans were appointed through elections. They were never subjected to interviews. Senior Academic managers in a university set up comprise Deans, Heads of Department, Centre Directors, Principal. The Deans and Heads of department play a key role in management of the university.

Some respondents believed that failure to improve performance in HEIs could emanate from the fact that senior managers are not objectively recruited to these esteemed positions. The Deans and Heads of department are elected through popular vote not through analysis of skills and attributes through an interview. The implication of this is that often times, these managers shy away from making tough decisions that would not go down well with those who ushered them in their positions during implementation efforts. This dilemma affects performance.

Further investigations were made to find out what the system was doing regarding recruitment of these positions. The study revealed that efforts to rectify these challenges through amendment of the university act in two universities for example, were blocked by the academic members of staff as they claimed that they were not involved in the process of amending the University Act. One respondent noted that failure to resolve this problem of senior managers' recruitment, let alone failure to engage staff members in changing policies that directly affect them, are some of the leadership challenges affecting HEIs in Malawi.

The important role played by middle and front-end managers in organizational performance has also been highlighted in knowledge management. Kluge et al

(2009), Marsh and Satyadas (2003) and Olivier and Kandadi (2006) cited in Kandadi (2006) opine that effective management and leadership are integral to each other and are required for successful performance. HEIs therefore need to ensure that middle and front end managers are involved in SM.

Many respondents also noted the need for action oriented leaders who would take the challenge of moving the HEIs forward in these difficult times when there is reduced government funding, dilapidated infrastructure, poor ICT infrastructure increased number of students against few classrooms and low work morale among staff. They believed that the current leaders were not strategic enough in their approach to resolving the myriad of challenges that HEIs face today. This revelation is in line with the new leadership proposed in literature, the transformational leader.

Over the past couple of decades, two increasingly popular theoretical perspectives labeled transformational leadership and servant leadership have been proposed by Burns (1978), Bass (1998) and Greenleaf (1977) respectively. Bass (1998)'s theory is an extension of Burns' (1978) qualitative classification of transactional versus transformational political leaders. Whereas transactional leadership is described as a series of exchanges and bargains between leaders and followers, transformational leadership goes beyond exchanging inducements for desired performance by developing, intellectually stimulating, and inspiring followers to transcend their own self-interests for a higher collective purpose (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

Transformational leaders attempt and succeed in raising colleagues, subordinates, followers, clients or constituencies to a greater awareness about issues of consequence. This heightening of awareness requires a leader with vision, self-confidence, and inner strength to argue successfully for what is right or good, not for what is popular or is acceptable according to established wisdom of time. With Transformational leadership, comes a shift of focus from simply leading followers, by offering rewards, to empowering them to become leaders through the development of a relationship of mutual stimulation and trust. Mintzberg et al (1995) suggest that a leader must become, above all, a

creator or shaper or keeper of skills. Peters and Waterman (1982) observe that transformational leaders throw themselves into a relationship with followers who feel elevated. Bass (1985) asserts that transformational leadership will result in followers performing beyond expectations because of the leader's influence.

Servant leaders encourage followers to intelligently grow, be creative, self-manage and serve people. This leads to the betterment of society and advocates acceptance, tolerance, empathy, love, forgiveness, and adherence to the Golden Rule of "do unto others as you shall have them do unto you"

Ehrhart (2004) proposed that servant leadership involves two main constructs: ethical behavior and concern for subordinates. Thus the servant leader behaves ethically, and encourages and empowers subordinates to grow and success both personally and professionally. He further proposes that servant leadership and transformational leadership share many similar characteristics. However the focus of servant leadership is not only to achieve organisational and personal goals but also to accept a moral responsibility to serve all stakeholders.

Higher Education Institutions, therefore, need their leaders to rethink the way they conduct business if their institutions are to be successful. One interesting finding which is in contrast to the transformational leadership research believed to be affecting performance in HEIs is the belief that HEIs do not need transformational change. Some of the respondents insisted that universities as professional bureaucracies do not need transformational leaders. This argument was echoed by other respondents in the other universities who asserted that universities have different cultures from the private sector. A respondent at one of the public universities explained as below:

"A University is a complex system with employees who are experts in their fields, as such, they are their own bosses... they may report to an HOD but they manage their own time and work with little control from management (1b)

Another respondent at another public university confirmed the complex cultures in public universities and explained as below:

Universities are professional bureaucracies with employees who are their own bosses. This of course has brought a lot of challenges in the system. In a system there is need for order we need to change our approach. Academic staff need to be answerable to their Heads of Department and Deans. A professor should be able to listen to a Head of Department who is a Senior Lecturer”... (4ed)

Conversely, the need for transformational leadership was appreciated in the two benchmark organisations where all the respondents believed that their success was achieved because of the tough decisions by the organisational leadership. The transformational leadership is consistent with the new public management principals which public universities just like other public institutions are being encouraged to adopt.

The findings of this study suggests the need for HEI managers to seriously consider adopting new leadership approaches that have helped performance improvement in the private sector institutions. This can be achieved through a servant leadership mentality to be built cultivated throughout the organisation.

4.5.4.2 Government and Politics (F16)

The study has recognized the important role that politics and government played in shaping HEIs. They argued that government and politics including the role of trade unions have all contributed in different ways to the performance of HEIs in Malawi. Table 4-21 presents the substantiating codes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-21 Government and Politics (F16): Substantiating codes

Substantiating Quotes
We hear our former Vice Chancellor made a political comment which did not please the then government. This really affected the institution as government seemed to be sidelining us in terms of development.... (1an).

We do not have a union per se...but we have a consultative committee which is responsible for looking at staff welfare issues... It plays an important role in ensuring that the welfare issues of employees are taken care off by the employer.

As a private company, I do not think that the unions can have power compared to those in the public sector.

The unions in my view, provide checks and balances to the system.....recently they queried management why we were recruiting people and giving them positions that did not exist in current organogram.

There is politics in any institution....Academia is full of clever people with strong ideas of what they think is wrong or right... This can appear as a battle between two systems say between Deans and Heads of Department... There is need to recognize people's individualism... (16)

...Performance of the university has been affected by collective bargaining efforts by the unions...soon after the country became a multiparty state; there was a lot of anxiety on the part of the unions which were powerless during the one party state... (15g).

In 2008, we reviewed the conditions of service for the CTS staff. However the union decided to get an injunction against their implementation because they thought that they were not addressing the pertinent issues that they had raised during the review of the conditions of service.

As a public institution, we are subjected to external political systems. We have always operated under the realm of policies of the government of the day.. sometimes we make decisions just to please the government...For example, when the former president died, the current regime came up with its priorities which meant that as a university we also had to re-align our priorities (4)

The unions have played a significant role in our university....we rely on our unions through collective bargaining to have our salaries increased for example. Without our union's voice I do not think we would have our salaries adjusted...

....i should confess that sometimes the unions have helped us as management in decision making or negotiating with government. Our unions are very strong and are a force to reckon with, when it comes to collective bargaining. However, sometimes, this has worked to the disadvantage of management because it becomes difficult to make crucial decisions.

There was an enquiry that was sanctioned by council of the university, to investigate what happened during a strike which led to the death of a university student....

...This was also to investigate the underlying causes of the instability of the university. It was observed that Politics played a major role in the instability of the institution....

There are always competing camps in the institutions. Such that staff members identify with such camps. If one camp has its member as the Principal that camp will support him while regardless of their performance..

Somebody with good plans but who is not politically aligned for instance, will not survive, while one whose performance is always wanting but has political connections, will likely stay regardless of their poor performance.

The university does not usually involve us in the strategic management issues of the institution...we are often involved when there are problems....Unions in my view have got a role to play in shaping the institutions strategy...

Any change in government regulations will affect our strategies. HEIs in Malawi for instance, suffered tremendously in Malawi because of structural adjustment policies where the world bank and IMF requested the government to prioritise primary school education at the expense of HE.....

Properties

- 1) Dominant groups of individuals within organisations have an influence among other employees.
- 2) Trade unions have a significant influence in policy direction in HEIs.
- 3) Organisational politics shape strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs.
- 4) Changing government legislation affects SM in HEIs.
- 5) Government strategies have an influence on HEIs strategic endeavors.
- 6) National politics influence the way HEIs will be managed.

Strategies

- 1) Management in HEIs should ensure that they develop a shared understanding with trade unions, government and other stakeholders.
- 2) HEIs need to be aware with developments in government to take advantage of opportunities that might arise or to strategise on any challenges that might be anticipated.
- 3) HEIs should strengthen collaboration with stakeholders such as the government and the private sector.

Discussion

Many respondents in both the HEIs and the two benchmark organisations in this study, believe that the central government influence strategy implementation in HEIs. They argue that any change in government legislation or change in economic policies will directly affect strategy formulation and implementation. For instance, one respondent argued that the devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha by government had affected implementation of strategy to a greater extent. The institutions could no longer procure adequate teaching and learning materials because the prices of commodities had gone up.

As the role of HEIs is to fulfill the long term educational needs of the nation; governments play a significant role in shaping the way in which universities operate. The government is often able to exert considerable influence by imposing the strategy in universities through different ways including: Changing legislation; Budgets; short, medium and long- term plans and political environment. Any change in government legislation will have an effect on strategic management in HEIs. For instance, the change in two legislations in Malawi has had an influence on some aspects in strategic management endeavors. The Pensions Act of 2008 for example, has necessitated the need for HEIs to revisit recruitment policies in order to ensure that they are operating within the law. Another law which has also affected implementation of Human Resources strategies is the severance pay bill which has necessitated the need for HEIs to make massive payments to retirees including staff who were dismissed on disciplinary grounds. As one respondent observed:

...."You cannot understand how some legislation are introduced. Just imagine over the past four years we have been requested to pay severance allowance to those who were retrenched, those who retired after reaching the mandatory retirement ageinclude those whose services were terminated on disciplinary grounds....such legislation have affected our Human Resources plans"

HEIs depend on governments for funding. One of the biggest challenges facing HEIs in Malawi is the ever reducing government funding, which has been exacerbated by a myriad of issues ranging from donor fatigue, IMF and World Bank policies, general economic slowdown (the credit crunch). On the other hand, the same government has put a lot of restrictions on the amount of tuition fees that public HEIs can charge students. For instance, students in private universities in Malawi pay an average of U\$1500 tuition per year while those in public universities are only asked to make an annual contribution of about U\$130. HEIs have for the past few years lobbied the government to raise the tuition fees to reflect the high cost of training but government has vehemently opposed the move since it has political implications.

The government's strategic plans also influence strategic management in HEIs. The study found that strategic plans are premised on the national road maps as well as plans domiciled in the respective government ministries. Another respondent explained that, as the country was implementing the second Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGSII) and the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) his institution had to premise their strategies on the national objectives highlighted in the overarching policy documents. However, due to the change in the political environment that came about due to the abrupt change in government, it was necessary to develop a short - term strategy to guide the country towards economic recovery. This change in focus implied that HEIs also needed to refocus in line with the new modus operandi.

The study has also found that the political decisions, often influence strategic management endeavors. As one respondent explained, in 2010, the government of Malawi announced that the country would have five new universities in different sectors of the economy. It also announced that some colleges and research institutions would become merged to be part of some universities. These announcements, for example, affected strategy implementation in the institutions that were affected through the merging.

The study has also revealed that strategy implementation in HEIs is sometimes influenced by political short terminism mentality where politicians are fond of undertaking short-term policies. Most respondents in the HEIs as well as the two benchmark institutions shared the view that politicians sometimes undertake short-term policies which can be implemented within their term of office but which do not create long term benefits. For instance, since a term of political office is five years, consequently, the government tends to be oriented towards short-term plans which can be implemented within the five years. Politicians cannot reap the rewards of successful long-term implementation projects. On the other hand, they are also not affected by the consequences of an unsuccessful long-term implementation project.

Another issue worth noting, affecting strategy implementation underpinned by the role of government and politics, is academic freedom. Two constituent

colleges of the University of Malawi were at one point closed for 8 months due to issues of academic freedom. This issue affected implementation of strategy due to the closure and the fact that instead of concentrating on developing the institution, managers were busy with court processes and procedures.

The influence of trade unions is another factor affecting strategic management endeavors in HEIs. HEIs tend to have strong unions that influence strategic management positively as well as negatively. There is a positive influence when, for example, the unions are involved in the process of strategy formulation. Their input is always cherished. However, the unions have also influenced strategy implementation negatively. For instance, CTS staff has for more than a decade been fighting management over issues of improved conditions of service. At times, this fight has brought animosity and lack of trust between management and the support staff. Furthermore, representatives of unions sometimes tend to work with politicians. This gives trade unions considerable influence within organisations because politicians tend to have a large influence over many organisations. Additionally, unions have the weapon of going on strike, giving them considerable bargaining power, especially if the organisation is in crisis.

Van Dar Maas (2008) believes that given their strong influence, unions need to be involved in the formulation and implementation of strategy in order to increase their commitment and that of the employees. He goes further to say that involving unions can also reduce the distrust of organisational members toward a new strategy, more especially in times of crisis it is effective to involve unions to gain their support. Unions often have considerable influence on the attitude of organisational members during such times. Furthermore, union support is especially important when the strategy implementation consists of measures, which are tough for employees, such as wage reduction and layoffs.

4.5.4.3 Employee Trust and Commitment (F17)

The study shows that a shared understanding and commitment of all employees is an important factor to effective organisational performance. Kotter (1996), Armstrong (2014) and Rapert et al (2002) support this assertion and state that

shared understanding without commitment may result in “counter effort” and negatively affect performance. Table 4-22 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-22 Employee Trust and Commitment (F17): Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
<p>...we come back to the issue of leadership and performance. If performance is there, commitment will be there.... If there are no resources there will be no trust and commitment....(3d).</p>
<p>Due to the academic freedom impulse, there is no trust between staff members and the university management..... Staff members felt betrayed by management... during the academic freedom fight.... (16g).</p>
<p>Issues of organisational politics have brought about an air of suspicion between staff members and the university management.....(25g)</p>
<p>There is a long standing mentality of mistrust between management of the university and the clerical technical and support staff union over long outstanding disputes on conditions of service.....(29j)</p>
<p>...there are so many legal cases in the university where staff members have sued the university over issues that could have been settled amicably without involvement of the courts...(35h)</p>
<p>....on the other hand management is always cautious in the way that they handle Human resources due to the mistrusts that exist.....such mistrusts have created lack of commitment and poor performance on the part of the less committed employees (16) .</p>
<p>We have two sets of conditions of service and four salary structures. In my view these are the sources of mistrust among the various groups. (43c).</p>
<p>There is always mistrust between management and union members and between management and the staff. There is also lack of trust between executive management and middle management. (43f).</p>
<p>There is a court injunction against management to implement the reviewed conditions of service for junior staff.....the union never trusted the intentions of management...(8t)</p>
<p>We have failed to implement the reviewed criteria for promotion after five years of hard work because staff think management has hidden agenda. (39f).</p>
<p>The new management is trying to use effective communication as a tool to build trust and commitment. We are coming from a history of mistrust.... (43s).</p>

We don't trust our management from what has been happening the past few years... (3j)

Management has to work hard to build employee trust which would lead to employee commitment. Currently there is no trust . employees do not trust their management (38d)

Properties

- 1) Lack of employee trust in Management reduces employee's motivation to work hard.
- 2) Culturally, there is lack of trust among different groups in HEIs in Malawi (e.g. Academic staff against Administrative staff; Management against Employees in general; Top Management against University wide management (Heads and Deans), Management against trade unions).
- 3) Poor channels of communications are a source of mistrust in HEIs.
- 4) Lack of trust leads to loss of commitment by employees.

Strategies

- 1) Improvement of communication in HEIs will likely improve trust and commitment of employees.
- 2) Leadership in HEIs needs to be transparent in the manner in which it conducts its business. This can be achieved by ensuring that adequate systems and procedures are put in place.
- 3) Training and development can be important strategies to equip employees with skills which will help them understand some organizational elements that would appear mythical.
- 4) Sharing important information with employees (e.g. vision, mission statements, budgets, current trends in the industry etc) will also enhance mutual understanding between management and employees. One of the causes of mistrust is lack of information on part of employees.
- 5) Encouraging employees and teams to work together. Creation of flat management structure with broader responsibilities, greater decisional discretion and flexibility.
- 6) Assuring employees of job security (e.g. in 2008 employee commitment at one University was at the lowest upon hearing that the institution

would embark on a structural review that would see some junior staff retrenched).

- 7) Recognizing that employees are a valuable resource and a source of competitive advantage if handled properly.
- 8) Clearly define responsibilities. Each job should have job descriptions and each employee should know to whom they report to, what kind of decisions they are allowed to make and what is expected of them.

Discussion

The study has confirmed that employee trust and commitment are important factors that determine organisational performance. The study found that trust was an important determinant of high organizational performance vis a vis strategy implementation. This factor was further confirmed by what was happening in most of the public HEIs. For example, the academic calendars in most of the universities have for the past few years been affected due to intermittent closure due to strikes by both students and staff. Furthermore, there were many court cases and court injunctions in these institutions which were as a result of different parties failing to agree on various issues.. Additionally, failure to implement some important policy decisions could also be linked to lack of trust between management and the employees.

Despite some respondents mentioning the impact of trust on performance, many researchers have highlighted the importance of trust on organization performance. For example, in a study of 2500 companies worldwide, Waal (2008) found that trust was the most important factor determining high performance in organisations. This assertion is supported by other authors such as Hattori (2009) and Blomqvist (2002). Similarly, Aryee, Budhwar & Chen (2002) stress that trust is related to job satisfaction and work attitude. They emphasized that increased trust of individuals upon other individuals and team members would allow them to perform in an effective manner. Moreover, trust between employees and organization is of equal importance as it creates positive psychological contract among collaborating parties. Furthermore, Konovsky and Pugh (1994) established that in a social exchange process trust in managers is positively connected with organization citizenship behavior.

The study shows that recognising the importance of employees as a source of sustainable competitive advantage will motivate them to commit themselves to the organisation. This will in turn help improve performance. For example, respondents in the two benchmark organisations believed that the open policy in their organization coupled with clear and open communication channels fostered trust between employees and management which in turn led to employee's commitment to the goals of the institutions. Alexander (1985) believes that obtaining employee commitment and involvement can promote successful implementation.

Some respondents believed that other than trust, failure to involve implementers in the process of formulation lead to low commitment to strategy which affected implementation. Cai (2008) and Dandira (2011) suggest that lower level employees should not only be involved during the strategy implementation phase, but they should be involved in all the strategic management phases starting from formulation.

The study has also depicted that sometimes lack of employee commitment come about because employees have little confidence or trust in their superiors to effectively lead them due to such reasons as; Lack of leadership and managerial skills on the part of the supervisors and probably past failures in similar endeavors. When this happens, it is very difficult for the followers to commit themselves to the cause. It is therefore important that organizations should have leaders who are able to inspire and motivate subordinates.

Organizations must not only focus on building trust but also on maintaining it. Building trust requires ensuring open communication, sharing good and bad information to all the levels of management, encouraging creativity, fostering talent, maintaining integrity and making consistent and fair decisions. In order to maintain trust and ensure employee commitment, organizations need to reward value added activities, keep up with their words and promises, encourage trustworthy behaviors and punish violation of trust.

4.5.4.4 Entrepreneurship (F19)

This study has revealed that entrepreneurship mentality is an important attribute of successful performance of HEIs. Table 4-23 presents the substantiating quotes. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-23 Entrepreneurship (F19) : Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Codes
We are encouraged to think like a business. We need to ensure that we take all the opportunities in the business.
University education is a risky venture. Initially we did not think we would be able to attract students considering that we were new in the Industry...but we have been encouraged by the number of students we have enrolled the past few years...
The biggest problem with our public universities is the inflexibility and inability to respond to the needs of the nation in the manner that would benefit everybody.....
....we once asked one public university to develop a special programme for us..... We never got feedback in three years and we ended up engaging a University from the UK.
...we have set up an innovations and new products committee. This committee aims at looking at new ideas from staff within the organization that can be exploited. We encourage our staff to use this committee as a platform for sharing ideas..
As a university we cannot operate like a private sector institution...

Properties

- 1) The current imperative to develop entrepreneurial capacity in HEIs derives from the current pressure emanating from globalization and internationalization of HEIs.
- 2) Lack of an organizational culture to identify and capitalize on opportunities contributes to failure for such institutions to enhance performance.
- 3) Current HEI environment does not provide incentives for entrepreneurial thinking.
- 4) Current Leadership in most HEIs in Malawi lack entrepreneurial thinking.

- 5) The fact that all HEIs receive almost 100% funding from government contributes to their failure to some extent to adopt an entrepreneurial culture.
- 6) The traditional (federal) HEI setup makes it difficult for such institutions to adopt entrepreneurial mentality

Strategies.

- 1) There is need for more engagement with the wider stakeholders community as part of organizational learning strategy.
- 2) HEIs in Malawi should embrace the idea of a university which encourages the scholarship of relevance and integration of knowledge and a sharing with and learning from the wider community.
- 3) HEIs should ensure that they recruit entrepreneurial staff and appoint entrepreneurial leaders and managers as change agents including the opening up of different university positions to a wider community through adjunct staff, visiting appointments and even recruiting those who have private sector experience.
- 4) Performance management and reward systems should be enhanced to help enhance a culture of performance.
- 5) HEIs should ensure that entrepreneurship is core and mandatory course in all taught programmes to help inculcate an entrepreneur culture in both employees and students.
- 6) HEIs need to embrace the Public Private Partnership concept as a strategy of getting closer to the community and stakeholders.
- 7) As global competition continues to grow, it is critical that HEIs which are institutions driving innovation improve their ability to offer market relevant programmes that have economic value

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with the literature on SM that assert the importance of entrepreneurship in successful strategy implementation. Many respondents in the two benchmark institutions attributed their successful performance to the culture of entrepreneurship developed by their leadership. The foregoing assertions were shared by the respondents in the private sector organisations who confirmed that their organisations inculcated a culture of

searching for opportunities which would make the institution improve performance. In contrast, lack of an entrepreneurial philosophy in HEIs is said to be one of the factors influencing poor performance.

Many respondents in the HEIs while noting that universities are not profit making and should not operate like private sector institutions, reckoned the need for change in mindset to adopt entrepreneurial thinking through seizing and exploiting lucrative opportunities. Many other respondents in the HEIs even noted the needed to ensure that entrepreneurship is introduced in all the programmes offered in the universities so that creativity and an entrepreneurship mentality is inculcated in the minds of the students.

The study has also found that leadership and human resources management are critical factors for entrepreneurship. For entrepreneurship to be successful there is need for leadership to embrace the philosophy. Secondly human resources function also needs to be supportive, capable and motivated. Furthermore, the organisational culture should also allow risk taking.

Many respondents in the HEIs believed that lack of entrepreneurship in their universities was as a result of Leadership and HR systems and procedures. For instance, some respondent believed that HEIs would never be entrepreneurial unless these institutions changed the recruitment policy of Managers. There was need to consider leaders who have industry experience other than those who have just worked in universities. Some respondents further argued that universities needed to create a conducive environment which supports creativity, and recognizing talent. This is also supported by other findings which calls HEIs to enhance the issue of people management (see F19).

The importance of entrepreneurship as an emerging important source of competitive advantage in HEIs is prevalent in universities world over. For example, in the United States of America, in 2011, 142 major research universities and associations submitted a letter to the Secretary of Commerce renewing their commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship on campus and in their communities, and asked the federal government to continue to work with

them in these areas (US Department of Commerce 2013). Ireland et al (2003) posits that a firm which employs an entrepreneurial mindset to identify opportunities; manages resources strategically to tackle the opportunity; applies creativity and innovation; and generates a competitive advantage. Entrepreneurship is about effective deployment of behavior that is having an entrepreneurial mindset to identify opportunities, or the application creativity to create innovation.

Recent literature has highlighted the need for entrepreneurship in Universities under the Entrepreneurial University concept. In defining entrepreneurship, Shane and Venkatatarman (2000) emphasize that it is a “nexus” that involves entrepreneurial individuals seizing and exploiting lucrative opportunities; the field involves the study of sources of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploitation of opportunities. Covin and Slevin (1989, Drucker 1985, Lumpkin and Dess 1996; Miller 1983 and Zahra 1993 argue that entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours are necessary for firms of all sizes to prosper and flourish in competitive environments.

All in all, it should be noted that a university does not become entrepreneurial by merely blowing up centuries of tradition or replacing the expertise and culture that have made such institutions great. Entrepreneurial universities are institutions where entrepreneurship is part of the fabric of such institution.

4.5.4.5 Human Resources Management (F18)

This study demonstrates that people management is an important dimension shaping strategic management in HEIs. Table 4-24 presents the substantial quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-24 Human Resources Management (F18) : Substantiating quotes

	Substantiating Codes
	<p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation. We believe our staff are not motivated to help achieve this plan. (18g)</p>
	<p>From our five year strategic plan, we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this trickles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan. Our staff members are aware of what the institution stands for and how it is doing to achieve the desired future goal.(7dc)</p>
	<p>..We seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan. As implementers we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning....We are demotivated because of the policies by our employer... we have not had our conditions of service reviewed in so many years....(6gh)</p>
	<p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation.</p>
	<p>From our five year strategic plan we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this trickles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard, we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan.(4nv)</p>
	<p>..we seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan. As implementers we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning(23m) We have guidelines but they need to be reviewed. Since the university was established 14 years ago we have never reviewed them..... (1ga).</p>
	<p>Human Resources Management is at an elementary stage. It is only now that people are being assigned specific Human Resources tasks. For example, we never had HR specialists in both this university and the other public university I worked in...This has led to so many lawsuits that we now face...(3m).</p>

We have had challenges with management of our human resources due to the fact that we do not have career HR personnel in our college. We recently made a decision to recruit an Assistant Registrar specifically to be responsible for Human Resources Management.(16y).

We have not been able to recruit and manage employee contracts. This has affected us strategically...We need to have clearly defined Human Resources policies to move forward. (4j)

The current policy stipulates that employees should retire at sixty years and can be offered a maximum of 5 two-year contracts after the mandatory retirement age. However, what is happening on the ground is that we have staff members who are over 70 years old...(24j)

We have two sets of conditions of service. One for Administrative and Academic staff and the other one for clerical, technical and support staff. Already having two sets of conditions of service and two salary structures is discriminatory and it affects the way that the university performs... There is a great feeling on the part of the junior staff that they are not considered as important... that has led to low motivation....(17t)

Properties

- 1) People are the key to business success.
- 2) People provide business enterprises with their only sustainable long-term competitive advantage.
- 3) Investing in the development of people can dramatically improve organisational performance.
- 4) Many business problems are caused by people who do not know what to do or how to do it.
- 5) Inability of HEIs to attract talent can have an effect on organisation performance in the long term.

Strategies

- 1) HEIs need to enhance HRM systems such as recruitment, motivation, rewarding and development to enhance employee's capabilities to perform effectively.
- 2) Adhering to laid down systems and procedures will enhance objectivity in the organisation.
- 3) The uniqueness of HEIs require the strengthening of the Human Resources Management function.

Discussion

The majority of the respondents in both the HEIs and the benchmark organisations believed that proper management of Human Resources is an important factor to successful organisational performance. They argued that good Human Resources practices and policies contribute to successful strategy formulation and implementation. A respondent at one of the public universities lamented as below:

Human Resources Management is at an elementary stage. It is only now that people are being assigned specific Human Resources tasks. For example, we never had HR specialists in both this university and the other public university I worked in....This has led to so many lawsuits that we now face...(3m).

The human resource management dilemma was also alluded to by another respondent in another public university. He explained as below:

We have had challenges with management of our human resources due to the fact that we do not have career HR personnel in our college. We recently made a decision to recruit an Assistant Registrar specifically to be responsible for Human Resources Management".(16y).

Another respondent at another public university noted as below:

We have not been able to recruit and manage employee contracts. This has affected us strategically...We need to have clearly defined Human Resources policies to move forward. (4j)

The literature reviewed supports this assertion. Over the years, the role of managing people in organisations has changed from recruitment and other mundane duties to include management of Human Resources as a key factor for sustainable competitive advantage (Pearson &, Strickland 2003; Collins, 2003). To ensure the successful formulation and implementation of strategy, the

support and performance of the employees from all strata of the organization is inevitable.

For strategy to be accepted in the system, the organisation must have a culture that exudes a positive attitude to the changes brought about by the strategies. Often, people are hesitant to change their modus operandi hence the need for Human Resources to convince them to move with the transitions occurring in the business. The Human Resources Management looks at the process of recruitment, induction, training, rewarding as well as managing the employee's exit for the success of an organization. For an organisation to be successful, it needs to recruit qualified personnel, train them and motivate them to give superior performance to the institution. Demotivated employees will tend to shy away from challenging responsibilities and this will affect strategy implementation. On the other hand, well-motivated employees will give superior performance which will result in achievement of organisational goals.

The results of this study are in tandem with what was underpinned in the literature review. Strategy implementation was high in institutions with good Human Resources management systems and policies as well as where motivation in terms of salaries was high. Conversely, in institutions where conditions of service were wanting and where salaries were perceived to be low, performance was poor. The issue of salary versus performance forms an avenue for future detailed research.

Another interesting finding of this study is the fact that both HEIs and the benchmark organisations placed great importance on management of employees. However the study seemed to confirm that the private sector organisations had achieved more in people management compared to the HEIs. Failure on the HEIs to embrace new HR policies and systems at the same rate as the private sector organisations could be attributed to the culture found in HEIs (see F7).

The importance of people as a critical source of competitive advantage has been reflected in the extant literature. Viseras, Baines, and Sweeney (2005) cited in Cai (2008) for example, grouped 36 key success factors into three

research categories: people, organization and systems in the manufacturing environment. Their intriguing findings indicate that strategy implementation success depends crucially on the human or people side of project management, and less on organisation and systems related factors. Similarly, Harrington (2006) and Dandira (2011) found that a higher level in total organisational involvement during strategy implementation had positive effects on the level of implementation success, firm profits and overall firm success.

The study also found that private sector organisations performed better compared to the HEIs because in the private sector, employees who did not have requisite knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes could be re-tooled, offered other positions or even laid off. Therefore organisation members would always try to work hard knowing that if they did not perform, they could be laid off. In contrast, many respondents in the HEIs opined that it was very difficult to lay off employees in a public HEI due to many reasons such as fear of being taken to court, fear of animosity by other staff members, fear of strikes and managers mentality not to appear bad to staff. By their own admission, HEIs managers believed that their failure to take appropriate action against non-performance was one of the major impeters of successful performance. The need to take action against non-performers in organisations has been raised by many authors (see e.g Stoddard and Jarvenpaa, 1995; Collins 2001). Collins (2001) for example, has proposed that for a company to move from good to great, its leaders need to get the right people on board and to offload those who are non-performers.

The importance of people as a key factor for successful performance in HEIs cannot be overemphasized. As Armstrong (2008) iterated, people are the most important resource in organisations, as such they need to be treated with utmost care and attention. Successful 21st century organisations have a clear vision and sense of direction and will also create an environment in which their people will be motivated to achieve and grow. Employees therefore need to be provided with requisite trainings for them to operate at the required level.

Furthermore, the importance of learning and organisational development, talent and career management is underscored by the fact that several successful organizations place great importance on training and education of organizational members during the implementation effort. In the strategy implementation literature, many scholars have pointed to the important role of adequate training and education during strategy implementation (see Armstrong, 2009 and Alashloo, 2005). HEIs need to ensure that they not only recruit competent employees but they should train, motivate and reward them if they are to get the best out of them. Well-motivated and trained staff members are likely to give superior performance compared to de-motivated staff.

4.5.5 Individual Dimension

The study has revealed that the individual’s capabilities to implement strategies and to realise the need to do things differently were important determinants of successful strategy formulation and implementation. The Employee core category encompassed three factors F19, F20 and F21 which were mostly cross cutting. Figure 4-8 presents a conceptual overview of the individual dimension factors observed during the study

Figure 4-8 Conceptual Overview of the Individual/Employee Dimension, Source Author.

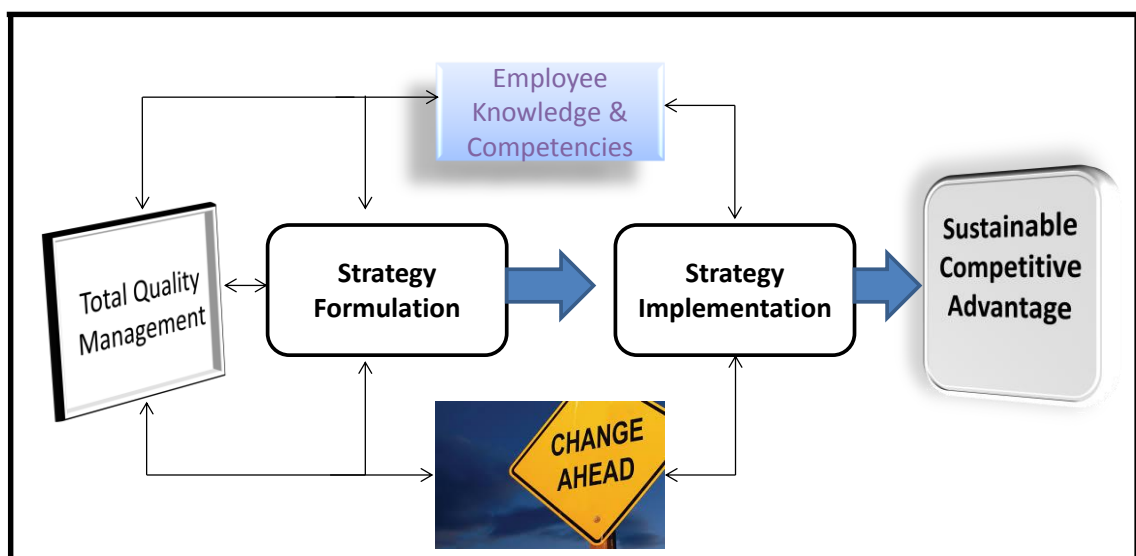


Table 4-25 depicts the relevant factors of this core category with some substantiating codes. The following sections provide detailed analysis of various

SM factors on individuals/employees core category. Table 4-19 Detailed analysis of the two SM factors is presented in tables (4-25, 4-26 and 4-27).

Table 4-25 Employee/Individual Dimension: Constituent Factors and Substantiating codes.

4.24 Constituent Factors
Change Management (F19), Lack of capabilities (F20).Total Quality Management (F21)
Substantiating Codes
<p>We have attended several trainings on strategic planning that have equipped us with requisite skills to be able to formulate strategic plans and to understand the need to do things differently if the process is to be successful.(44k)</p> <p>Lack of planning in our public universities is a major challenge. We hope that the National Council for Higher Education that Government has established will help address strategic management challenges that the Higher Education Sector in Malawi is facing. (18e)</p> <p>Some people still think strategic management is a waste of time and resources.....it is not surprising therefore that our institutions are not performing (18g).</p> <p>One of the biggest challenges we face is management of change. It is very difficult to convince our employees to do things differently. We initiated the process of reviewing our criteria for promotion in 2005 if not 2006 but up to now, we have not implemented the changes because our members of staff feel we still need to do things the way we operated in the past.(45g)</p> <p>We also make sure that we keep our plans simple....When the former Vice Chancellor was appointed, he engaged some strategic planning experts from the USA through USAID to help the university develop its first strategic plan....(12fg)</p> <p>The biggest problem then was that we did not develop a plan for implementation. While we had a good strategic plan document though very voluminous, it was never implemented successfully....some departments developed work plans (17s)</p>

4.5.5.1 Change Management (F20)

This study demonstrates that managing change is an important activity shaping strategic management in HEIs. Many respondents believed that change management is an important factor for strategic management in HEIs. Table

4-26 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-26 Change Management (F20) : Substantiating quotes

	Substantiating Quotes
	We have been independent as a sovereign state for 50 years now. Our oldest university is also 50 years old. However, we seem not to have moved with time. I was looking at the world bank status report on education in Malawi....management of change is one major issue.(35k)
We have a complex culture... managing change is difficult.....(1gk)
	We started reviewing our regulations a few years ago and 6 six years down the line we have not implemented them. Managing change is one of our major problems.....(5af)
	The university Act amendment which would have brought change we need, was presented to parliament but was not approved because the university fraternity don't want the change that was being proposed.....In my personal view the new Act would help us as a university.....(4cb)
	Poor communication sometimes makes people loose trust. There is no trust among different cadres in our university.....(8j)
	We do involve our staff members before any change effort. This helps us to move together....Creating a sense of urgency is important....we don't just introduce new things..(9bg)
	Resistance to change is a common phenomenon in our institutions....(11bc)
	Communicate and communicate and communicate more that's what makes us tick.....(14dc)
	The success in strategy implementation lies in the way that we handle our processes. Firstly we have good channels of communication and we take efforts to inform our staff members on what is happening. (22d)
	Achieving success depends on the leadership as well. If you have strong leadership you will be able to achieve the intended change. If not then it will be business as usual.(19g)
	Our industry is dynamic we have to move with time otherwise we will be left behind.44k)
	Change is part of our business we need to be dynamic to survive in this industry...(44u)

Properties

1. Changing the behavior and attitude of employees to adopt new processes and systems is a difficult task in HEIs.

2. HEIs have unique cultures which are different from other public and private institutions.
3. Resistance to change is a common phenomenon in HEIs in Malawi.
4. The Challenging emerging market (new public universities and proliferation of private universities) is driving the need for the traditional HEIs to rethink the way they conduct business
5. Failure to implement strategy can be attributed to some extent to failure to manage change

Strategies

1. Continuous SM evangelization across the organisation's value chain system will help in changing the employees and student's perceptions, attitudes and behavior towards a strategic management culture.
2. The Change Agents in the organisations should create a sense of urgency for the change to be created and accepted by the entire organisation.
3. Continuous learning and development of employees will help enhance their capabilities to change. Organisational leaders should develop training and employee development policies.
4. HEIs should develop communication systems that would facilitate information sharing across departments.

Discussion

The study re-emphasises the significance of change management in strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. The majority of the respondents in the HEIs have stated that changing the employee's behaviours, attitudes and organization culture towards an effective strategic management culture is a difficult task. In almost all the organisations that participated in this study, change management is mentioned as one of the most daunting tasks

Several authors have noted the significance of managing change in organisations (Teulier and Rouleau, 2013; Mintzberg 2003; Kotter, 1996,2007; Johnson et al, 2009). Although many authors have acknowledged the significance of change management, Gouillart and Kelly (1995) argue that the

Strategic Management literature is still in need of specific strategies on how to manage change in HEIs. Some respondents have lamented the difficulty to introduce change in HEIs in Malawi. As one respondent explained:

One of the challenges that we face is how to make our staff members change their approach to doing things. For example, our university has been failing to implement a good number of plans because staff members are not willing to do so. We have some injunctions against some decisions that we, as management, wanted to implement, that we thought would help our institution.....There is no trust between management, government and staff and as long as there is this mistrust we will not move.

The above assertion is shared by many other respondents in the other universities. Organisational cultural issues have affected change management in HEIs institutions in Malawi. While management of change was found to be problematic in the HEIs, the situation was slightly different in the benchmark organisations that were interviewed. Many respondents in the two benchmark organisations opined that due to the dynamic nature of their industry, change was inevitable. For example, one respondent explained that due to the competitive nature of their industry, it was inevitable that the institution should be positive about change otherwise it would not survive. This was in sharp contrast to the situation in the HEIs where management of change was difficult and it was hardly possible to convince people to do things differently.

The research has also revealed the level of interdependences among the strategic management factors. For example, how the institution will manage change will depend on other factors such as leadership, communication, organization structure, power and politics, trust and commitment. Success in managing change in an organisation will depend for instance, on how the leadership communicates the strategy, the issues of power play in the organization, and whether the members of staff have trust in management. Kotter (1996, 2007) proposes an eight stage process of creating major change in an organization as below:1)Establishing a sense of urgency; 2) Creating a

guiding coalition; 3) Developing a vision and strategy; 4) Communicating the change vision; 5) Empowering broad based action; 6) Generating short-term gains; 7) Consolidating gains and producing more change; 8) Anchoring new approaches in the culture. For change to be successful in HEIs there is need for Managers to plan for the change and to ensure that the change is communicated to all staff members who will be involved in the change process.

4.5.5.2 Knowledge and Competencies of Organisational Members (F20)

This study demonstrates that knowledge and competencies of members is an important factor shaping strategic management in HEIs. respondents believed that employee’s knowledge, competencies and capabilities influenced their ability to implement strategy.

Table 4-27 presents the substantiating quotes of this factor. The following sub-sections provide factorial properties and SM strategies observed during this empirical study. A brief discussion is provided for this factor based on a critical comparison of the findings with contemporary SM literature.

Table 4-27 Knowledge and Competencies of Organisational Members (F20): Substantiating quotes

Substantiating Quotes
We are yet to develop a strategic plan for our institution.(9aa)
I was appointed as a Head of Department last year. I hope that management will organize an orientation for all of us new staff members. We need training on management issues since some of us have not held management positions before.(47h)
We have a training section with the sole role of ensuring that organization learning and development activities for employees are coordinated.....we make sure that we arrange induction and trainings for all staff members...(7ab)
We have a regional training Centre.....We make sure that we provide training and on the job experience to our employees....we also have a management trainee programme(3cg)
We face a lot of challenges. We lack management systems and procedures.....We want to develop a performance management system. (38a).

I am a professor yes, the highest administrative position I have had is Head Of Department, and there is need for us to be exposed. Management is a different thing altogether.(48ad)

Strategic management is a complex task. Being relatively new in our university staff need training if they are to make positive contributions....(31af)

Most of our Heads of Department and Deans lack management experience. Some of them were educated to the level of master's degree in this university. They went abroad for a PhD and came back. They have only worked for this university....they do not have any other experience apart from what they have learnt in this university.(26de)

Properties

1. Training and continuous professional development is important to enhance employee's skills and experience. Training on organisational management activities such as Strategic Management can enhance employee's capabilities vis a vis performance.
2. It is sometimes assumed in HEIs that academics are knowledgeable in management duties by the mere fact that these academics have high qualifications such as Masters and PhD degrees.
3. Lack of adequate knowledge and competencies in SM on the part of employees contribute to failure of HEIs to implement strategic plans.
4. Organisational leadership needs to prioritise learning and organisational growth initiatives.
5. Many HEI managers lack adequate management competencies due to lack of relevant orientation and training

Strategies.

1. HEIs need to improve communication on various organizational endeavors. This can include developing communication strategy and policy and adoption of ICT as a strategy to enhance communication within the institution.
2. Managers in HEIs need to coordinate the development of Personal Development Plans. This should be used to develop training plans. All

HEI managers (Deans and Heads of Department) should be provided with relevant training on a continuous basis.

3. Development of systems such as Human Resources, Performance Management, Total Quality Management, Reward systems can help cultivate a culture of learning which will help equip employees with requisite skills to implement strategy.
4. HEI leadership should ensure that performance measurement should be conducted based on performance targets agreed upon at the outset.

Discussion

This study shows that lack of employee knowledge, capabilities and competencies on strategic management was one of the factors influencing performance of HEIs. The issue of knowledge gaps among HEI managers was initially, established during the pilot phase where the interview tool had to be modified several times because the respondents seemed to have inadequate knowledge on SM. The study also found that strategic management tools and techniques were rarely used during strategy formulation and implementation efforts. Most respondents explained that the only tool that they used during a strategy formulation effort was the SWOT analysis.

Many respondents did not necessarily admit lack of SM competency but recognized the need for adequate training for HEI leaders and managers if they were to contribute positively to strategy formulation and implementation. As one of the respondents explained:

“The problem in our university is that as lecturers we find ourselves holding management positions without being provided with leadership and management training.....All what we know is teaching and doing research. Furthermore, we wish we changed the criteria to recruit Heads of Department and Deans...Currently the procedure is that Deans and Heads of Department are elected through a popular vote. Usually, these Heads and Deans will not want to take harsh decisions against their constituents who ushered them into power.”

In a typical University structure (see Table 4-28) a Head of Department (HOD) which is a middle management level position, is key to strategy formulation and implementation considering that operationally, most decisions are implemented at departmental level. It is important that those who are to hold such positions should have requisite experience, attributes, skills and competencies to drive the institutions agenda. However, the current situation in many HEIs is that HODs and Deans are elected by popular vote without looking at an individual's skills and competencies. Therefore, the current recruitment policy in the HEIs can lead to recruitment of leaders who are not committed to strategy implementation efforts. This can likely lead to failure to implement strategy.

The findings of this study support the extant Literature reviewed. For example, Shi (2009); Salih & Doll (2013) and Beer and Eisenstat (2000) found that inadequate leadership skills and development of middle managers constitute a barrier to strategy implementation. Thus changing the policy on recruitment of HODs and Deans coupled with introduction of leadership development training programmes can improve performance of both the individuals and the entire organisation.

The study also found that lack of exposure of managerial experience was one of the impeters to SM. For example, most of the respondents holding leadership positions revealed that they were never properly oriented upon taking up the leadership positions. This they claimed contributed to their lack skills and competencies to implement the strategic plans. People are promoted to the level of their incompetence as suggested by the Peter Principle.

Several authors have opined the importance of management capabilities in strategic management (e.g Okumus, 2001; Alexander, 1985; Pinto and Slevin, 1985; Beer and Eisenstat, 2000; Van Der Maas 2008 and Alashloo, 2005). They note that inadequate capabilities of managers are common cause of implementation failure. For example, in a study on strategy implementation, Van Der Maas (2008) found that availability of competent and qualified organizational members was the factor that was mentioned most, by interviews as influential on strategy implementation performance. Similar assertions were

noted by Alashloo et al (2005) who argued that lack of capabilities was one of the factors impeding strategy implementation.

Table 4-28 Typical HEI Organisational Structure

Position	Level
Vice Chancellor Deputy Vice Chancellor University Registrar Director of Finance University Librarian	Executive Management
Director of Centres Deans of Faculty	Senior Management
Heads of Departments Sectional Managers	Middle Management

The study also provides evidence of successful strategy implementation because of employee skills, competencies and capabilities. Respondents in the two benchmark organisations partially attributed the high performance in their institutions to not only competent leaders and managers but also the competitive criteria for recruitment of middle and top level managers. Unlike in the HEIs where there were no performance management systems and reward systems. In the two benchmark institutions performance of organisational members was measured using the balanced scored technique. Furthermore, those whose performance was deemed to be unacceptable were either re-tooled, given other responsibilities or even dismissed.

Training and employee professional development was also given priority in the two benchmark organisations. For instance the respondents explained that their organisations had training departments that were responsible for identifying training needs for all employees and arranging trainings for staff. Additionally, it was a policy in both organisations that before the launch of any product or system all staff members that would be involved or affected should receive relevant training. For example, one of the two benchmark organisations introduced an electronic performance management system. Before the system

was implemented, all employees were provided with training. Conversely, one of the Finance Managers in one of the HEIs attributed the failure to successfully implement the Accounts Department computerization project to lack of competencies on the part of finance staff.

Although not very well documented in the literature on SM, lack of adequate SM knowledge on the part of the employees was one of the major factors affecting strategy implementation in HEIs. The challenges could largely be attributed to the fact that SM was a relatively new phenomenon to Malawian organisations. For instance a private university contacted indicated that they were yet to formally develop strategic plans. For those institutions that had strategic plans, challenges were evident at both formulation as well as implementation levels. For example, most of the respondents in the HEIs had challenges when asked to comment on how their institutions were implementing the strategic plans. In most cases most of the respondents had the strategic plan documents which they never referred to in the course of their duties.

The challenge on SM knowledge was also observed during the budgeting exercise. Many responded revealed that they never referred to their strategic plans when developing their annual budgets. All what they did was to just factor in a certain percentage in the previous year's estimations. While literature recommends that budgeting should be done based on the strategic plans (see Johnson et al 2009, Pearce and 2007). Many respondents in most of the organisations admitted that they did not develop their departmental budgets based on the strategic plans let alone the annual work plans.

The possible explanations for the failure to link strategic plans to performance were: lack of training for managers; the detachment between planning and implementation, culture of resisting change and failure to involve those who are to implement strategy in the process of strategy formulation.

The research has also confirmed that success in strategic management in the private sector is not by chance but due to efforts undertaken by these organisations. This could be attributed to the competitive nature of private

sector organisations which are continuously searching for new sources of competitive advantage to out perform their competitors. This was also echoed in the study by some respondents in the HEIs. They observed that the increase in number of public and private universities required a paradigm shift in the way that the sector operated. There was need for more accountability in the way the public HEIs were managed. Improvement in strategic management is one of the possible areas to consider.

All in all, the study has found that employee capabilities are an important factor to successful strategy implementation. Failure to implement strategy in HEIs was partially attributed to lack of capabilities by senior and middle level managers. Conversely, good performance in the two benchmark organisations was strongly linked to the strong leadership capabilities by top and middle level managers.

4.6 OPERATIONALISING THE POMI FRAMEWORK

The POMI framework comprises 21 factors that must be available for successful formulation and implementation of strategy. These factors are mutually exclusive and can contribute to the improvement of the strategy formulation and implementation processes in an organisation. A detailed outlined on how the framework can be operationalized is presented in appendix 4.

The POMI framework deliberately avoids meticulous detailed or description for each dimension as suggested by Kandadi (2006).The interventions for various factors are cross cutting in some instances. For example, while change management (F20) is identified as an independent factor, learning and development (Training F2) which is another independent factor, is important to achieve change. Similarly, Change Management as a factor is critical in organisational culture (F7) improvement as well Leadership (F14). The following paragraphs provide a brief overview for each of the four dimensions and provide directions to various factors for a more detailed level of understanding.

4.6.1 Planning Dimension

The Planning dimension in the POMI framework attempts to address the planning aspects in strategy formulation and implementation. This dimension aims at enhancing the Planning culture in strategic management by Formulation Planning (F1), Learning and Organisational Development (F2), Simplicity and Undue Complexity (F3) and Implementation Planning (F4).

To achieve this factor, HE Managers need to plan for formulation. This can be achieved by involvement of strategy implementers in the planning process and also taking into consideration the environmental factors (PESTEL) during planning to ensure that the objectives developed are SMART. Furthermore, provision of both relevant long term and short term trainings and orientation and induction courses to all employees will enhance employee's capacity to formulate and implement plans. Evangelisation will help in removing complexity in the strategic management subject area which has been criticized at times for its complexity which has led to failure for many institutions to implement their brilliant plans.

Development of Work Plans provides direction on how to implement the plans and also provide a good basis for budgeting. The factors in the planning dimension are abstract and non-sequential in nature. Furthermore, although this factor appears to be simple, it is the most important dimension as it provides the basis for the strategic management subject area. Strategic Management is about planning. Planning lays the foundation and the basis for all the other factors. Thus placing great effort in this factor will help in strategic management.

4.6.2 Organisational Dimension

The Organisational dimension is associated with factors that are associated with the organisational dynamics. These include Financial Resources (F5), Systems and Procedures (F6) Organisation Culture (7) Communication (F8), Information Communication Technology (F9) Performance Management (F10) Organisation Structure (F11), Reward Systems (F12) and Evangelisation (F13). Chakravarthy (1987) suggests that there should be a fit between Strategic Management and the context. For successful strategy formulation and

implementation, Organisations need to develop effective organisational structures, enhance the performance of employees through development of a performance management system, ensure that there is an enabling culture and introduce reward systems to reward superior performance. Furthermore, there is need to ensure that there are adequate resources available to implement the strategy. In addition to availability of resources proper financial management systems should be put in place to ensure efficient use of the limited resources. This dimension also involves Information Communication Technology (ICT) to support organisational operations. For instance, Finance operations, Human Resources Management systems, Student Records Management and Academic services such as Curriculum Management and Examination management can be computerized to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Once the strategy has been developed, the next step is implementation. However, implementation as many authors has suggested in not an easy affair. Bossidy (2002) cited in Chari (2007) proposes that implementation is greatly unaddressed issue in the business world today.

Many authors suggest that failure to implement strategy is the single biggest obstacle to success and the cause of most of the disappointments that are mistakenly attributed to other causes. Scholey (2005) notes that most of the best strategies are not implemented because the leaders who develop the strategy do a poor job in communicating and evangelizing the strategy to the implementers. Therefore, the POMI framework proposes that organisational leaders should ensure that they walk a shared vision with all the employees. This will be achieved through evangeliastion and proper communication. Evangelisation is an important organisational factor. Evangelising the vision, mission and strategic management achievements to employees is a significant element to improve employee commitment and support.

Organizations should constantly inform the employees about how strategy formulation and implementation can improve their performance and mutually benefit the organisation. Internal Magazines, Journals and Newsletters, general staff meetings are some platforms for evangelisation.

4.6.3 Management Dimension.

The Managerial dimension aims at establishing an effective Organisation Management system. It includes such factors as Leadership (F14), Power and Politics (F15), Trust and Commitment (F16), Entrepreneurship (F17) and Human Resources Management (18) .HEIs need to ensure that the Leaders are able to influence the follower to achieve the organisational goals.

Achievement of organisational goals depends to a larger extent on the employee's commitment and belief in the leaders and the organisation. Therefore, leaders need to build employee trust and commitment. Furthermore, HEIs need to ensure that power and political issues in the organisation are managed. For instance one of the major issues affecting performance of HEIs is the influence of Trade Unions. Trade Unions play an important role in lobbying for employees benefits and improved working conditions. Sometimes the way in which the unions operate affect achievement of organisational goals. Therefore, HEIs need to appreciate the role that these stakeholders play in the management of the institution.

One other important factor in performance of an organisation is the people. Performance of any organisation depends on the people. HEIs need to develop robust Human Resources Management systems that are able to recruit, train and retain human resources able, willing and committed to achieve the organisational objectives.

4.6.4 Individual Dimension

The individual dimension comprises the factors. Employees Knowledge and Competencies (F19), Change Management (F20) and Total Quality Management (F21). The three factors are cross cutting and affect all the other factors. HEIs need to ensure that employees have the knowledge and competencies in all the other factors if they are to achieve successful performance. For example, employees need to have relevant competencies if they are to computerize the systems, provision of relevant trainings, proper

communication and even change management will help employees to acquire the relevant competencies to computerize. Managing change is necessary for employees if they are to embrace new way of doing things. Finally improved performance calls for continuous improvement on the part of the employees. HEIs need to make sure that there is quality in all the processes.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the empirical findings of this study based on an application of various tools and techniques of grounded theory. This has resulted in the identification and analysis of a list of factors that influence SM in HEIs. For each of the 20 factors identified, a set of properties and strategies were provided. A strategy implementation framework named 'POMI' has been developed for HEIs in Malawi. This framework will help HEIs to tackle strategy implementation in a systematic approach using the POMI framework..

Chapter 5. CONCLUSION

"Every person has a path to follow. It widens, narrows, climbs and descends. There are times of desperate wanderings. But with courageous perseverance and personal conviction, the right road will be found. This is what brings joy."

(Konosuke Matsushita)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides concluding remarks on this study. The research findings and conclusions are discussed under the following sections: (1) Research Problem, Goal and Objectives, (2) Theoretical and Practical Contributions, (3) Research Methodology, (4) Validity, Reliability, (5) Limitations and (6) Further Research. Section one explains the research problem, the aim or goal of the research and the objectives that have been charted for the research. The second section discusses the theoretical and practical contributions to the strategy formulation and implementation subject area from the study. The third section discusses the research methodology adopted for the study while the fourth section provides a discussion of the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The limitations of the study have been discussed in section five. The final section discusses further research opportunities which this research could not address.

5.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The main research question (Q) was to explore: *How to Formulate and Implement Strategy in Higher Education Institutions so as to achieve sustainable competitive advantage*. To answer the research question, a goal (G) was formulated i.e. *to develop an integrative framework for strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions*.

The development of a Strategic Management framework for Higher Education Institutions has addressed the research question (Q) at the same time achieved the goal (G) charted for this thesis. The study has identified 21 factors influencing strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Based on these

factors, the (POMI) matrix was developed. Data for the empirical study was collected using a case study methodology from six in-depth case studies conducted at four universities, one multi-national telecommunications company and one local commercial bank. A brief overview of how the objectives formulated for this study were achieved is provided as follows:

Objective 1: To provide a critical literature review of various theories, concepts and frameworks of strategy formulation and implementation.

An in-depth literature review was provided in chapter two of this study. The literature review discussed and analysed the evolution of strategic management, definitions of strategy and strategy related concepts as well as Strategy Management process, Higher Education in Africa and Malawi and the roles of universities in society. The multi-faceted review provided some useful insights to several aspects of strategic management in HEIs and how the process could be enhanced to achieve competitive advantage. The review has also provided an opportunity to explain the research question in detail and also assisted in the formulation of research questions (Q1, Q2 and Q3) for this study as highlighted in chapters 2 and 3.

Objective 2: To identify organizational factors which influence strategic management in HEIs.

Based on the critical review of Strategic Management literature and other related subjects, a broad array of elements were identified as possible factors affecting Strategic Management. These elements provided a guide during data collection. However, while the identified elements merely provided a guide, the case studies were approached with an open mind.

Based on a thorough analysis of different research methods, the study adopted an interpretive research paradigm and a case study approach for conducting this research study. Using purposive sampling technique six organisations (Four HEIs and Two private sector institutions) were identified as case studies.

Objective 3: To benchmark Strategic Management in Higher Education Institutions against best practice.

Two private sector institutions were identified as best practice against which strategy formulation and implementation was benchmarked. These two institutions were identified through purposive sampling. Furthermore, the opportunity for access to these institutions also contributed to the choice.

Objective 4: To evaluate and discuss the study findings against the existing literature of strategy formulation and implementation.

21 Strategic Management factors were identified for this study. There were critically evaluated against the existing strategic management literature. Each of these factors were discussed and substantiating codes were provided. The discussions provided deeper insights of each factor and how it can contribute to successful strategy formulation and implementation.

Objective 5: To develop an integrative strategy formulation and implementation framework based on the empirical study and insights gained from the contemporary strategic management literature.

Based on the 21 Strategic Management factors identified, an integrative strategy formulation and implementation framework is developed for HEIs from the findings of this research study. The 21 factors were re-grouped into four core categories using the grounded theory approach based on Alashloo's (2005) strategic management approach. These are Planning, Organisation, Management and Individual. The framework is termed POMI Matrix for Strategic Management. It provides a holistic view of engaging in Strategic Management (Chapter 4).

5.3 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Strategic Management as a field of study is a complex phenomenon as noted by many authors (Mintzberg et al, 1998; Porter 1980). This has also been observed in the course of conducting this study. The complex nature of

strategy calls for a need to develop a simple and easy to use strategic management framework. One of the motivations for this study was to contribute towards the link between strategic management theory and practice. This has been achieved through the aim of this research study which was to develop an integrative framework for strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. The following sections provide the contributions of this study to the Strategic Management subject matter in both theoretical and practical areas.

Implications for Theory

The theoretical implications of this research are significant and highlight the importance of strategic management in the successful performance of HEIs. The empirical findings have also challenged some traditional ideas regarding strategy formulation and implementation. The following are the theoretical implications that have been identified in the study:

The reviewed literature on SM in HEIs revealed that there are gaps in literature on SM in HEIs. The literature review revealed that there is insufficient attention to strategy implementation as many theories and frameworks have focused on strategy formulation (Okumus, 2001; Alexander 1985 and Dandira, 2009). This is an important and rare empirical study in HEIs which explores both strategy formulation and implementation. An important contribution of this study is the identification of a list of factors (F1-F21) that influence Strategic Management initiatives in HEIs. A detailed explanation was provided on how each of these factors influence strategic management (see chapter 4). For each factor identified, best practices were provided. Furthermore, for each Strategic Management factor identified; strategies and properties were provided. These strategies guide managers or strategists in formulating and implementing strategy in organisations. These strategic management factors can also enhance the theoretical understanding of strategic management in Higher Education Institutions.

The study focused on strategic management in HEIs even though it included case organisations from the private sector. The literature revealed that there is insufficient research on strategy formulation not only in HEIs, but in HEIs in the sub sahara Africa (SARUA, 2003; AAU, 2003; UNESCO, 2004 and World Bank, 2010). Therefore, this research on HEIs in Malawi makes an important contribution to the theory on strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs.

The traditional view about strategic planning has been that formulation is responsibility of top management while the rest of the organization is responsible for the implementation of what top management has formulated. (Chandler, 1962; Ansoff, 1979). However, the study findings seem to depart from this traditional view. The study has found that strategy planning should also involve those responsible for implementation in the process of formulation. Therefore, the empirical findings help in understanding the role of the operational staff (the implimenters) in the process of strategy formulation.

This study makes an important contribution to the literature by validating the findings of some of the previous studies conducted in other industry sectors and geographical locations. Different Strategic Management concepts from private sector organisations were adapted in the context of the public sector organisations in the Higher Education sector. By examining these key factors in the Higher Education Institutions sector in sub-Saharan Africa, this study is making a significant contribution as it is extending the industry borders.

Some literature, especially, the early writers on the subject such as Chandler (1962), Andrews (1977) Ansoff (1982), tend to advocate the strategy formulation and implementation should be viewed as separate processes. This would therefore imply that the associated factors should also be viewed separately. This study demonstrates that these 21 factors identified should be viewed as mutually exclusive events that would affect one another so much so that success of the process would depend on all the factors being managed appropriately. The various factors (F1 –F21) identified in this study are integrated in **Error! Reference source not found..**

This study therefore confirms the need to manage all the factors if sustainable competitive advantage is to be achieved. Such findings will be immensely beneficial to practicing managers since the framework will make it possible to ascertain what needs to be done in practice to enhance organisational performance through Strategic Management.

A few findings have deviated from the traditional understanding of how strategy is formulated and implemented in organisations. Some of the examples are the view that strategy formulation and implementation should be viewed as two separate continuums; the role of junior staff in strategy formulation and the need for simplicity in strategy formulation.

There is a heightened view among the respondents that:

- a) Strategy formulation should not be separated from implementation as this would cause strategists to put in more effort in one area while neglecting the other.
- b) While the traditional view of strategy highlights the importance of senior management in strategy formulation, many respondents observed that junior staff and middle managers are equally important if the organisation is to be successful.
- c) The process of strategy formulation let alone the strategy content should not be complex. There is need to ensure that organisational members understand what direction the organisation wants to take and how every staff member should contribute towards the journey.

Most of the literature on strategy formulation and implementation is based on research on private sector organizations (SARUA, 2003; Kazmi. 2008; Alexander, 1999; Okumus, 2003). This study on strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions provides both practical and theoretical underpinnings on Strategic Management in Higher Education Institutions.

All in all, this study presents an important departure from the traditional approaches to strategy formulation and implementation, the insufficient attention to strategy implementation and the lack of adequate research on strategic management in HEIs in the sub sahara Africa region. Thus, this research makes a significant theoretical contribution towards strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs not only in Malawi but the Sub Sahara Africa region.

5.3.1 Practical and Managerial Implications.

The need to embrace the contribution and role of strategy formulation and implementation in improvement of organisational performance vis avis achievement of sustainable competitive advantage is an important managerial implication. Through the empirical study conducted, the study has identified a gap in Strategic Management literature requiring the development of a framework for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. The POMI has been developed which comprises several factors (F1 – F21) influencing Strategic Management function in Higher Education Institutions. It attempts to help formulation and implementation through four dimensions based on Alashloo's (2005) model. Each of these dimensions is based on several factors. The POMI matrix can be used as a road map for successful strategic management not only in Higher Education Institutions but in any other sectors.

These factors are critical for the successful strategic management. Therefore, Managers need to ensure that all the 21 factors are considered in any management endeavor. For example once the strategy has been developed, Management needs to develop an enabling organisational structure, and systems. Furthermore, the organization needs to have people who are motivated to manage the change process.

Additionally the study recognizes the need to consider processual issues when formulating and implementing strategy. The study has highlighted, for instance, the need to carry out detailed analysis of the environmental factors and also the need to develop Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Reliable and Timely (SMART)

objectives. Persistent lack of funding from government would have been identified as a critical success factor at planning stage if the strategist critically analysed the environment and developed SMART objectives. This would therefore ensure that organisations develop realistic strategies that are achievable with existing and identified potential financial resources. The role of strategic planning or management is to analyse the external and internal environment, assess resources and capabilities and develop objectives and strategies based on the available information. If organisations critically analyse the environment and internal capabilities and resources, they are likely to develop goals that are achievable subject to making sure that they address all the 21 factors identified.

Similarly, the strategies provided for the other factors can help in the understanding of how the theoretical underpinnings inform the strategic management practice. For example, the study found that lack of involvement of operational staff in strategy formulation affected strategy implementation as there was no buy-in on the part of the operational staff. On the other hand, it was found that in the two benchmark institutions, junior staff were actively involved in strategy formulation where as in part of the planning process all employees in the institutions were requested to indicate key issues that the institution faced, and how they thought the institutions could go about to address them. In so doing, employees felt they were involved in defining the future for the institution; hence they supported strategy implementation initiatives.

5.4 PRACTICAL USE OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this study are immensely useful to Senior Managers in HEIs, middle level, lower level managers as well as front end staff members. The findings are also applicable to any organisation both public as well as private sectors. This study emphasises the need for formal strategic planning in organisations by adopting the POMI matrix which highlights important elements that must be taken into consideration in the process of strategy formulation as well as implementation. Details of the POMI matrix and its applicability are explained in chapter 4. This study also re-affirms the importance of strategic

management in achievement of organizational goals vis a vis organizational performance. Managers and employees need to therefore properly plan for formulation, develop the plans, plan for implementation and then implement the plan taking into consideration the factors identified, if organisational performance is to be enhanced.

5.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, VALIDITY, DEPENDABILITY AND RELIABILITY OF FINDINGS

A number of mechanisms were adopted in this research to ensure that the findings are reliable and valid. A multiple case study approach was adopted as suggested by Yin (2006) and Saunders et al (2009). This approach helped in gathering a rich collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and analysis of archival records. The use of multiple sources such as interviews and analysis of archival records helped in verifying the data by constantly comparing the data from these different sources.

Some researchers have criticised the case study methodology for lack of dependability, reliability and validity (Yin 2006; Saunders 2009; Hussey and Hussey 2003). To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the study a case study protocol was developed which guided the research in collecting data from the case studies. Yin (2009) advocates development of a case study protocol and opines that use of case study protocol is important as it keeps the researcher targeted on the topic of the case study and secondly, the protocol forces the researcher to anticipate several problems including the way that the case study reports are to be written.

The validity of the qualitative data collected was ensured by Triangulation. Several authors have suggested using triangulation techniques at data collection and analysis phases to improve the credibility and trustworthiness of the empirical findings (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991; Yin, 2009; Hussey and Hussey 2003). During data collection phase triangulation was achieved through using multiple sources of data, semi-structured interviews and archival records. During the findings stage, triangulation was achieved through comparison of results of data analysis which was done and compared by three different

researchers independently. This approach helped in achieving the accuracy and consistency in the research findings.

Credibility of the findings was also enhanced by cross case analysis where strategic management factors were compared across the organizations to identify common patterns. This was achieved through grounded theory data analysis approach for each factor. The systematic display of the interview codes and categories for each of the strategic management factor provides empirical evidence and justification for the study.

The POMI matrix developed in this study is based on the practice derived from some of the case organisations. For example, one of the organizations that was selected for the case studies have consistently performed well in Malawi whereby in 2010, it managed to beat its performance target by over 100%. The other benchmark organisation has also demonstrated to have good organisational policies and systems such as strategic management guidelines, performance management systems, career management systems etc.

For improved validity of the findings, the protocol was developed to help in determining the factors influencing Strategic Management. This protocol which modified Kandadi (2007) KM criteria comprised five elements (E1 to E5).

- E1. Each factor should have played significant role in shaping strategic management in at least two organisations under study.
- E2. Each factor should be identified by at least two researchers during data analysis.
- E3. Each factor should be supported by at least two respondents from at least two organisations.

E4. Respondents should have provided instances of how a particular factor has influenced strategic management and the way it has been managed.

E5. The interview data should be eligible for triangulation.

5.6 LIMITATIONS

There are bound to be limitations in almost each and every piece of research and this study is no exception. This section highlights some limitations so that the reader can view the success of the study within the context of those limitations. Despite the study being generally successful, there were a number of limitations that underpinned it.

Perhaps the first major limitation of this study is associated with the complex nature of the subject matter itself. It was observed that strategic management was still an area which was not very well perceived in Higher Education Institutions. For instance, the researcher had to modify the questionnaires so many times because it transpired that respondents were not very well conversant with some terms, concepts, techniques. Lack of knowledge of strategy concepts was meanwhile identified as one of the factors affecting strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Therefore, the lack of adequate knowledge in the subject matter may have affected the findings. This has however been taken care of by data triangulation where archival records and organizational reports were also analyzed to make the necessary comparisons between practice and theory within the organisations.

The sample size in this research study was another limiting factor. Although Yin (2003, 2009) argues that the sample size does not have an effect on the findings, if a bigger sample of HEIs as well as other institutions was selected, the findings would have been enhanced. However, in the original plan, the researcher had intended to have ten case studies. These would have included two Universities in the UK, one University in the SADC region and two more universities in Malawi. It was however recommended to remove these institutions because of the time factor, and lack of resources. Since Higher Education Institutions in different countries operate under different

environmental factors (Political, Economical, Social and Cultural, Environmental and Technological) each case in the different countries would have presented certain new factors and understanding. This limitation was overcome by analyzing HEI documents by UNESCO and the World Bank. The World Bank for instance, produces current status reports on HEI in the SADC region which provide a comparative analysis on performance of HE sector within a region. This provided insights on strategic management in HEIS in these countries.

Another limitation relates to the organisational identities of the cases. The results of this empirical study were presented in this study without identities of the organizations that formed the case studies. The removal of identities may not allow readers to construct specific assumptions, implications and conclusions. Nevertheless, this discipline protection of organisations and respondents was needed to protect the image of the organisations who participated in the study. Furthermore, this strict code of ethics ensured that knowledge from these organisations should not be used for competitive purposes by competitors.

5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There are some important future research directions as this research calls for more attention to enhancement of the understanding of the influence of strategy implementation in achievement of sustainable competitive advantage in HEIs. Future research should further the agenda of theorising of strategy implementation. This is important so that strategy implementation could acquire more prominent position in strategic management literature. It is important to make progress towards building theoretical frameworks for strategy implementation and how these would enhance performance. Good research should pave the path for future research by posing some interesting questions to answer (Chari, 2007). From this study, the following avenues for future research have been proposed.

5.7.1 Expansion of the findings.

One of the limitations that was highlighted in the study likely to impact on the findings was the limited number of case studies used. Six case studies were used and all these were from Malawi (four HEIs and two private sector organisations). The validity and generalization could be enhanced if the study included all HEIs in Malawi and at least some HEIs outside Malawi. Furthermore, the benchmark organisations from the private sector could also be objectively selected other than using the purposive sampling which is subjective. Yin (1994) advocates that replication can be done if multiple cases support the same theory. Therefore, using all the HEIs in Malawi which are less than 15 as case organisations and other HEIs outside Malawi but within the Southern Africa region would enhance the generalization and validity of the study.

5.7.2 Application of the findings

An important extension to this study would be to test the applicability and limitations of the SM factors and the POMI framework developed. Since the developed framework has not been implemented, it will be important to empirically verify its applicability and usefulness through practical implementation of these findings and studying the benefits gained by the organization through this model. The author plans to undertake a deductive study to test the POMI matrix's usefulness. Therefore, this proposed research study can add value to the POMI matrix by evaluating its validity.

5.7.3 Detailed Studies on Strategic Management Factors.

The study has identified 21 factors (F1- F21) as critical factors influencing SM in HEIs. The major interest was strategy implementation process. The study did not zero-in on the individual factors because of such factors as time and resources. For example, the study has identified organisational culture as impeding on SM in HEIs. Therefore, an indepth study could be undertaken on how this factor (culture) impacts SM in HEIs. There are many intricacies on this factor that could have been investigated in detail but since the emphasis was

not the detailed analysis of each of the factors. Therefore, detailed studies of each of the 21 factors are other areas for further consideration.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the study by providing an outline about how the research problem of this study was addressed. It has provided an overview, reviewed main conclusions of the study, and has discussed the contributions to the body of knowledge with practical and theoretical implications. In all, this research aimed at addressing the gap in strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. Despite some limitations, this study provided valuable and interesting insights regarding strategic management in HEIs.

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Appendix 1 : Participant's Consent Seeking Letter



1st September 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
RE: STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

I am pleased to invite you to participate in this strategic management study which is being undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with the University of Bolton. It aims at developing a comprehensive Strategic Management Framework in Higher Education Institutions. This could however be applied in both private and public sector organizations.

In today's fast-changing business environment, both managers and individual contributors alike, need to have a broad perspective and awareness of the cultural trends and business developments shaping the world. To remain competitive requires organizations to keep their strategic management process dynamic, continuously learning and adaptable and taking advantage of emerging opportunities. Strategic thinking thus becomes a key competency for leaders and managers responsible for the design and deployment of business and functional strategies.

Against the above background, the researcher has initiated this study to examine the impact of strategy formulation and implementation on organizational performance.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and no names or identities of individual firms will be disclosed to third parties. Should you have questions at any time about the research, please contact Phillip Kaonda at: Phillipkaonda@yahoo.co.uk.

The interview should take about one hour to complete. Answer the questions freely. Thank you very much in advance for your time and support.

Phillip D.F. Kaonda
Post Graduate Student –Bolton University

Appendix 2 : Semi- structured questionnaire



STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

Phillip F.D. Kaonda, Researcher

University of Bolton
Email: Pkaonda@bolton.co.uk
Mobil: 00 265 888895592

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Details of Interviewee and Company Information

1. Interviewee details

Title.....

Name.....

Designation.....

2. Contact details:

Email.....

Phone.....

Address.....

3. Company Information

Company name.....

.....
Department and Business division.....

Location of office
.....
.....

Number of employees.....
.....

Annual business revenue/Budget.....

Industry Type.....
.....

4. Type of Organization?

Public Private(Ltd Company) Parastatal Non Govt

Other

5. How old is your organization?

.....
.....

6. What are your Highest Qualifications?

Secondary School Diploma Degree Masters degree

Other

7. What is the level of your position in the organization?

Senior Management Middle Management Operational staff

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.....
.....
11. Explain the functional relationship between the strategic plan and the work plans?

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.....
.....

12. A lot of organizations use SMART objectives. Does your organization use them? In your opinion do you think the objectives and strategies contained in the strategic plans are realistically achievable in the specified timeline? (You might need to

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.....
.....

13. In your view who are the crucial people in strategy formulation?

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14. Once the strategy has been formulated who keeps custody of the document

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.....

15. What measures has your organization taken to improve strategy formulation

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16. To what extent is the strategy formulation process influenced by other national strategies?

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Q4 Strategy Implementation

1. What is your role in the process of strategy implementation?

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2. Who are the other members involved in strategy implementation?

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9. How do the policies and regulations above affect strategic management?

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10. Does the organization have clear structures with clear reporting lines?

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.....

11. How does the organization structure influence strategic management in the organization?

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Q9 Strategic Management and Financial Planning

1. What type of budgeting system does the organization follow?

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2. How is the process of budgeting linked/integrated with strategic management?

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3. How does financial management affect strategy formulation and implementation?

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4. When formulating strategy does your organization take into consideration both internal and external sources of funding ?

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Appendix 3 : Conference Paper

Improving Strategy Formulation and Implementation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malawi through better Leadership, Human Resources Management and Implementation Planning: An empirical Study.

Phillip Dalitso Frank Kaonda

School of Business & Creative Technologies, University of Bolton

© 2013

Abstract

As Higher Education Institutions become increasingly accountable for the quality and value for money of their teaching and learning, universities need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in strategic management to improve performance i.e. achievement of strategic goals. Though strategic management has gained prominence in the private and public sector organizations, evidence suggests gaps in strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs in Malawi that have led to failure to achieve superior performance. This paper aims at developing a framework for strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs which can be adapted to any situation.

A qualitative methodology was adopted where in-depth case studies were conducted at three universities, a commercial bank and a multinational telecommunications company to investigate the process of strategy formulation and implementation. Semi-structured interviews were administered on senior managers who play significant roles in strategic management, and selected operational personnel involved in strategy implementation. A literature review coupled with a range of internal organizational documents has provided input for the empirical analysis.

Based on the identified factors that impede strategy formulation and implementation, a strategic management framework has been developed. Since strategic management is an important process in organizations, improving formulation and implementation processes contributes to the overall performance of an organization.

Strategic management is a complex phenomenon as acknowledged by many authors. Thus this complexity could affect the findings of this study. Secondly the research adopted a case study methodology which has been criticized for lacking rigor. However this criticism was overcome by using multiple sources of data.

Key Words: *Strategic Management, Strategic Planning, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Higher Education Institutions, Strategic Leadership.*

Type of paper: *Research Paper*

Introduction

Over the years, Higher Education Institutions have struggled to satisfy the needs of their clientele due to a myriad of factors that include ageing infrastructure, changing technology, changing demographics, globalization, rising costs and the global meltdown which has resulted in funding cuts and politics (Ostar 1989; Streib and Poister 1990; Smith et al, 1987; SARUA, 2003; UNIMA, 2012). At the same time, these institutions have been challenged to be increasingly accountable for the quality of their teaching, learning and research as beneficiaries of state funding. The above shifting winds of change have made HEIs to realize that Strategic Management is their key asset to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Public institutions find themselves competing with private institutions for quality students, Human Resources as well as funding from both the private as well as the public sector financiers (UNIMA, 2012 and World Bank, 2010). While there was only one University in Malawi for example from 1964 to 1997, the proliferation of HEIs in the country from 1 in 1964 to 9 in 2013 has heightened the competition for both financial and human resources. Higher Education Managers are therefore challenged to formulate proactive responses that will enhance the education processes with the aim of making them more competitive.

Empirical studies in the field of strategic management have mainly focused on strategic management in private sector organizations and furthermore strategy formulation has received much empirical interest than strategy implementation (Deloitte and Touche 2006; Dandira 2011).

This paper aims at developing a framework for strategy formulation and implementation in higher education institutions which can be adapted to any situation.

Strategy formulation and implementation are important topics in organization science. Both practical experience and academic research indicate that strategic management has a substantial impact on organizational performance (Peters, 1992; Scholes et al 2006; Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984), is crucial to organizational effectiveness (Mintzberg 1998; Sproull and Hofmeister, 1986), is critical to the functioning of an organization (Drucker Schilit, 1987) and is an essential factor in the formula for success of any business or organization (Noble, 1999). The successful formulation and implementation of strategy gives any organization a significant competitive edge (Giles, 1991), especially in an Industry like higher education where unique strategies are difficult to achieve due to the nature of the clientel (Noble, 1999).

Problem Statement

Today's organisations including HEIs face a multitude of pressures, most of which will be familiar to managers operating at all levels. Researchers in the field such as Porter (1980), Mintzberg (1998), Lynch (2001), contend that organizations both public and private face a myriad of internal and external challenges. Such challenges include competition for both financial and human resources and the need for strategic management in order to withstand the competition.

Alashloo et al (2005) and Alexander (1991) propose that the strategic management process can be compared to a two-headed coin. On one side is strategy formulation, which defines what an organization's game plan will be to compete successfully within a specific context while the other side stands for strategy implementation, which takes the formulated strategy as given and then decides how to achieve its goals. Strategy implementation addresses the issue of how to put a formulated strategy into effect within the constraints of time, an organization's financial and human resources, and its capabilities. Consequently, these two integral parts of strategic management answer both, what the strategy shall be and how it should be put into effect. The extant literature review undertaken suggests that strategic drift occurs at both formulation and implementation stages.

Despite HEIs making great strides in Strategic Management vis a vis strategy formulation and implementation, there are gaps in literature on how

organizations can successfully implement their formulated strategies. The integrative framework which will be developed on strategy formulation and implementation will therefore help HEI managers address management challenges they face. The following research question has been developed for this study:

“How can Higher Education Institutions formulate and implement strategy in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage?”

A critical review of the existing literature has revealed that current SM concepts, theories and frameworks were insufficient to address the above problem as most of the available frameworks focused more on strategy formulation with very few focusing on implementation or the formulation and implementation continuum. Furthermore most literature has focused on private organizations with very few on Higher Education Institutions (SARUA 2003). Therefore; the following aims have been defined for this research:

- *“To identify key factors for successful strategic management in HEIs, focusing on the relationship between strategy formulation and implementation.”*
- *“To develop a practice framework for effective strategic management in Malawian HEIs which will help achievement of sustainable competitive advantage?”*

Achieving these objectives will ideally solve the research problem. However, to develop the framework, the research will need to address the limitations in the SM theory identified through the literature review and the research. Based on the literature review, four broad research questions were constructed to address the identified research limitations and inadequacies. Creswell (2002) presupposes that in a phenomenological study there may be up to seven sub questions.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGY

Today's organizations including HEIs face a multitude of pressures, most of which will be familiar to managers operating at all levels. Researchers in the field such as Porter (1980), Mintzberg (1998), Lynch (2001), contend that organizations both public and private face the following challenges:

- Operating within a rapidly changing political landscape, especially in relation to funding and inspection.
- Coping with rapid and radical developments in Information and Communications Technology which have the potential to fundamentally alter the way in which learning and research are conducted.
- The challenges of operating within an increasingly competitive market.
- The need to absorb major new strategic priorities such as internationalization, globalization and responsiveness to business.
- the ability to work with and benefit from new stakeholders, such as those within business and the community
- ever-increasing pressure on resources and the resulting need to 'do more for less' through the maximization of assets and minimization of wastage; and
- recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills, experience and attitude

Most analysts agree that the scale of these (and other) challenges facing modern organizations is only likely to increase over the coming years, thanks to a combination of socio-economic, demographic, political and technological pressures. The nature of many of these challenges means that most are beyond the capabilities of individual managers, or institutions, to control nevertheless, that does not mean that we are powerless. It simply increases the importance we must attach to ensuring that our institution is functioning as effectively and efficiently as possible and, therefore, putting it in the best possible shape to meet these demands.

b) Strategy Formulation

Several authors including Grant (2003), Porter (1980) and Quinn & Ghoshal (1999) define strategy formulation as the process through which an organization's strategy is developed. It comprises defining the corporate mission, specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies and setting policy guidelines. Other authors such as Wittington (1993) and Mintzberg et al (1998) have divided strategy formulation into two: strategy formulation approaches and strategy formulation processes. This study has adopted Mintzberg et al (1998)'s approach which views strategy formulation from two perspectives; the strategy formulation approaches and strategy formulation processes.

5.8.1.1 Strategy Formulation Approaches.

Theoretical views on the approaches to strategy formulation fall into two distinct groups: Rational and Emergent approaches (Grant, 2003; Mintzberg et al (1998). The rational approach is based on the view that organizations adjust to changes in their environment by making rational decisions and choices based on the assumptions that; the environment is relatively predictable and that an organization is "tightly coupled, so that all decisions made at the top can be implemented throughout the organization" (Chaffee, 1985). This approach is however in contrast to the dynamic nature of the environment. Figure 1 depicts the rational strategy process adapted from Lynch (2000).

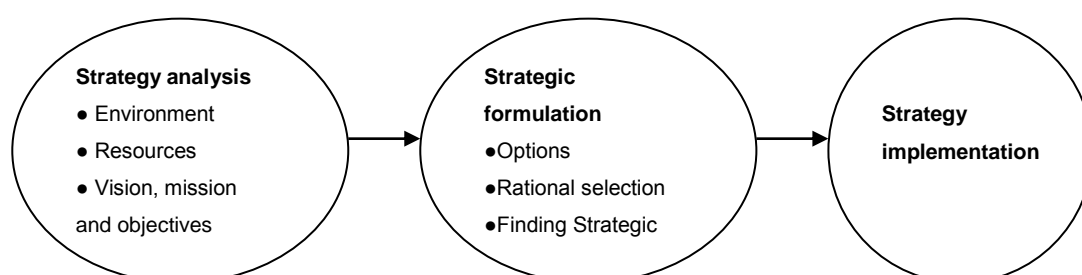


Figure 1 Rational strategy process

Source: Lynch 2001

The emergent approach is based on the fact that organizations continually respond to changes by adapting, in much the same way as living organisms respond to their environments. Chaffee (1985) refers to this as the adaptive strategic model where a continual process of adjustment occurs within the organization (either reactive or proactive) aimed at “co-alignment of the organization with its environment”. Johnson et al (2006) concurs with Chaffee’s thinking and goes on to call this logical incrementalism. This approach looks at strategy formulation as being a result of everyday routines, activities and processes in organizations drawing impetus from the argument that to take decisions, managers rely on a company’s culture, politics and routines, rather than on a rational process of analysis and choice.

5.8.1.2 Strategy Formulation Processes

Different researchers have offered different interpretations on strategy formulation processes. According to Shrivastava (1983) strategy formulation processes are methods and practices organisations use to interpret opportunities and threats and make decisions about the effective use of skills and resources. Here two key factors affecting the strategy making process are the environmental factors and internal resources. This definition portrays a simplistic view that strategy formulation is a straightforward process where the steps involved in the process are well defined. This definition closely matches the definitions posited by Andrews (1980) and Chandler (1962)

Several authors have proposed different strategy formulation processes. For example, a categorization of processes to strategy formulation has been proposed by Whittington (1993), who has suggested that there are four generic approaches to strategy formulation see figure 2. Below:

Johnson et al (2008) have identified six (Lenses) in which strategy develops in organizations (See fig 2). They however warn managers not to view strategy development from one lens, as this may result in failure to see issues raised by the other lenses. Mintzberg et al (1998) support the above assertion by not recommending any method in their ten schools of strategy formulation as the most preferred one.

Hart (1992) has come up with a process that comprises 5 elements namely Command, Symbolic, Rational, Transactive and Generative (See fig 2.) He looks at the contrasting roles top managers and organizational members play and use these to develop an integrative framework. He further agrees with Mintzberg (1998) that in relatively stable environments his two modes (Command and Rational) which he equates to Mintzberg et al (1998)'s Prescriptive schools work well in relatively stable environments.

Perhaps the model by Mintzberg et al (1998) seems to be more comprehensive than the other models. This model gives a comprehensive overview of the development in the field of strategy process and demonstrates the nature of its complexity. Drawing on previous studies by different writers such as Senge, Ansoff, Porter, Berkeley, Selznick, Chandler, Andrews, Lorange, Steiner, Ackoff, et al, Mintzberg et al (1998) came up with a model (Ten Schools) on how strategy develops in organisations (See Table 2.). Each of the ten schools critically looks at how strategy is formulated. Despite Mintzberg (1998) remaining ambiguous by not recommending a school of thought for an organization, the researcher considers the ten schools to be a good reference point on how strategy can be formed in an organization.

Veetil (2008) suggests that there is still room for in-depth research to establish whether the different schools represent different processes to strategy formation or different parts of the same process. Mintzberg et al. (1998) is aware of the complexity associated with the field of strategy and has presented strategy process as a phenomenon which is extremely difficult to perceive. While conducting such an empirical study it becomes difficult to operationalise strategy formulation process because of its complexities (Veetil, 2008). It is therefore important to clearly define the dimensions of process to focus on during the operationalisation. Figure 2. Below depicts selected Strategic Management Models proposed by different authors.

Selected Strategic Management Models

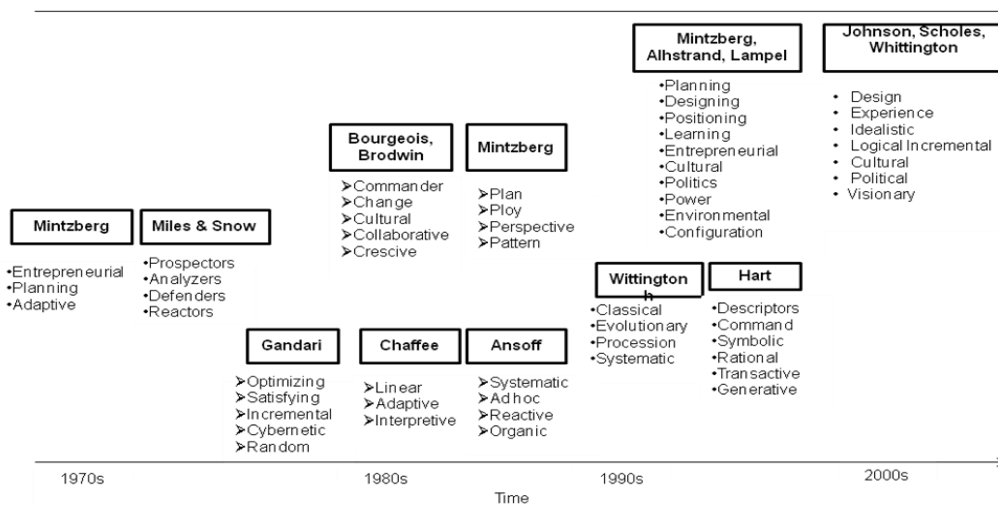


Figure 2. Source: Author

Some authors such as Johnson et al (2008) and Ansoff (1991) contend that strategic planning (planning school) generally results in better alignment and financial performance than trial and error methods e.g. the learning school although some authors have challenged the above assertions that strategic planning causes too much rigidity Mintzberg et al (1998).

Despite Mintzberg et al (1998) not recommending any school out of the ten schools, for the purpose of this study the planning school is adopted. This takes into account the nature of the organizations under study that is HEIs.

c) Strategy Implementation.

Pearce and Robinson (1985) and Bourgeois (1980) define strategy implementation as the process where organizations translate the strategies formulated into action. They emphasize that strategy must be translated into concrete action, and that action must be carefully implemented, otherwise accomplishment when left to chance leads into failure to achieve intended outcomes vis vis strategic drift.

Noble and Mokwa (1999) believe that strategy implementation provides the critical link between formulation and superior organization performance. This view is supported by Johnson et al (2009) who contend that strategy

implementation signal a critical new phase in the strategic management process of translating strategic thought into strategic action.

Despite strategy implementation being equally important to formulation in the search for superior organization performance there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that implementation has not only been neglected but it is also not an easy task. Furthermore, numerous studies including Alexander (1985), Dandira (2011) and Okumus (2000) acknowledge that strategies frequently fail not because of inadequate strategy formulation, but because of insufficient implementation. Nutt (1999) for example studied Strategic decisions in organizations located in the USA and Canada and concluded that half of the strategic decisions failed to attain their initial objectives mainly because of the problems during strategy implementation process. Furthermore there is growing recognition that most important problems in the field of strategic management are not related to formulation but rather to strategy implementation (Flood et al 2000).

While strategy formulation is often based on rational, objective facts and analysis, implementation is often about people, and people are not fully rational such that the domain of implementation is very different from that of formulation (Sadler, 1998). Several studies have indicated that implementation of strategy is a difficult task, but nobody, really seems to know the true rate of implementation. Candido and Santos (2008), cited by Dandira (2011), noted that the difficulty of successfully implementing new business strategies has long been recognized in the literature. Alexander (1985), Wernham (1985), Ansoff and McDonnell (1990), Mintzberg (1998) assert that most managers believe that strategy implementation is more challenging than formulation. Wessel (1993), Alexander (1985), Shah (2005) and Wernham (1985) contend that most of barriers to strategy implementation fit into the following categories;

- Too many and conflicting priorities
- The top management team does not function well
- Top down management style
- Interfunctional conflicts
- Poor vertical Communication

- Inadequate management development programmes
- Poor Governance Structures.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature review, five major questions have been derived to address the inadequacies regarding strategic management in HEIs. The following are research questions formulated to help describe and identify key factors that influence strategic management:

- 1) How is strategy formulated and implemented in HEIs in Malawi?
- 2) What are the key factors that influence successful strategic management?
- 3) What are the challenges faced in strategy formulation and implementation in the organisations?
- 4) To what extent does theory on SM inform practice?
- 5) What mechanisms can HEIs adopt to ensure successful strategic management?

Research Methodology

Many management researchers including Mintzberg et al (1998), Johnson and Duberly (2006) argue that qualitative research is a valid approach in studying management related subjects such as strategic management. Kandadi (2008) confirms that qualitative research methods such as case studies and action research provide many avenues to learn about organizational aspects. Zainal (2007) support Gulsecen & Kubat (2006); Grassel & Schirmer (2006) and Johnson (2006) in suggesting that case study methodology is a recognized tool in many social science studies dealing with organizational management issues in education. Zainal (2007) further argues that by including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation. The case study method is often recommended in situations where several elements of a subject need to be studied extensively (Yin, 2002; Saunders, 2006).

The aim of this study is to explore strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs. This will involve studying and analyzing multiple dimensions of organizational factors affecting strategy formulation, implementation and organization performance. To achieve this aim, a case study approach has been preferred. Yin (2002) defines case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The complexity in the relationship between strategy formulation and implementation on one hand and strategic management and organization performance on the other hand demonstrates the appropriateness of case study enquiry in this research. Other approaches such as ethnography and action research were considered to be inappropriate for this study because of constraints such as time span.

Sample selection for case studies

The case selection or sample selection process is an important aspect of the research design that directly determines the quality and relevance of empirical data to be collected and ultimately shape the conclusions (see e.g.: Yin, 2009; Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Kandadi, 2008). Selecting the most appropriate sampling technique is important in case study research. Different techniques such as Quota, Judgmental/Purposive, Snowball, Self select and Convenience can be located in business research (Saunders et al, 2009; Creswell, 2002; Yin, 2009; Stake 2000). A Judgmental sampling was used for this study. In judgmental sampling the focus is on selecting a sample based on particular characteristics and attributes of interest that would best enable answering the research questions at the same time qualify the data collected for generalization of the observed phenomenon. A sample of five cases is selected for this study on the following basis: Location; Industry Sector; Size; Access to information and Knowledge intensity.

Similarly, Yin (2009) supported by Hussey and Hussey (1997) recommends developing a clear criteria for selecting case organizations in a case study research. Based on the research problem (P) objectives (O) and questions (Q)

of this investigation, the following criteria are identified to select the case organizations.

- a) The Cases should include HEIs.
- b) All the cases must be engaged in formal SM.
- c) The researcher should have adequate access to privilege information related to SM in these institutions considering the sensitive nature of the investigation.
- d) The HEIs should be large organizations and accredited by respective regulatory authorities.

Based on the above criteria six organizations are chosen for the research study. (Refer to table 1)

Out of the six case organizations identified, four are HEIs one is a multinational institution while the other one is a local bank. The purpose for selecting cases from different sectors was:

- a) To obtain rich data on SM in different industry segments whereby helping achieve the objective of benchmarking SM based on best practice
- b) To achieve a rich mixture of responses as interviews will be conducted in different organization in different industries and geographical locations
- c) To have a feel of SM in different cultural contexts as below
 - I. Public sector organizations in MW
 - II. Private Sector organization in Malawi
 - III. Multinational company based in Malawi

While the study is aimed at exploring strategic management in HEIs, inclusion of a multinational company and a commercial bank provided a basis for benchmarking strategic management processes. The Communications company was selected because it was one of the biggest multinational companies in Malawi by revenue while the bank was selected because the researcher worked there and had access to information. Furthermore because

of strict controls on Commercial banks by the central bank, the banking industry was seen as an ideal example of best practice.

Organisation	Industry	Sector	Location	No of employees
Public University (A)	HE	Public	Malawi	1356
Public University (B)	HE	Public	Malawi	400
Public University (C.)	HE	Public	Malawi	365
Private University (A)	HE	Private	Malawi	90
Commercial Bank	Banking	Private	Malawi	257
Telecommunications Firm	Telecommunications	Private	Multinational(Malawi)	175

Table 1. highlights details of the case organizations

B. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS CHOICES.

Many researchers (Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Saunders et al, 2009; Yin, 2009) have proposed that taking a rigorous approach to data collection is one of the important attributes of a good qualitative research. Yin (2009) supports Creswell (1998) by confirming that qualitative research using case studies need to collect data from multiple sources to enhance validity and generalisibility.

A multi-method qualitative choice was adopted where qualitative data was collected using questionnaires, interviews as well as documentary evidence. The multi-method is seen to be ideal for a case study strategy considering that since the major research questions are “how” and “why” therefore, the control over the events of the investigator is highly limited and the “required” focus on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context is definitely given (Yin, 2009; Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

Once data has been collected, the next step is analysis. Yin (2009) warns that once data has been collected extra care needs to be taken to ensure that all evidence has been attended and that the analysis addresses all potential major rival interpretations. This research adopted an interpretive paradigm using a case study research methodology where qualitative data was mostly collected. Unlike in quantitative (positivist) research where data collection and analysis can be separated Saunders (2009), under an interpretive paradigm the data

analysis cannot be separated from the data collection. Hence, the data analysis was an interactive process in combination with data collection (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

While Yin (2009) suggests five approaches for analyzing case study based research, the researcher prefers to use grounded theory for analyzing the data collected, since it provides pragmatic analysis tools, which help to develop the intended framework. This is in contrast to case study analysis tools which are not detailed and are deficient of systematic tools (Saunders, 2009)

Collis and Hussey (2009) and Charmaz (2011) explain that grounded theory is a methodology in which a systematic set of procedures is used to develop an inductively derived theory about phenomena aiming at arriving at prescriptions and policy recommendations with the theory which are likely to be intelligible to and usable by, those in the situation being studied.

Baily et al (2008); Charmaz (2011) and Collis and Hussey (2009) summarize the advantages of using grounded theory as a data analysis technique as detailed below:

- a) It allows considering the mentioned variety of factors being necessary for the intended unifying applicable framework, since all relevant sources or methods related to interpretivism can be applied, unless personal boundaries are avoided.
- b) Because grounded theory is open to comment and correction, the methodology allows expecting a maximum in terms of the aspired applicability of the research results
- c) Grounded theory allows publishable conclusions from originally confidential sources.

C. RESEARCH ETHICS: CONSIDERATIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Several authors including Zikmund (1998), Hussey & Hussey (1997) and Bryman (2007) contend that most research situations involve three parties; the researcher; the sponsoring client (user) and the respondent (subject). How the

three parties relate requires considerations into ethical issues that may arise if the research is to objective.

Hussey and Hussey (1998) and Saunders et al (2009) propose that the following ethical issues should be considered by researchers in business research:

- 1) Safeguarding the interests of the respondents (case organizations)
- 2) Offering confidentiality or anonymity to participants in a research study.
- 3) Obtaining the informed consent of the participants
- 4) Maintaining dignity and
- 5) Ensuring objectivity while publishing the research findings.

This research involved collecting highly sensitive data through interviews and mostly analyzing confidential company documents. It is considered important for the researcher to ensure that the ethical issues discussed above are considered and being followed.

Findings

The aim of the study was to identify factors that influence strategy formulation and implementation in Higher Education Institutions. Despite its acknowledged importance for the success of any organization, strategic management especially the implementation side remains a relatively under researched subject (Noble, 1999; Cravens, 1998). Jooste and Fourier (2009) and deLeon (1999) even argue that the complexity of implementation is more than daunting and that strategy implementation is more challenging compared to formulation. Based on the empirical analysis 3 factors (F1-F3) were identified as influential on strategy formulation and implementation. Although these factors influence each other, they have been dealt with as mutual independent because of their individual role in achieving the organizational goals.

The following sections describe each of these factors in detail with substantiating quotations. These factors are evaluated with relevant theories in the existing Strategic Management literature.

The research contributes to a better understanding of the key factors that may influence strategy formulation and implementation in an organization. Furthermore the research highlights the fact that strategic management is a complex organization issue which involves many interrelated factors (see e.g.: Okumus 2000; Jooste and Fourie, 2009; Noble 1999; Alexander, 1991) which are all important for the success of an organization.

F1 - Leadership

The study illustrated that inspiring followers to achieve a common goal was key to strategic management success. By communicating the vision and mission to organizational members, leaders can give direction to organizational members during strategy formulation and implementation. This can give members confidence, clarity and security about what they are trying to achieve. Strategic leadership is widely described as one of the key drivers of effective strategy implementation (Lynch 1997; Noble 1999; Ulrich, Zenger & Smallwood 1999; Collins 2001; Thompson & Strickland 2003; Freedman & Tregoe 2003; Kaplan & Norton 2004; Pearce & Robinson 2007; Hrebiniak 2005). Nevertheless, lack of strategic leadership by the top management of the organization, has been identified as one of the major barriers to effective strategy implementation (Alexander 1985; Beer & Eisenstat 2000; Kaplan & Norton 2004; Hrebiniak 2005). Table 2 presents the substantial quotes of this factor.

Table 2	Substantiating Quotes
	<p>We have serious leadership problems around this place..... We have staff and students striking every now and then we don't understand why our leaders are not able to ensure that we do not have these strikes.</p> <p>The success of our organization lays in its strong leadership....our leaders are inspiring and really work hard for the company to succeed.</p> <p>A few months ago one of the motivational consultants talked about Malawi lacking transformational leadership. ..I think it's true that most of our leaders are interested in short term goals ...they seem not to be interested in bringing positive change.</p> <p>Leadership is about taking difficult decisions to bring about positive change our leaders lack the skills to bring change, strategy means doing things differently which brings about the element of change, we avoid change and we are always used to doing things the same old ways....that's our problem</p>

F2 - Implementation Planning

Most respondents claimed that once the strategic plans have been formulated there were no proper mechanisms put in place to ensure that implementation was successful. The need for monitoring and control of the implementation effort is underscored by the strategy implementation literature (see e.g. Best, 1997; Thompson and Strickland 2003; Reed and Buckley, 1988; Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979). A best practice for strategy implementation monitoring and control is to meet regularly in structured and time-limited sessions (Allio, 2005). As implementation plans are destined to change, implementation teams should regularly meet in well-structured, punctuated sessions to share information and reconfirm priorities. This way, management can make adjustments when needed and thus control the implementation effort, as found in this study.

Table 3	Substantiating Quotes
	<p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation.</p> <p>From our five year strategic plan we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this trickles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan.</p> <p>We seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan.</p> <p>As implementers we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning</p>

F3 - Human Resources Management

Many respondents believed that proper management of Human resources is an important factor to strategic management. Good Human Resources practices and policies contribute to successful strategic management. The literature reviewed supports this assertion. Over the years, the role of Human Resources Management has changed from recruitment and other mundane duties to include management of Human Resources as a key factor for sustainable competitive advantage Pearson and, Strickland, Armstrong, the other book;

Collins 2003). For the successful formulation and implementation of strategy, the support and performance of the employees from all strata of the organization is inevitable. Armstrong. For acceptance of strategy into the system, the organization must have a culture that exudes a positive attitude to the changes brought about by the strategies. Often times people are hesitant to change their modus operandi hence the need for Human Resources to convince people to move with the transitions occurring in the business.

Furthermore, the importance of learning and organizational development, talent and career management is underscored by the fact that several successful organizations place great importance on training and education of organizational members during the implementation effort. In the strategy implementation literature, many scholars have pointed to the important role of adequate training and education during strategy implementation (see e.g. Alexander, 1985, 1991; Skivington and Daft, 1991; Hambrick and Cannella, 1989; Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Alexander, 1985; Daft and Macintosh, 1984; Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979). Table 4. presents the substantial quotes of this factor.

Table 4	Substantiating Quotes
	<p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation.</p> <p>From our five year strategic plan we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this trickles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan.</p> <p>We seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan.</p> <p>As implementers we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning.</p> <p>We are demotivated because of the policies by our employer... we have not had our conditions of service reviewed in so many years....</p> <p>One of the biggest problems that we have is failure to implement our plans. We have a document that was developed by our management four years ago but we have serious problems with implementation.</p>

From our five year strategic plan we meet every year to develop a plan for the year based on the five year plan.....the annual work plan forms the performance contract for the CEO and this tricles down to all the staff members. Through use of the balanced scorecard we are able to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategic plan.

we seem not to have a system which ensures that we implement our plan.

As implementers we are not involved in the planning or rather strategy formulation hence its difficult at times to appreciate the thinking during planning

Conclusion

Strategic Management has emerged as one of the most important organization activities that influence improved performance. Despite this acknowledgement, the activity has received less attention in HEIs compared to private institutions (see e.g. Dandira, 2011; Alashloo et al., 2005). Furthermore compared to formulation' strategy implementation remains a relatively under researched subject (see e.g. Alexander 1985; Noble 1999; Van Der Maas, 2008). Actually Deleon (1999) cited in Van Der Maas 2008 believes that the complexity of implementation is more than daunting and apparently unmodelable. Furthermore Jooste and Fourie (2009) have confirmed that the ability to implement a strategy is viewed as considerably more important than strategy formulation. This has been supported by Alashloo et al (2009) and Van Der Maas 2008) who agree that while most effort in organizations including HEIs are put on formulation, failure to consider implementation as an equally important factor leads to strategic drift.

The study has explored and presented some major factors affecting strategy formulation and Implementation in HEIs. Based on empirical research conducted at Five Organizations (Three Universities, a commercial bank and a company in the telecommunications industry), this study has identified eight major organization factors influencing strategic management in HEIs. The factors include: Strategy Implementation Planning, Strategy, Leadership and Human Resources Management .

Successful organizational performance requires organizations to embrace all the factors identified in the strategic management process. Furthermore the study emphasizes the need to look at strategy formulation and implementation as mutually exclusive processes that are linked. Some findings of this study such as involvement of middle level and operational staff in the process of formulation seem to have deviated from the top bottom approach espoused by early writers on the subject (see e.g. Alashloo et al 2005; Alexander 1985; Mintzberg 2003; While most HEIs in Malawi follow the federal british top down approach to management (see e.g UNIMA, 2011) current thinking in strategic management for the sake of organization ownership and buy-in advocate involvement of all employees in the organization in strategic management endeavors This approach seems to have brought success in strategic management in some researched organizations as the research has found.

The factors explored in this research are based on strategic management in both public and private sector organizations. The approach to combine private and public sector organizations enhances generalization and reliability of the findings and provides a cushion against the major limitation identified for this research which is the sample selection strategy.

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APPENDIX 4: Operationalising the POMI Framework

The POMI framework comprises 21 factors that must be available for successful formulation and implementation of strategy. These factors are mutually exclusive and must all be undertaken if the process is to be successful. Table 4.8 presents how the framework can be operationalized.

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
PLANNING DIMENSION			
1	Formulation Planning	a) Lack of adequate planning leads to formulation of strategies which do not address critical Organisational needs. b) There is also lack of ownership due to failure to involve implementers in the planning process.	a) HEI Managers need to plan for formulation. b) This should include involvement of implementers and all stakeholders in the planning process. c) PESTEL factors need to be taken into consideration to ensure that SMART objectives are developed.

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
2	Learning and Organisational Development	<p>a) Training is one of the most critical Organisational factors that affect performance.</p> <p>b) One of the factors that affect strategy formulation and implementation is lack of knowledge on the subject due to inadequate or lack of training.</p> <p>c) Lack of training result in failure by employees to embrace change, results in lack of knowledge and competencies.</p>	<p>a) HEI Managers should ensure that all employees are provided with Strategic Management training as well as trainings in the relevant areas of specialization for all staff members.</p> <p>b) All new employees and those holding managerial positions such as Deans and Heads of Department need to be provided with regular trainings and induction courses.</p> <p>c) HEIs should also develop training policies which are inclusive not only targeting academic staff.</p>
3	Simplicity and Undue complexity	<p>a) The study has found that undue complexity is one of the factors that affect strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs.</p> <p>b) HEIs develop very complex plans that are difficult to implement within the life of the plans.</p> <p>c) This has resulted mostly in institutions failing to implement the plans on time.</p>	<p>a) Proper planning and involvement of implementers in the process of formulation helps in developing realistic plans.</p> <p>b) Strategy formulators should develop strategies which are simple and not complex.</p> <p>c) Evangelisation and training helps to enhance the employees understanding of what is to be done.</p>
4	Implementation Planning	<p>a) Lack of implementation planning makes it difficult for HEIs to realize the plans.</p> <p>b) Without work a plan budgeting is a challenge.</p>	<p>a) HEIs Managers need to ensure that implementation is planned.</p> <p>b) This will involve developing Work Plans provide basis for budgeting and decision making.</p> <p>c) Implementation planning also provides a basis for decision making</p>
ORGANISATION DIMENSION			
5	Financial Resources	<p>a) Lack of financial resources is mentioned as the major challenge affecting Organisational performance.</p> <p>b) Inefficient utilization of available limited resources also complicates the problem.</p> <p>c) Human Capacity to manage finances in line with the public finance management Act is a challenge.</p>	<p>a) Development of work plans helps in allocation of the limited resources.</p> <p>b) Furthermore analysis of the environment will help planners to establish sources of funding which should inform the planning.</p> <p>c) HEIs need to take an aggressive income generation approach to raise funds for HEIs. This includes prudent use of available</p>

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
			<p>resources and adopting an entrepreneurial approach.</p> <p>d) There is also need for recruitment of competent and qualified staff and putting in place financial control system.</p>
6	Systems and Procedures	<p>a) Lack of adequate systems and procedures is identified as a recipe for strategic drift in HEIs.</p> <p>b) HEIs in Malawi lack robust systems and procedures to guide strategy implementation.</p>	<p>a) Proper systems and procedures help create a conducive environment for successful strategy formulation and implementation.</p> <p>b) HEI Managers should ensure that they develop systems and procedures for all processes in the organisations value chain systems and should communicate the same to all employees.</p> <p>c) Besides communication, managers should provide necessary trainings and orientation on the new system as this will help in change management.</p>
7	Organisational Culture	<p>a) Organisational culture is mentioned by many respondents as affecting strategy formulation and implementation.</p> <p>b) The laissez faire culture in HEIs effects the ability to implement strategies.</p> <p>c) There is resistance to change due to various cultural issues</p>	<p>a) HEI Leaders need to ensure that they build a culture which will help strategy implementation.</p> <p>b) Managers should work towards changing culture in line with the vision of the institution.</p> <p>c) Training is one way of making staff believe in change.</p> <p>d) Development of organisation system and procedures help in change management.</p>
8	Communication	<p>a) Lack of a Communication policy leads to chaos in the way the organisation manages its business such as Public Relations, Marketing.</p> <p>b) Many Industrial action issues are a result of communication breakdown.</p>	<p>a) HEI Managers need to develop communication policies.</p> <p>b) Establishment of a communications office will help in marketing and managing public relations.</p>
9	Information, Technology and Technology (ICT)	<p>a) Information Communication and Technology is key to improving teaching and learning in HEIs.</p> <p>b) Lack of software packages has resulted in failure to</p>	<p>a) HEIs need to develop ICT to help management the processes. This can be done by firstly establishing ICT Directorates headed by a Director at Management level.</p>

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
		<p>manage academic processes such as Finance Management Systems, Human Resources Management Systems, and Students Management Information Systems.</p> <p>c) Lack of ICT infrastructure such as optic fibre and computers has affected communication .</p>	<p>b) Availability of support infrastructure such as good Internet Service Provision (ISP) is critical to better implementation of ICT.</p> <p>c) Long term Investment in ICT infrastructure is crucial to achievement of superior performance.</p>
10	Performance Management	<p>a) Lack of Performance Management systems in HEIs affects the Institutions capacity to assess employee performance.</p> <p>b) HEIs not able to bargain for resources due to lack of performance management system which some donors require as a prerequisite.</p>	<p>a) Managers should develop performance management systems which should help measure the performance of individual employees and the entire organization.</p> <p>b) A Balanced scorecard can be adopted to help measure organisational performance.</p>
11	Organisational Structure	<p>a) Poor Organisational Structures affects implementation of strategy.</p> <p>b) Unclear reporting lines create mistrust among employees.</p> <p>c) Lack of delegations on the part of managers causes delays in strategy implementation</p>	<p>a) HEI Managers need to ensure that organisations are appropriately structured for the circumstances in which they find themselves.</p> <p>b) Responsibilities, communication channels and reporting lines need to be clearly outlined.</p> <p>c) Devolution of power to faculties and departments is an effective strategy for enhancing performance.</p> <p>d) Other than executive management handling all SM issues, autonomy to faculties and departments with adequate capacity building is the most successful and sustainable way of improving performance in HEIs.</p>
12	Reward Systems	<p>a) Lack of reward systems in public HEIs affects morale, motivation and commitment of employees.</p> <p>b) This in return affects their input in strategic management initiatives.</p>	<p>a) HEI Leaders need to develop reward systems to reward performance.</p> <p>b) The PM system should provide mechanism and strategies to recognize exceptional performance.</p> <p>c) Establishing the Organisational rewards for exemplary performance can motivate employees towards helping strategy</p>

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
			<p>implementation.</p> <p>d) Managers at various levels should be encouraged to recognize exceptional performance.</p> <p>e) Introduction of awards to best performing staff will motivate them to work hard</p>
13	Evangelisation	<p>a) Often times staff members complain that they are not informed of strategic management initiatives being undertaken in their institutions.</p> <p>b) Lack of communication on organisational initiatives creates low morale among employees.</p>	<p>a) Building employees trust through involvement and training is important to ensure their commitment.</p> <p>b) Employee commitment is an important factor to evangelisation. Deliberate efforts should be made to encourage employee learning and development in HEIs.</p> <p>c) ICT devices such as e-magazines, Management Information Systems, news sharing on the Local Area Networks, BBM, E-Newsletters, Facebook, and Twitter should be used in HEIs to enhance evangelisation efforts.</p>
MANAGEMENT DIMENSION			
14	Leadership	<p>a) Poor criteria for recruiting HEI Managers such as Deans and Heads of Department in HEIs lead to engagement of inefficient leaders.</p> <p>b) Lack of exposure affects performance of leaders</p>	<p>a) For strategy formulation and implementation to be successful requires strong leadership that is willing and able to bring the required change.</p> <p>b) Leaders should be provided with adequate training and mentorship.</p> <p>c) Succession planning should be encouraged to ensure that a pool of potential leaders is created.</p>
15	Power and Politics	<p>a) Government interventions in the running of HEIs have affected performance of HEIs.</p> <p>b) Infighting among staff members derails progress.</p> <p>c) Powerful Trade Unions have sometimes created a bad working environment due to unrealistic demands</p>	<p>a) Power and politics in organizations has been a source of conflict. Management in HEIs should ensure that they develop a shared understanding with trade unions, government and other stakeholders.</p> <p>b) HEIs need to be aware of developments in government</p>

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
			to take advantage of opportunities that might arise or to strategise on any challenges that might be anticipated.
16	Trust and Commitment	<p>a) Poor communication has sometimes created a lot of mistrust among employees.</p> <p>b) Most of the strikes in HEIs have been as a result of lack of trust.</p>	<p>a) HEI Managers should work towards enhancing trust and committee between staff members and the employer, trust among staff members different categories, trust between staff and students and students and the institution.</p> <p>b) Trust can be enhanced by development of proper communication systems, development of policies and procedures and adoption an impartial leadership style which promotes objectivity</p>
17	Entrepreneurship	<p>a) Risk aversion in HEIs leads to failure for Managers to take risks which are inevitable.</p>	<p>a) The current imperative to develop entrepreneurial capacity in HEIs derives from the current pressure emanating from globalization and internationalization of HEIs.</p> <p>b) Performance management and reward systems should be enhanced to help enhance a culture of performance.</p>
18	Human Resources Management	<p>a) Poor HRM policies lead to recruitment of poor quality personnel.</p>	<p>a) Strategy formulation and implementation in HEIs can be enhanced by effective HRM practices that are recruiting of quality staff, motivating them and training them so that they are able to provide and effective and efficient performance.</p>
INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION			
19	Employee Knowledge and Competencies	<p>a) Lack of knowledge and competencies on the part of employees is a major factor affecting formulation and implementation of strategy.</p>	<p>a) HEI Managers need to ensure that they equip all employees with requisite skills to help them perform at the required level.</p> <p>b) This can be achieved through continuous professional development, trainings and induction courses for all new staff members.</p>
20	Change Management	<p>a) Poor Organizational structures and culture</p>	<p>a) Continuous SM evangelization across the</p>

Sn	Factor	Major Challenges associated with Factor	How this factor can improve the process
		<p>affects organisational capability to change.</p> <p>b) Changing the behavior and attitude of employees to adopt new processes and systems is a difficult task in HEIs.</p>	<p>organization's value chain system will help in changing the employees and student's perceptions, attitudes and behavior towards a strategic management culture.</p> <p>b) The Change Agents in the organisations should create a sense of urgency for the change to be created and accepted by the entire organisation.</p> <p>c) Continuous learning and development of employees will help enhance their capabilities to change.</p> <p>d) Organisational leaders should develop training and employee development policies.</p> <p>e) HEIs should develop communication systems that would facilitate information sharing across departments.</p>
21	Total Quality Management	<p>a) Lack of systems, policies and standards and a laissez faire culture affect performance of HEIs.</p> <p>b) Lack of a continuous improvement culture affects employees capability to improve</p>	<p>a) HEIs should inculcate a culture of continuous improvement in the organization.</p> <p>b) To manage quality Managers should ensure that all processes in the value chain system are documented and that minimum performance standards are set.</p> <p>c) Managers need to work towards institutionalizing a quality conscious culture so that every individual should adopt a continuous improvement philosophy</p>