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**Abstract**

This paper aims at the sensitization of University Administrators on the need to form internal partnership by means of linking together all key stakeholders such as Students and Academic

Staff Associations. The paper seeks to discuss the participative role of core and/or key Stakeholders such as students and academic staff members in policy and strategy formulation, decision making, and the management of HIV and AIDS. The management of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in universities and other tertiary institutions is not being given the necessary attention. The study therefore aims at exploring the role that can be played by internal stakeholders such as students and academic staff in the management of HIV and AIDS.

## **Introduction**

Policies in Universities should be in the form of general statements that provide guidelines for decision-making. The management and leadership of Ghanaian Universities should be able to provide guidelines on the kind of political affiliations that will be supportive in the provision of tertiary education in the country. Although some benchmarking will be necessary in this regard, it must be undertaken with caution to ensure the outcomes produce synergies. For example venturing into areas of university education that has some connection with general economic development will require policies that will indicate the types of assistance that will be required from developed countries and those that will be required from organizations in the developing world. Some University leadership teams in this country have proven more skilful at arriving at commonality of view than others. A lot depends on the composition of the team. Roles in university management teams are often divided along functional lines and different people come to the team with very different backgrounds. The different views brought to the management and governing table can be the source of enhanced corporate awareness of environmental change, if the process is successful, or it can be the source of political in-fighting and decision paralysis.

Universities in this country face a changing environment which they cannot always control, but to which they must respond and adapt. Decisions will be necessary and these must be taken in response to choices and options regarding how the university responds to the environment, and how its internal activities are to run. Decisions need to be arrived at collectively if these must be effective. Once this is done the right to do things (i.e. authority) may be delegated from the Vice Chancellor down the ladder to Academic Staff Associations and the Student Representative Council. Notwithstanding this arrangement responsibility (i.e. the liability of a person to be called to account for exercising authority, actions and results) must rest with the Vice Chancellor and the top management teams of the University. Some degree of responsibility should however remain with implementing groups down the hierarchy in the

University if they should be effective. This is because people who are not held responsible are free to exercise their authority in a capricious way: they are not bound to do otherwise. The MethodistUniversityCollege being a private mission-owned university has to identify what role internal stakeholders can play in the quest for effective management and governance of the university, hence the study.

## **Literature review**

Fred R David (2007) defines strategic management as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. 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 competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations (Johnson G., Scholes K., Whittington R., 2008). Student as well as academic staff members should form part of the resourcing process in exploring strategies in universities. This should be so because it is claimed that the internal resources of an organisation are more important than the external factors in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. Supporters of Resource-Based View (RBV) claim that organisational performance is primarily determined by the resources internally owned and controlled by the organisation. Internal resources are grouped under three main headings thus physical resources, human resources and organisational resources (J B Barney, 2001). The RBV theory says that organisations are helped by resources available in exploiting opportunities and neutralising threats. Organisations should always consider the mix, type, amount and the nature of their internal resources when strategising. In the process the development and exploitation of unique resources and capabilities needs to be taken seriously in order to gain competitive advantage. Examples of general resources according to the Resource-Based View include formal reporting structure, management techniques, internal planning systems, knowledge found in the organisation and the systems that help to create it, organisational culture, organisational reputation, and both internal and external relationships (Addison-Wesley 1997).

Organisations keep changing and the designing of these organisations also keep changing but traditionally management scientists are of the view that organisations should have formal structures (D Pugh, 1984). Such formal structures usually have the strategy of top-down, command and control design. Decisions are then made at the top and the implementation of such decisions expected to be done by those below the top level

executives. The two main issues that arise as a result of the fast-moving and knowledge-intensive world are that the formal structure is less appropriate and the harnessing of valuable knowledge within an organisation requires more than just the formal structure. There is the view that the verb 'organising' should therefore be used instead of the noun 'organisation' (R. Whittington, E. Molloy, M. Mayer and A. Smith, 2006). It is important also to align the processes of the formal structure with the informal processes and relationships. This results in an organisation's configuration that is the structures, processes and relationships through which the organisation operates (R. Whittington, A. Pettigrew, 1999). G. Friesen (2005) gives five basic structural types that is functional, multidivisional, matrix, transnational and project. The type of structure used by a particular organisation provides the means by which integration of knowledge and activities are ensured. Whatever structure is used needs to allow both internal and external relationships to be built and maintained. In public sector enterprises (G. Johnson and K. Scholes, 2001) as well as private sector it becomes necessary that the centre of the organisation delegates decision making to units and managers lower down in the hierarchy. This process is referred to as devolution. This calls for clarity in the process of dividing responsibility and strategic decision making by the central unit of the organisation. Goold and Campbell (1987) give three strategic styles that show the ways of describing responsibilities. These are (1) strategic planning style – where the centre remains the master planner, (2) financial control style – typically used by holding companies and the relationship between the centre and business units is a shareholder or banker parent and (3) strategic control style – where the relationship between the centre and the business units remains that of a parent or strategic shaper thereby influencing the behaviour in business units (C. Bartlett and S. Ghoshal, 1994).

According to H. Chesborough and D. Teece (2002) an organisation relates externally to customers, suppliers, subcontractors and partners through outsourcing, strategic alliances, networks and virtual organisation. Virtual organisations are usually held together by means of partnership, collaboration and networking rather than through formal structures. D. Ulrich and W. Brockbank (2005) claims that HR professionals and

executives should be aware of future changes and the implications of these on competences. In resourcing organisations it is emphasised that the 'soft' issues of HR that is behaviour of people must not be ignored (C. Collins and K. Clark, 2003). Knowledge creation and information management calls for the need for managers to be strategic in connection with sources of improved competitiveness through information. Strategies in connection with information can create or destroy (N. Carr, 2004) the capabilities of an organisation. The use of data mining (J. Firestone, 2005) that is the process of finding trends, patterns, and connections in data for managerial information will be very useful in gaining competitive advantage. Information managers (M. Vernon, 2006) need to understand the potential of IT and make use of the resource for competitive advantage. Strategic managers need to manage for value because the shareholder is interested in the capability of the organisation to generate cash and be able to pay dividends (P. Atrill, 2006). Managing for value is concerned with maximising the long-term cash-generating capability of an organisation (J. Barlow, R. Burgman and M. Molna, 2004). Value creation involves financial issues on funds from operations, investment and disposal of assets, and financing costs.

Edgar Schein (1985) says organisational culture is "a pattern of behaviour [that has been] developed by an organisation as it learns to cope with its problem of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid and to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel." P. E. Atkinson (1990) says culture reflects the underlying assumptions about the way work is performed; what is 'acceptable and not acceptable'; and what behaviour and actions are encouraged and discouraged. A. McLean and J. Marshall (1993) assert that culture is the collection of traditions, values, policies, beliefs, and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do and think in an organisation. R. Harrison and H. Stokes (1992) say 'culture impacts most aspects of organisational life, such as how decisions are made, who makes them, how rewards are distributed, who is promote, how people are treated, how the organisation responds to its environment, and so on.' R. F. Reigle (2001) claims that culture is an important factor in the implementation of technology, innovation, job satisfaction, organisational success and team effectiveness.

## **Methodology**

In seeking to establish the role of student and academic staff associations in policy and strategy formulation and the management of issues in the Methodist University College Ghana the study used secondary data (literature review) and primary data (interviews with students and members of the teaching staff). The interviews were less formal and concentrated on participant's views on the expected role play. The review of literature covered strategic management, statutes of universities and policy formulation. Questionnaires were also administered and analysed. There were extensive discussions with stakeholders the Principal, Vice Principal, Deans and other senior members as well as students. A significant amount of data was collected from students and senior members. The study was prompted by a paper presented on "University Governance: The Role of Student and Academic Staff Associations at an International Symposium African Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century organized by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the University of Illinois in 2002.

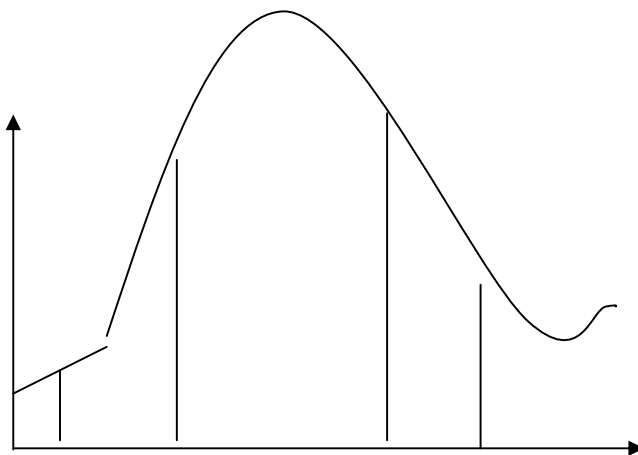
## **Findings and discussions**

Consultative management through meetings both formal and informal and the exercise of authority in Universities in general is essential in building internal partnerships. However when the Vice Chancellor and his team get addicted to meetings and consultations, sometimes these become vehicles for avoiding decisions. For universities to remain effective, meetings and consultations must be used for strategic thinking. The study revealed that students and academic staff associations are not involved in the decision making process at MUCG as associations. While the Student Representative Council members serve the interests of their members there is no formal academic staff association. Information available indicates that senior members are now working towards the establishment of an academic staff association. Consultative Boards and Committee meetings of MUCG will promote strategic thinking if what has to be



discussed are arranged in a manner that will allow effective deliberation. The graph given below shows how the agenda of such meetings can be arranged:

**The Bell-Shaped Agenda**



Matters	Main Business	Correspondence
Arising	Including reports	and Routine
	And strategic issues	Business

In the quest for constructive deliberations at meetings it is more useful if the business to be transacted is arranged in a bell shaped manner to allow sufficient time to consider main business and issues that are of strategic importance. Routine matters can then be dealt with when members are getting tired and are eager to bring the meeting to a close. The chairman promotes effective meetings when he or she ensures that matters arising from the previous meeting do not take more than the time needed for main business.

According to de Bono (1985) there are six distinct states in which the brain can be "sensitised" and that in each of these states the brain will identify and bring into conscious thought certain aspects of issues being considered (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgment, neutral facts). Bono explains that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be identified, deliberately accessed and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop strategies for thinking about particular issues.

### The "Six hats" approach to meetings

White hat	Data and information <i>What information is missing?</i>	Everyone at the meeting looks to see what information is available, what is needed how it might be obtained
Red hat	Feelings, intuitions, hunches and emotions <i>My gut-feeling is that it will not work.</i> <i>I don't like the way this is being done.</i>	Everyone is encouraged to put forward their feelings and intuitions
Black hat	Caution and critical judgment The regulations do not permit us to do that. <i>They have no experience in what they are learning.</i>	Everyone looks for pitfalls. This is the most used hat, but it can easily be overused.
Yellow hat	Optimism and the logical positive view of things <i>This would work if we had female students in the Halls of Residence</i>	Everyone looks to see how an idea could be feasible and what benefits it might have
Green hat	Creative thinking, new ideas, different possibilities <i>Could we do this differently? Is there another explanation for this?</i>	Everyone is asked to make a deliberate creative effort

Blue hat	Controlling the thinking process, setting the agenda, suggesting the next step  <i>Let's look at priorities here. We have spent too much time trying to blame someone.</i>	This hat is normally used by the chairperson but others can make suggestions of this sort too.
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This approach to meetings will assist University Administrators in controlling group discussions. The approach has been enthusiastically embraced by a number of major companies like IBM, Du Pont and Prudential and can work well with Universities.

When respondents were asked to describe the decision making process in MUCG, 82% indicated that University boards and committees are used, with 14% indicating that Faculty Boards and committees are used. The remaining 4% indicated that Departmental Board and Committees are used. The use of boards and committees promotes creative thinking and allows the university to examine options available in various situations. This allows brainstorming that is the generation of ideas (Bono's Green hat approach). In the absence of a formal academic staff association, majority of senior members surveyed indicated that views of academic staff are represented through university committees. It will be more useful and productive if senior members accelerate the process of forming an association.

Skills in problem solving and decision making, planning and leading meetings, and teambuilding were identified by respondents as very important to the jobs they do and need improvement. The Business Development Unit should therefore organize training and development programmes in these areas in order to build the capacity of officers whose task involve the use of such skills. MUCG has the facility that can be used as training venues. What is required is the use of external consultants who will join some of the experienced senior members in the delivery of these courses. Meetings form an integral part of

decision and policy making in MUCG and the skills required in planning and leading these meetings must be embedded in those involved in the management of meetings.

### **Funding levels**

Respondents, that is, students and academic staff are of the view that the funding levels of MUCG are inadequate and that the major type of funding is fee income, charges and dues. The survey revealed that some amount of work has to be done in relation to income generation by means of commercial ventures.

It is suggested that the university should undertake commercial ventures in order to generate more income for purposes of reducing the funding gap. Majority of those surveyed are of the opinion that the funding gap can also be reduced by means of subvention and grants. A careful look at the case of MUCG indicates that the only source of subvention will be grants from the church. The possibility of sourcing funding from the National Council on Tertiary Education's (NCTE) Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) should therefore be explored.

### **Management of HIV AND AIDS**

In its quest to ensure universities and other higher education institutions use all available means to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS and effectively manage the menace the Association of African Universities (AAU) runs an HIV and AIDS programme dubbed 'African Universities Responding to HIV and AIDS'. Four impact assessment surveys were instituted in universities in sub-Saharan Africa in 2008/2009 for purposes of examining the extent to which issues on the menace have been mainstreamed into institutional programmes. Following the presentation of the Best Practices report to the AAU's Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP) in Tripoli in October 2007, a survey involving 35 institutions from 19 sub-Saharan Africa zoned into four groups (1)

Anglophone Western Africa (2) Francophone Western and Central Africa (3) Eastern Africa and (4) Southern Africa was done. The survey covered the state of HIV and AIDS as major institutional concern, the extent to which HIV and AIDS related activities have influenced behavior as well as the impact of AAU support. It revealed that 80% of institutions surveyed have policies to respond to the pandemic. The remaining groups surveyed either have a draft policy awaiting approval or are in the process of drafting one. It was also revealed that Anglophone West Africa and Francophone Western and Central Africa higher education institutions do not have evidence of integration of HIV and AIDS issues in their Strategic Plans. The story in Eastern Africa sub-region is different in that 80% of the institutions surveyed have HIV issues in their Strategic Plans. The management and funding of HIV projects in Anglophone West Africa and Francophone Western and Central African institutions tend to be ad hoc with no clear budgetary allocations.

The case for the Methodist University College has been useful in that both student and academic staff associations indicated that there is the need to have HIV and AIDS issues institutionalized. When asked what form HIV and AIDS management should take, the results were as follows:

	% in favour
A unit	45.5%
A focal person	13.6%
An existing programme	40.9%
Other	0.0%

### **Impact of culture**

R. F. Reigel (2001) claims that culture is an important factor in the implementation of technology, innovation, job satisfaction, organisational success and team effectiveness. It is worth noting that a particular culture can be a major strength or weakness. The culture of an organisation is defined as the complex body of shared values and beliefs of an organisation. The culture of an organisation is the way things are done in that particular organization. The study revealed that employees in MUCG identify themselves with the university and accept its rules and that people are motivated to achieve the objectives of the university. A larger proportion that is 68-70 per cent of respondents indicated that people internalise the values of the university and participate in the democratic functioning of the institution. Again 75% of those surveyed say people have sense of identity with, and loyal to, the university with the feeling that they are valued and considered important to the university. T. E. Deal and A. A. Kennedy (2000) say there are two main factors in the marketplace that determine corporate culture and these are (1) the degree of risk associated with the organisation's activities and (2) the speed at which organisations and their employees receive feedback on the success of strategies or decisions. The fact that stakeholders of MUCG are valued and considered as important indicates that employees receive feedback on successes achieved.

## **Conclusion**

It is not sufficient just to develop a very insightful and relevant strategy and hope that the logic behind the strategy will be enough to make it a reality. People should be given clear and specific responsibilities for making strategy work. The more people get involved in the implementation of strategies the better. This will create a wider sense of ownership, commitment and responsibility for making the strategy happen.

The academic staff members of MUCG therefore need to form an association and make their presence felt in the decision making process. The assignment of responsibilities should be extended to staff associations and the student leadership with clear and understandable instructions and tasks. The progress

made on task assigned must be reviewed at regular intervals. For effective governance functional strategies and responsibilities involving student and academic staff associations should have a shorter time horizon so that these internal stakeholders will know what needs to be done now, under changing conditions.

MUCG needs to consider the introduction of income generating activities ie bookshops, business initiatives and enterprises, consultancies, executive development and training programmes. The study revealed that the effect of the HIV and AIDS epidemic on the education sector is well documented. There is a strong believe that the education sector could be fortified to remain the strongest weapon against the threats of HIV and AIDS. MUCG can therefore take steps to contribute to the effective management of the menace by the creation of a structure to deal with HIV and AIDS issues.

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