

## APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC CONTROLS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

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### Abstract

*The study specifically investigated the extent to which management of tertiary institutions apply environmental analysis and use strategic control in the management of their institutions. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design and was carried out in Enugu State. The population of the study was the entire 254 core management staff and Deans of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. There was no sampling as the entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire titled "Environmental Analysis and Strategic Control Application Questionnaire" (EASCAQ). The instrument is five-point scale structured thus: Very High Extent (5), High Extent (4), Moderate Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1). The content and face validity of the instrument were determined using three experts in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To determine the reliability of EASCAQ, the researchers tested the instrument on the representative sample of 20 managers from tertiary institutions in Ebonyi state using split-half method. Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficients obtained for the two clusters were 0.74 and 0.84 respectively. The researchers administered 254 copies of the instrument with the aid of three research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings among others indicated that core management staff and Deans in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education apply strategic control to a low extent. Similarly, they applied environmental analysis in tertiary institutions in Enugu State to a moderate extent. Recommendations among others were that: managers should ensure that every member of staff is involved or adequately informed of the environmental analysis and strategic control processes in the institutions to be able to contribute effectively to their application.*

## **Introduction**

The education sector, like other sectors of the economy needs trained manpower to function effectively. In this regard, every nation establishes institutions of learning to produce well adjusted individuals who can fit properly into the environment. In Nigeria for instance, education is provided at different levels namely: primary, secondary and tertiary. The focus of this study is on tertiary institutions.

According to Babalola (2008), tertiary institutions, are higher educational institutions which are statutorily charged with the responsibility of producing high level manpower or human capital. Learning at the tertiary level could be described as effective if it results in bringing about the expected transformation in the attitudes, skills and knowledge of the recipients or students over a period of time. Effective learning, especially at the tertiary level should result in producing graduates who are adequately informed, technically equipped and morally prepared to become parents, good citizens and selfless leaders. All these point to the fact that tertiary institutions provide tertiary education

Tertiary education is relevant for the training of highly skilled specialists in the fields of science and technology at various types of higher institutions. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) stated that, tertiary education is the education given to an individual after post basic education in institutions such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and those institutions offering correspondence courses at this level. Tertiary institutions worldwide are regarded as the citadel of knowledge, the fountain of intellectualism, the most appropriate ground for the incubation of leaders of tomorrow. According to Ike (2013), tertiary institution is a knowledge and value provider, it stands or fails in its ability or inability to deliver on the criteria laid by FRN (2013). This, according to Nwankwo (2011), explains why merit has been the watch word in the tertiary education system - a system a student must first be certified worthy in character and learning before being graduated into the labour market.

Managers of any tertiary institution have enormous tasks to perform to ensure effective teaching-learning processes. They are the chief planners, financial managers, personnel managers and general overseers of all the affairs going on in the institutions. Although the roles of managers of tertiary institutions are clearly stated above, there are problems in the management of these institutions as identified by the World Bank (2012). The traces of these problems are noticeable as: financial crisis, deteriorated infrastructure, brain-drain syndrome, graduate unemployment, volatile and militant student

unionism, secret cults, politicization of education, incessant strike actions and unprecedented school population explosion.

Tertiary institution managers remain subjected to blames by the public, that the tasks they perform are not adequately channeled towards providing education necessary for the students of today and the future. In the face of all these difficulties, managers of higher institutions of learning need effective management strategies to combat these challenges. Two of such management strategies include environmental analysis and strategic control.

Environmental analysis refers to a process of collecting, scrutinizing and providing information for strategic purposes (Nwankwo, 2011). It helps in analyzing the internal and external factors influencing an organization. Results of the analysis of the external and internal environments lead to the development of a number of different strategies from which the best strategy can be chosen and implemented (Bryson, 2014). Thus, after executing the environmental analysis process, management should evaluate it on a continuous basis and strive to improve it. Certo and Peter (2013) encapsulated environmental analysis as examining the internal and external environment to identify opportunities and threats. The external environment of an institution is often considered turbulent (Shahin, 2011). The underlying question is whether the institutions of higher education actually carry out their functions and more specifically, whether they scan their environment in order to adapt themselves to future trends and events. Ref-Inqawa(2014) noted that scanning the institutions environment is the act of managers searching for relevant information that would help an institution to identify trends, events and patterns in its external environment and to use that information to best prepare the institution for the future through a range of strategies. For environmental analysis to work effectively, strategic control is very important.

As observed by Bryson (2014), an organization must be properly managed to compete effectively for resources. In order to do this, it requires giving competitive advantage through strategic control of all the strategic policies in the tertiary institutions. According to Seymour (2014), strategic control in the management of academic institutions means monitoring and evaluation. The essence of monitoring and evaluation in the context of strategic control is to evaluate the process and how the institution has implemented its programmes and policies well as the outcomes of such programmes and policies. Pollanen (2015) was of the view that strategic control is about taking stock of the actual implementation of institution's programmes and policies and their effectiveness. In the context of strategic control, managers in academic institutions are expected to monitor both the actual implementation of the programmes and policies and their performance

outcomes of such implemented programmes and policies. If they do not measure up to the expectation or strategic goals, then the programmes and policies or their implementation process may have to be modified or totally changed (Nwangwu, 2013). As noted by Kenny (2014), the discrepancies identified will inform the organization what action to take next if need be. In the light of the above, it is pertinent to examine the application of environmental analysis and strategic control in tertiary institutions in Enugu state.

The application of environmental analysis and strategic control as management approaches for the reformation of tertiary institutions in Enugu State is in line with the four year strategic plan (2011-2015) of the federal government on the development and management of tertiary education sector embedded in the current National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). Again, the researchers are also worried about the problems in tertiary institutions in the state.

In addition to the above, Chukwuma (2015) and Nwankwo (2011) stated that the problems facing tertiary institutions in Enugu State over the years have been identified as unprecedented school population explosion, inadequate financial allocation, examination malpractices, dehumanization working condition, uneven and very poor reward system, incessant strike, politicization of education, indiscipline among staff and students. These are some of the management issues which can be addressed by managers of the tertiary institutions by applying environmental analysis and strategic control.

In the light of the above, the extent to which environmental analysis and strategic control are applied by managers of the tertiary institutions in Enugu state to solve these problems is not known. Therefore, the problem of this study is to determine extent managers of tertiary institutions in Enugu state apply environmental analysis and strategic control in order to successfully address management issues in tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

Two research questions and two null hypothesis guided the study. They include:

1. To what extent is environmental analysis applied in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State?
  2. To what extent is strategic control applied in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State?
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1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of core management staff and Deans of Faculties in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on the application of environmental analysis in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of core management staff and Deans of Faculties in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on the application of strategic control in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State.

The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Method**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It was carried out in Enugu State. The population of this study consisted of 254 core management staff and Deans in all the thirteen tertiary institutions (7 Universities, 3 polytechnics and 3 colleges of education) in Enugu State. There was no sampling as the entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire titled "Environmental Analysis and Strategic Control Application Questionnaire" (EASCAQ). It has two sections: one sought information on demographic data of the managers while the other contained items of the questionnaire arranged in two clusters. The first cluster was environmental analysis while the second cluster covered strategic control. These were extracted from the literature and anchored on the following: Very High Extent (5), High Extent (4), Moderate Extent (3), Low Extent (2) Very Low Extent (1). The content and face validity of the instrument were determined using three experts: one in Measurement and Evaluation and two are in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the researchers tested the instrument on the representative sample of 20 managers from tertiary institutions in Ebonyi state using split-half method. Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficients obtained for the two clusters were 0.74 and 0.84 respectively. The researchers administered 254 copies of the instrument with the aid of three research assistants who were briefed on the purpose of the research. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Similarly, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses.

## Results

**Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings of the Extent to which Environmental Analysis is applied in the Management of Tertiary Institutions**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Rmk
1.	Keeping in line with my institution's environment	3.18	.98	ME
2.	Making decisions based on a systematic analysis of my institution's environment	3.00	.95	ME
3.	Strategy is continually adjusted as changes occur in the external environment	2.73	.90	ME
4.	Discussing to adopt a strategy that determines opportunity and risk of the institution's environment	2.65	.93	ME
5.	Scanning the internal environment to identify problems and their solutions	2.58	1.01	ME
6.	Resisting any strategic change that does not suit well with the culture of the institution's environment	2.59	.97	ME
7.	Accommodating the conflicting interests of powerful groups and individuals in both the internal and external environment	2.62	.88	ME
8.	Develop strategy by experimenting and trying new approaches as it concerns environment	2.65	1.01	ME
9.	Using environmental analysis to develop important programmes	2.54	.94	ME
10.	Determining the strength and weakness that may either support or hinder the organization	2.66	.92	ME
<b>Mean of means</b>		<b>2.72</b>	<b>.94</b>	<b>ME</b>

The results in Table 1 showed the extent environmental analysis is applied in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu state. The mean of mean score 2.72 showed that core management staff and Deans in the area of study applied environmental analysis in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State to a moderate extent. The analysis shows that environmental analysis approach was not applied the way it suppose to be applied because of the core management staff limited knowledge of the

approach. However, for items 5 and 8, the highest variations (1.01 and 1.01) amongst responses were observed. This suggest that respondents were quite divided as to whether scanning the internal environment to identify problems and their solution and develop strategy by experimenting and trying new approaches as it concerns environment were enough as strategies in the environmental analysis approach.

**Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Extent Strategic Control is Applied in the Management of Tertiary Institutions**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Rmk
11.	Examines the institution's strengths and weakness	2.55	.92	ME
12.	Examines the reasons for past failures and success	2.44	.97	LE
13.	Assesses staff member's areas of professional expertise	2.46	1.01	LE
14.	Evaluates the institutions' present organizational structure	2.44	.96	LE
15.	Reviews the institutions' current performance	2.43	.97	LE
16.	Provides definite and precise strategic control objectives	2.40	.96	LE
17.	Provides precise procedures for achieving strategic control objectives	2.42	.93	LE
18.	Develops strategic control through a process of ongoing adjustment	2.53	.93	ME
19.	Evaluates strategic control alternatives based on more relevant information	2.70	.92	ME
<b>Mean of means</b>		<b>2.49</b>	<b>.95</b>	<b>LE</b>

Results in Table 2 indicated the extent strategic control is applied in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu state. The mean of means score of 2.49 showed that core management staff in the area of study apply strategic control to a low extent in the management of tertiary institutions. The highest variation (1.01 and .97) amongst responses was observed in items 13, 12 and 15 respectively. This indicated that respondents varied in their responses on extent of application of strategic control in the management of tertiary institution.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance on Senior Management Staff Ratings of the Application of Environmental Analysis by Institutions**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.91	2	.95	4.42	.01
Within Groups	52.09	241	.21		
Total	54.00	243			

As shown on Table 3, the F-ratio (df: 2/241) was 4.42 and the P-value (.01) was less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. It was therefore decided that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of core management staff of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on the application of environmental analysis in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu state. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. A Post-Hoc analysis of the data is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Scheffe Post-Hoc Test on Core Management Staff Ratings of the Application of Environmental Analysis by Institutions**

(I) Institutions	(J) Institutions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
University	Poly	.20785*	.02
	College	.12905	.22
Poly	University	-.20785*	.02
	College	-.07880	.66
College	University	-.12905	.22
	Poly	.07880	.66

As indicated by the Post-Hoc test (Scheffe test), there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of core management staff of Universities and those in the Polytechnics on the application of environmental analysis in the management of their institutions. But no significant difference was found between the mean ratings of core management staff of Universities and those in the Colleges of education. There was also no significant difference among core management staff of Colleges of Education and those in the Polytechnics.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance on Core Management Staff Ratings of the Application of Strategic Control by Institution**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.120	2	.560	1.63	.19
Within Groups	82.370	241	.342		
Total	83.491	243			

As shown in table 5, the F-ratio (df: 2/241) was 1.63 and the P-value (.19) was greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. It was therefore decided that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of core management staff of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on the implementation of strategic control in the management of tertiary institutions. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### Discussion

Results of the study revealed that the core management staff in the area of the study showed that tertiary institutions senior management has applied environmental analysis to a moderate extent as indicated by the overall mean score. The item by item analysis further indicates that all the listed strategies of environmental analysis were being applied to a moderate extent because they lacked in- depth knowledge of the approach and its application. The findings are similar to the findings of Messah and Mucai (2011) who found that the analysis of the external environment is used to identify opportunities and threats facing the organization while the internal analysis of the organization identifies its strengths and weakness. The core management staff in tertiary institutions is expected to analyze the internal and external factors influencing their institutions and evaluate it on a continuous basis and strive to improve it. Liu (2008) also found that a change in environmental elements such as technology, legislation or competition may have an impact on an institutions capability and resources. The one way analysis of variance revealed that there was significant difference among the mean ratings of management staff in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on the extent of application of environmental analysis in the management of their institutions in Enugu State. It followed therefore that the null hypothesis was rejected. The post hoc test of comparison revealed that the significant difference was between the senior management staff in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in the application of environmental analysis in the management of their institutions.

Results of the study revealed that core management staff in the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education applied strategic control in the management of their tertiary institutions in Enugu State to a low extent which is seen at the grand mean. This showed that there was ineffectiveness on the part of the institutions managers monitoring and evaluation of the strategy implementation. Perhaps, the ineffectiveness could arise from the findings of Pollanen (2015) that some obstacles can hamper the acceptance of performance measures in the public sector. In support of the findings of the current work, Collier (2004) found that monitoring and evaluation enables the organization to track progress in the implementation of the strategic management. Findings from the test of the hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the core management staff of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on the extent of the application of strategic control in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. David (2013) found that strategic control in the context of monitoring and evaluation must be based on benchmark. In the context of this study, the primary benchmark is the ideal organizational picture developed at the beginning of the process.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there was moderate extent of application of environmental analysis and low extent of the application of strategic control in the management of tertiary institutions in Enugu State. While, there was a significant difference in the application of environmental analysis, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities do not differ significantly in their application of strategic control in their institutions.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Ministry of Education should organize regular workshops, short courses and seminars for managers on environmental analysis and strategic control to enable them grasp the fundamentals and have confidence in managing strategically.
2. The National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should ensure that environmental analysis and

strategic control are included in their criteria for accrediting tertiary institutions.

3. Managers should ensure that every member of staff is involved or adequately informed of environmental analysis and strategic control in the management process to be able to contribute effectively to their application.
4. It is recommended that managers make the necessary preparation before they apply environmental analysis and strategic control by ensuring that all pre-requisites for their successful application are in place, especially resource availability and skilled personnel.

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