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Islamic Azad University function Analysis with Using the SWOT Model in order to provide Strategic Guidelines (Case Study: Faculty of Humanities)

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Abstract

Higher education represents an investment in human resources that can provide the promotion of the organization 'staff knowledge, skills and attitudes requirements including technical, professional and managerial provide. If managers want to take appropriate purposes, it is necessary to carry out strategic planning in higher education in order to resolve problems and issues. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the existing situation of the humanities through the analysis of internal and external environment of the education year in 1390. In this study were used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Members of society in this study, including professionals, students and faculty of Humanities University 35 were considered as samples. The tools used in this study are two types of questionnaire. In order to analysis the information, it was used the descriptive statistics and SWOT analysis.

Results showed that Faculty of Humanities in internal and external analysis has more strengths opportunities than weaknesses and threats. And the most important strengths can refer to, and young masters are young, motivated and skilled professors in their field and in the weakness the poor, the fading of the group working of faculty and staff members and in the opportunities can refer to accept the experienced by teachers and related academic fields and tendency and the most important threats are the lack of knowing of community college courses and ambiguous status of graduates.

Results of this internal and external analysis showed that, Faculty of Humanities are a good place to grow and improve. Of course it has many problems in the fields of cultural, research and economic that with predicting the future and strategic planning can be overcomes the weaknesses and threats.

Key words: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT), Strategic planning

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1. Introduction

Higher education represents an investment in human resources that can promote the higher education introduces a kind of investment in human resources enhance the technical and managerial that it can the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by organization (Lerner, 1999). Thus, community development has undeniable dependence on the level of education and Qualitative and quantitative expansion of education system, especially higher education system. Hence, whatever the forms of higher education in public and private can be broader and deeper in the public and private levels of the society, the scope of its impact on society will be significant more (Akhavan, 2005). Among the various courses of higher education, higher supplementary education has an important role and dignity, because the task of training human resources specialist under goes in charge in the field of education, research and service. In recent years, the quantities grow of complementary education in Iran, had increase everyday and now the quality dimension of it attracts the policy makers and Decision-makers higher education system (Policastro, 2000). so, pay attention to quality of higher education is necessary in order to don't waste human capital, financial and material resources needed And coordinate the development of educational systems and its performance is essential(pearce and Robinson, 1367).

Institutions of higher education during the past decade were evidence of the numerous changes such as loss of financial support, rapid technological advances, demographic changes and training programs in internal and external environments have been (Mehrgan and Dehghani, 1388). The reasons for these changes and reshaping the role of universities in the world today, Globalization, the Internet, learning technology, particularly learning through information networks, improved information and knowledge, and access to government funds are the flexibility and lifelong learning. The result of this change forces caused to create some problems, including: educational quality reduction, increasing costs, the changing role of teacher - student at the University (Akhavan, 2005). This task is relating to environmental the analysts for identifying opportunities and threats to examine the effects of environmental variables on all parts and organs of the organization's inputs and output. As a result, these issues are necessary to conduct strategic planning in higher education in order to resolve problems (Mehrgan,1388). Many of strategic management experts believe that Strategic positioning is the most important thing for strategic planning and organizational strategic development(Mason,2003).

2. Strategic Planning in Higher Education Institutions

The main features of current world is included Rapid changes, information flow and every day's competition by removing trade borders and barriers, higher education institutions in the world, change into Institutions more competitive with the market drivers and business requirements and business conduct are becoming have taken away from the identity of their state (David,2000). Therefore, the desire to survive in this competitive environment because they are turning to management and strategic planning for increased compatibility with today's changing environment and ability to meet customer satisfaction(Nili,Nasr and Akbari,2005).

Norris (1998) knows the strategic planning as a process that it designs, the purpose of future institution and in this process, are reflected internal and external pressures that forced the company to change. The purpose of strategic planning in educational institutions is, as follows:

- Accountable institutions.
- Development goals of educational institutions.
- Ensure the priorities of educational institutions.
- Provide a framework for decision making.
- Provide a basis for performance measurement.
- Investment for the future of educational institutions (Naveh Ebrahim and Karimi 2006).

Strategic planning in an organization or institution during this stage is:

- Assessment of current environment.
- Defining the mission.
- The organization or institution to decide what the next few years are going to do it (the vision).
- Cognitive abilities, weaknesses, opportunities, threats to the organization.
- Planning to move from the current situation as well (Iranmanesh, 2005).

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis was addressed for the first time in 1950 by two Harvard Business School graduate named George Albert Smith and Roland was Krystnsn. At that time, the analysis was recognized for growing success as a business management tool. But perhaps the greatest success achieved when the analysis was done by Jack Welch in General Electric in 1980, in order to use it for studying the GE strategies and increasing the productivity of your organization [3]. SWOT is a term for strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. The first step in the process of strategic planning, is the mission, goals and mission of the organization, and then through a SWOT analysis that is one of the tools, for editing the strategy it designs for strategy of organization that is tailored to its environment. From using this analysis it is possible that: first to analyze the internal and external environments and Second, strategic decisions be taken for harmonizing the organization's strengths with the opportunities of environment (Amani, 2009).

A) External Factors

These factors are outside the organization and they impact on the organization's activities. But it is not in authority of organization and the organization does not have any effect on them. The purpose of reviewing the external environment is providing finite list of opportunities that can have a profit or threats that should be avoided. External are divided two factors:

- *Opportunities*

Opportunities are a major position in the organization. That is what the Institute will assist in achieving its goals and as the engine is accelerating the move to institute several times (Feize, 1388).

- *Threats*

Undesirable situation is a major threat to the environment agency and as an obstacle to the Institute and it is back from achieving its goals. About the opportunities and threats can be said for what is considered as a threat to the institution May be an opportunity for another institution. So opportunities or threats are a relative factor. An Institution is where threat can be limiting and it can change in to bring them to the advantage of the opportunity. Understanding of environmental opportunities and threats facing the organization to help manager's corporate strategy with insight and intelligence to make better and more effectively determine the direction of the organization.

B) Internal Factors

These internal factors are part of the company and it is in the authority of company. So while the impact of their activities, the organization also has an impact on them. The internal environment of the organization to obtain a list of

strengths that should profit from their exploitation. Or weaknesses that prevent or reduce loss of profit, it should be avoid. As well as external factors, internal factors are the two categories that include:

- *Strengths*

The strength is skill source or, is another advantage to competitors and market requirement of the institution that they work in it. Strength is a distinctive competence that is the comparative advantage in the market(Kalafaties,2000).

- *Weaknesses*

Weakness is a lack or constraints of skills and abilities' resources, and abilities that can be effectively separated from the function. Weakness is an internal function that disturbs the organization's activities it damages in achieving its goals. The agency is required to minimize these factors as possible as in order to achieve its goals. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses help to the organization to use of the strengths and minimize weaknesses and goals are more effective and prevent waste of resources (Kalin, 2005).

3.2 *Characteristics of the SWOT Model*

One of the important tools of SWOT is a strategic management model, to be used the external and internal analysis process and the appropriate environmental conditions and internal strategies. The common application of this model is essentially related to the strategic planning of production and services, this model provides a possibility to analyze different levels of the cross organization. These features include:

- Exhaustively: this model considered external and internal factors and compare them with strategies to help people with it, has a comprehensive, the other strategic management tools are lacking.
- Flexibility: This model is used in the manufacturing companies, service companies, nonprofit organizations and government, and a macro analysis of issues and topics the analysis.
- SWOT as a basic model that, help in selecting the Strategy. The main purpose of the strategy under this model, using a strong position to overcome a bad location.

3.3 *Rules of Governing the SWOT Matrix Analysis*

SWOT analysis as it was said, is the factors (internal and external) to identify and exploit the best of them. It can be said that the SO, ST, WO & WT strategies (Kalafaties, 2000). The summary of these strategies can be stated as fallow:

- How to take advantage of the strengths to do the maximum advantage of opportunities (SO).
- How can eliminate or reduced the strengths of the threats (ST).
- How can we take advantage of opportunities to turn weaknesses into strengths or decrease weaknesses of the intensity? (WO)
- How to reduce the impact of weaknesses and threats in order to reduce or eliminate the impact. (WT)

On this basis, within the matrix, SWOT analysis can be summarized in Table 1.

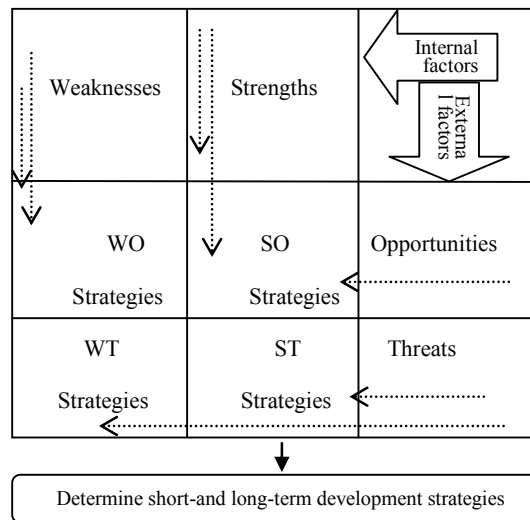


Figure of SWOT matrix analytical frameworks (David, 2000. P92).

Unlike the external environment, internal environment are largely in control of management [5]. If properly done the control of check the internal environment of educational institutions, need to change in some areas of the potential and possibilities for new services and programs.

Internal environment of an institution that should be analyzed include:

1. Faculty and staff, 2. Classrooms, laboratories (learning environment), 3. Current students, 4. Available funds, 5. multiple Association 6. Research program.

External environment of an institution as follows:

Perceptions of employers of graduates, parents and families' Students, Partnership Schools, the high schools, demographic characteristics, financing institutions [12].

4. Objectives of Research

Based on the SWOT model, research goals are:

- To get to know concepts and strategy of strategic management.
- To identify the responsibility, mission, and objectives of the university and turn qualitative objectives into measurable quantitative objectives.
- To identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on internal and external factors in Islamic Azad University, Branch Nowshahr.

5. The research questions are:

- What are the Strengths and weaknesses of the Islamic Azad University, Nowshahr?
- What are the opportunities and threats facing the Islamic Azad University, Nowshahr?
- What are the main strategies in order to create balance between your inner and outer environment in Islamic Azad University, Nowshahr?

6. Necessity of conducting a study:

To fulfill the above responsibility and attain the objectives with scientific and technological approach, qualitatively and quantitatively raise the enrollment and numbers of professors, educational board members, papers and magazines, textbooks, research projects and technological site, Islamic Azad University at Nowshahr branch needs to design a strategic plan and identify its purposes in all fields. Strategic plan is a long – term plan with the focus on prediction of environment and inside and outside implementations. Designing a strategic plan for this branch of the university needs attempts to optimize and attain ideal goals in the activities with various aspects. The university branch has a tendency toward meeting the vacancies, mismanagement, and futurism for next years. So to escape the weak points and expand its share in optimization, innovation and join competitions needs optimized management and strategic plans as an operational plan and road map which may specifically keep the institute alive and active, because in designing a major strategy, steps should be taken which to take them, the decision – makers and authorities have to encounter questions on university challenges. In the future, what concerns is the university to plan on? Moreover, what sociological responsibility does the university have and how should the university encounter its claimers?

7. Methods

Considering the present study aimed to assess the present status of the Islamic Azad University of Nowshahr, The application is used describes and analyzes the current state of Islamic Azad University, Nowshahr, in order to promote the development and improvement of university activities and in the process of analyzing internal and external environment in order to better understand, the way you approach both quantitative and qualitative interviews as a research method. This study was conducted in a university and the number of individuals was limited, so sampling was not performed and all people were considered as sample, and information collected of various groups, including experts, Faculty and Staff, a limited number of graduate students of the humanities, that all of them are 35. In the first questionnaire, participants were asked to list the strengths, Areas of improvement, opportunities and threats of college it is facing. After the data obtained were classified priority and Participants were asked to survey the options in terms of impact on the environment has to score. Finally, the second questionnaire for the assessment of internal and external factors of college was set as following manner:

- After studying the internal factors, the most important factors were listed.
- Weight was given to these factors, (not significant from zero to one is important). To each of these factors was given a score of 1 to 4. Score of 1 indicates a fundamental weakness. Score 2, weakness, low score of 3, indicating strength. And grade 4, indicating a very high strength factor was discussed.
- Determine the final score for each factor, the coefficient of each factor score was multiplied;
- Total score of each factor was calculated and finally the final score of the environmental factors were identified [6].

Table 1. Weighting strengths and weaknesses

Row	Internal Factors	Coefficient	Grade	Final grade
	Strengths			
1	Appropriate physical environment-	0/1	2	0/2
2	Attitude of the management system	0/05	2	0/1
3	Faculty members access to the Internet	0/05	2	0/1

4	A reference library and reading room	0/05	2	0/05
5	the value to student Association	0/05	1	0/05
6	Managers to be aware of laws -	0/1	1	0/2
7	Teachers are young, motivated and skilled in their field.	0/15	2	0/45
Weaknesses				
1	Special Assistant to the shortage of faculty with areas of high	0/05	3	0/05
2	Lack of labor	0/05	1	0/1
3	Fading of the working group among faculty members and staff.	0/15	2	0/45
4	Relatively high absorption in units of unskilled labor.	0/1	3	0/3
5	Chart of the old and the old traditional staffing.	0/1	3	0/2
	Total	1	2	2/25

According to Table (1) the internal environment analysis matrix, showed that Azad University of Nowshahr in its internal environment in which different aspects of education, research, cultural and administrative - Financial has more strengths than weaknesses in all aspects have been considered. Among the strengths of it, they can pointed to the appropriate physical environment, the attitude of the management system, faculty members access to the Internet, Managers being aware of the law, teachers are young, motivated and skilled in their field and weaknesses can be refer to lack of faculty with desirable course of special assistant to the top, fading out in the working group of faculty members and staff, Relatively high absorption in units of unskilled labor, the old and traditional chart of human resources.

Table 2. Weighting the opportunities and threats

Row	Internal Factors	Coefficient	Grade	Final grade
Opportunities				
1	- Acceptance Talented and youth students	0/2	3	0/6
2	- Acceptance experienced by teachers and related educational	0/2	3	0/6
3	-The ministry stressed the establishment of new undergraduate majors and set higher.	0/05	1	0/05
4	- Science and its application to management at the community level.	0/1	2	0/2
5	- Professional orientation in the entire country and require strong managerial techniques and information.	0/05	1	0/05
6	-Positive attitude students and community towards university	0/05	1	0/05
Threats				
1	-Lack of necessary facilities at universities, liberal arts education for teachers	0/1	1	0/05
2	-Lack of understanding of community college students and graduates ambiguous position	0/05	2	0/1
3	- The economic fluctuations that affected the university's budget.	0/05	1	0/1
4	- Drastic changes in the level of management and organizations.	0/1	2	0/05
5	-The faculty and staff overtime.	0/05	2	0/2
	Total	1		2/1

In regard to results of Table 2, Matrix analysis of external environment showed that Islamic Azad University, Nowshahr, in its external environment faces to opportunities and threats in various dimensions, including Social, cultural, technological experience, which can be expressed, the final score is lower than the average. The results of the table, can be expressed more strengths than weaknesses in the college. From the most important opportunities can refer to young and talented students, and experienced teacher acceptance and trends related to education, the need to management science and its application in society and threats to this college, because of the lack of necessary facilities for the study of humanities professors at universities, Lack of understanding of community college students, graduates ambiguous position, drastic changes in the level of management and organizations.

8. Conclusion

The strategy determines the ability of the organization and ways of achieving of the best exist state. in fact Strategies, will determine what, why and how their essential actions. And that are completely surrounded the intellectual climate, work and decision making processes. SWOT analysis is an important component of the strategy formation process. Analysis of external opportunities and threats are used primarily to assess this, we examine whether the organization can use the opportunities and minimize threats And weaknesses of this analysis is to examine the inner workings of institutions of higher importance. The university branch Nowshahr has a tendency to move from the present condition to an optimized condition. To attain the desirable development, the university have to provide academic courses needed by the province, hire appropriate educational board members, expand quantitative and qualitative education and research, optimized educational spaces, provide new courses, expand scientific and international relations, construct technological and research site, apply modern science in educational and research activities by means of its midterm policies and plans.

9. Suggestions and Decision step:

Organizations, whether commercial, educational, industrial and service are formed in order to meet the needs of environmental and those organizations are successful that against rapid changes, it is able to meet the needs of the environment. And it is not possible unless it uses and applies the strategic management techniques. According to SWOT matrix and the basis of the attained situation, some strategies are commented:

- To expand cooperation with the town and district administrations via an efficient management to establish necessary infrastructures (buildings, academic apace, workshop and laboratory).
- To win the competition with non-profitable and Payam Noor establishments on new academic courses in this university branch.
- To train and hire professors on the basis of the state 20-year perspectives and objectives.
- To satisfy clients willing to study in this branch rather than the neighboring branches via creating a balance between the administrative structure and strategic objectives.
- Systematic programming for active participation in national and international meetings by financial and intellectual support from the university through research projects conducted by the professors.
- To contract on industrial projects on the basis of its carrier and improve research abilities of the research teams.
- To expand co operations with outer environments

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