RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEVERAGING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS TO ADVANCE EXCELLENCE IN UNIVERSITIES

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Manuscript Info	Abstract
	Organizations use the strategic planning process to manage Organizations use the strategic planning process to manage purposefully the daily operations and anticipate challenges that may affect the operations of the enterprise to build a stronger future. In this era of COVID-19, planning has become vital and a way of life for organizations, including universities, currently faced with a turbulent economic, political, cultural, and pandemic stresses of the 21st century. To manage change, including the current stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic, university managers must confront tough questions regarding university's technical, structural, political, and cultural foundations. The present study examines the divergent views, beliefs, and assumptions about the benefits of strategic planning process undertaken to improve excellence. Questions in the data-gathering instrument were directed to probe the perceptions of faculty and staff of a university in Tanzania.

Introduction:-

Individuals and organizations have operated for hundreds of years by planning, strategic management, and forecasting intuitively (Armstrong, 1983). It was not until the 1950s that formal approaches were introduced and became popular. Since then, such planning approaches have been used by business, government, and nonprofit organizations including universities. Institutions of academic higher education have strived to leverage a strategic planning process to enhance excellence in African universities as a long-term standing pursuit and a worthy cause that currently merits attention.

Over the years, however, university leaders and scholars have struggled to find innovative ways to improve academic performance, maximize capacity of institutional structures, increase profits, and cut costs through a variety of means such as quality assurance, strategic planning and monitoring performance indicators (Farrant & Afonso, 1997). The assumption is that engaging formal approaches can improve effectiveness of universities if the plan can forecast its environment, anticipate problems, and develop robust plans to respond to those problems (Steiner, 1979).

As the need for quality education becomes increasingly sought after, so has there been increased pressureto deal with numerous problems posed by the great demand for university education in a climate of drastically reduced government funding(Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, 2010).Managing change strategically is persistently becoming a way of life for organizations,including universities, currently faced with a turbulent economic, political, cultural, and pandemic stresses of the 21st century(Tichy, 1982).

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To manage change, including the current stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic, (e.g., social distancing and work from home), university leadership and managers have to confront tough questions regarding university's technical, structural, political, and cultural foundations. Inescapably, some of the technical questions focus on policy instruments, governance structures and management, and institutional linkages. Questions include: What kind of university do we want? How should we be organized to build excellence and accomplish our long-term plans? What kinds of personnel do we need, and how will they be recruited, nurtured, and rewarded ? The political questionsaddress challenges pertaining to relevance and diversification, access and equity, and quality improvement. For example, who gets to influence the mission and vision of the university?

The cultural and sustainability questions include some of the sustainability and climate mechanisms which include financial, environmental, and human resource maintenance. For example, what values and beliefs are necessary to support the university's strategy and strengthen financial and institutional implementation capacities? What subcultures are desirable, and should there be an overarching corporate culture at the university? How should the human resources system shape and mold the university culture? These technical questions are the subject matter of a strategic planning process.

Reflections on the process of strategic planning are appropriate and timely because the author's university recently conducted a formal strategic planning process before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the university system. Participation in this process raised many questions that require answers. Constantly, I was confronted with the question, why pursue this process now and what are the benefits. The decision to conduct a strategic plan might be difficult for someone to make or understand, given that a proper strategy is critical in "order to prevent tactical skill from dissipating into a random thrashing about" (Kissinger, 1994, p. 98).

Regardless however, I thought having a plan that is well-reasoned strategically does not require the wasting of a great deal of a university's most valuable resource – the time of its faculty and staff. We know that perfectionists often act as if the perfect strategic plan is attainable and that there are no costs involved with its creation. But a prudent manager must keep in mind that there are opportunity costs involved in going through an elongated strategic planning process(Linn,2008). Therefore, raising the question of tangible benefits of managing a strategic change was clearly a reason to make any administrator in my position to pause for thought. And for the faint hearted, this task could be a daunting one. For me, it required a bold move.

Experts who study higher education (e.g., Kotler & Murphy, 1981) suggested that strategic planning is necessary and the type of planning that appears to be most appropriate for the future is "strategic" market planning. In the strictest sense, strategic planning is the process of developing and maintaining a "planned fit" between the organization and its changing marketing opportunities. However, in business, strategic market planning is rated as the most revolutionary commercial sector development in the last ten years(Aaker, 2008). The obvious quest in this whole process is whether a university can develop and communicate a clear, concise and measurable strategic plan. The expectation for higher education, therefore, is the promise that a robust strategic plan can be a powerful tool for use in higher education and a means to build a stronger future.

In this study, the strategic planning process is examined to determine four key issues. First, what obstacles were likely to be encountered with which kind of shortcomings. There is need to examine (1) internal ownership—namely the strength of consultation and discussion during the planning process. Was it as extensive as it needed to be? (2) what priorities or choices were not made in academic or non-academic areas. (3) did the plan incorporate every department's aspirations. (4) were financial and budgetary projections included in the general thinking based on realistic assumptions, or are they lacking. The overall goal was to produce a bold plan intended to be fair and honest but ruthless in assessment of the present situation and ultimately giving a sense of direction internally and laying out ways to secure resources from government, donors and the private sector.

However, daunting questions endure since the practice is relatively new to African universities, and overall, perceived as less relevant since many of the models of planning are borrowed from the Global North (Farrant & Afonso, 1997). For example, questions like: What happens during the strategic planning process? What are its benefits? How does a university pursue planning to achieve "excellence?" How is strategic planning related to structural overhaul? These questions form the basis for the present study.

Concurrently, when we consider aspects of the operational side of a strategic plan, more curious questions come up. For example, (a) which strategies are effective and how do we find them? (b) how does strategic planning interface with day-to-day planning and the visionary thinking of the university leadership? (c) what is the relationship between strategic planning and quality university education? (d) How does the university leadership position itself to implement the plan? And (e) Is buying in, and commitment to the "strategy" adopted by the plan, a necessary condition for anticipated results? These questions form the central thesis of this study and expose the everyday challenges of creating a long-term plan for a new and fledgling university.

To accomplish these aspirations, this paper examines, first the background and context of this study, second provides theoretical considerations that inform and guide the study, third, proposes a survey methodology of data collection and data analysis and results. The paper concludes with a short discussion of the results and conclusion.

Background and Context:
Although African universities have considerable experience of producing plans, within a wide range of practice, most of them, specifically private universities, have not adopted strategic planning as formal planning procedures to ensure smooth running of the institution, budgeting, expansion, and as policy for excellence in university education(Farrant & Afonso, 1997).Because the purpose of strategic planning is to improve quality by identifying the most appropriate targets for performance and meeting university goals, effective strategic planning has the potential to make huge contributions to excellence in higher education, businesses and other organizations (McFarlan, 1971).

The present study presents a case study of a private university that engaged a strategic planning process to leverage resources and tap the knowledge of experts, stakeholders, faculty and staff, to furnish a new way of operation and thinking about good education and academic excellence, consisting of a plan to advance a world-class university as well as a contributor to the scientific and technological progress for our common future. The outcome of the process was the conception of "Vision 2043—The Institutional Transformation Program and the Five-Year Strategic Plan."

The goal of Vision 2043 was to set up the university's strategy for rethinking and forge a long-term transformation plan to meet the demands for the 21st century in producing high quality graduates, spearheading research and consultancy services to benefit society on a local, regional, national and global scale. This thinking coincides with global university expectations that involve independent scholarship and academic freedom while nurturing an academic culture within which innovation and collaboration play an important role in the creation of new knowledge and groundbreaking discoveries. The process of developing a strategic plan at this university goes back to the year 2005, when St. Joseph's Teachers College transitioned to become a constituent college of Tanzania's St. Augustine University, which has grown to the current fully fledged university. And yet, some of the issues being addressed in the current strategy have their genesis in those early plans (e.g., managing enrolments).

This paper takes up the case of Tanzania's higher education to find answers to questions about the planning process, engagement of faculty and staff and the vision of running an excellent university that aims at being a national leader. Tanzania has experienced a phenomenal expansion of universities—from one university college in 1961, to 52 universities and counting, in 2013 (TCU, 2012). Specifically, a steady expansion is visible since 1995, when Parliament enacted the Tanzania Universities Act, 2005.The educational system in Tanzania, as in most African countries, is complex, with hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers, including 11 public universities, over 20 private universities, 17 university colleges, and hundreds of thousands of students throughout the country. The educational system also has an intricate, and far-reaching links to the development of human beings, society, and the nation(Istoroyekti, 2016).

The current vision of African university was envisaged with an introductory period of five years segment built within the 20-year period to evaluate the quirks in the plan before committing in the long-term. The plan under review of the university's fiscal calendar follows the university academic calendar which starts earnestly in September when the University system begins its first semester (e.g., the 2016/2017 to 2020/2021 runs from September of that academic year, 2020/2021).In its conception, this plan is on a rolling cycle and therefore 2020/2021 will mark its 5th year. The plan becomes official when the Administrative Council and University Senate formally ratify the plan.

Notably, the Vision 2043 Five-Year Plan assigned a critical participatory role to engage all stakeholders in the educational enterprise—from administrators to parents, students to consumers of school products/outputs, and from benefactors to beneficiaries of outcomes of a good education. The university administrative organs, administration, and human resources had to come together to streamline the new energy, thinking and momentum generated from Vision 2043 to elevate this university to new levels of academic excellence. Most importantly, the Vision incited the need for top management and all its constituents—university-level directorates, faculty members, deans, heads of units, students and auxiliary staff—to come together and commit to eventually buy-in into the implementation of Vision 2043.

The background and context of this research study is based on a cycle of strategic plans that the university conducted since 2000. To-date, this university has developed five-year strategic plans: the first, in 2000-2005; second, 2006-2010; third, 2011-2015 and fourth 2016-2020. The current plan—the 2021-2043 is university's projection that aims to marshal ideas, plans and resources for the systematic development of the university to become a word class university – a leading center of excellence to train the best quality graduate teachers, scientists, agricultural experts, entrepreneurs, business men/women, and lawyers in Tanzania and the region. In fact, the current planning reflects the aspirations of the Tanzania Government to see Tanzania grow rapidly to a middle income level state with an economy that is driven by knowledge and technology as specified under the goals of the Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), commonly known by its Kiswahili acronym MKUKUTA, and the National Development Vision 2025 aspirations.

In the present study, the strategic planning process was examined to assess three areas of interest. First, what obstacles were likely to be encountered with which kind of shortcomings. There is need to examine (a) internal ownership—namely the strength of consultation and discussion during the planning process. Was it as extensive as it needed to be? Second, what priorities or choices were not made in academic or non-academic areas. Third, did the plan incorporate every department's aspirations. Fourth, were financial and budgetary projections included in the general thinking based on realistic assumptions or are they lacking. The overall goal was to produce a plan that presents the real situation of the university and positively gives a sense of future direction.

The conception of planningis not entirely new to higher education in Tanzania. Following the provisions of the National Accreditation Board, namely the Tanzania Commission of Universities (TCU), new universities are required to undertake three major levels of planning. The TCU has the mandate, inter-alia, to audit, on a regular basis, the quality assurance mechanisms of universities, and to provide guidance. TCU monitors the criteria for student-admissions to universities in the United Republic. Previously known as the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC), TCU was established as a body corporate under Section 64 of the Education (Amendment) Act No. 10 of 1995 in order to facilitate and guide the development of higher education in the country.Its key role is to coordinate higher education at national level, to ensure quality control and facilitate accreditation. This move was in response to increasing pressure from parents and politicians to broaden the university system to more providers of higher education.

In the short history, as highlighted by the detailed accounts of the Tanzania's Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, private institutions are entirely self-financing, their main sources being fees, donations, endowments, and self-generated income (Cooksey et al., 2003). As of 2005/06, students enrolled in the private universities also became eligible for government loans from the National Higher Education Loans Board, loans which were already available to students in the public universities. Except for the International Medical and Technology University (IMTU), which is run by private individuals, many other universities are affiliated with, or owned by, various religious organizations. The Tanzania Bishops Conference (TEC), for example, operates St. Augustine University (SAUT) and Catholic University of Health and Allied Science, at Mwanza; and Ruaha University College in Iringa region. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania owns several colleges of the Tumaini University. Equally, the Muslim Council of Tanzania supports the Muslim University of Morogoro, which was founded in 2004.

Besides these universities, higher education in Tanzania also includes institutions that do not offer degree programs, although some offer professional training equivalent to university education. Whether they offer degree programs or not, both types of institutions are recognized within the Higher Education Institution Framework but are accredited by different systems. The TCU) accredits universities and the rest of college and training institutions are accredited by the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE).

To implement the three major levels of planning, the Tanzania university systems were mandated to undertake planning that included, a first level, that is, budgeting and scheduling processes. A second level encompassed short-range planning. Major areas required attention to recruiting students, physical plant decisions (construction of offices, classrooms, cafeterias, etc.,), development efforts (fund-raising, which sources to tap first, etc.,), and program modifications (e.g., degree or curricular areas of concentration, etc.,). Overall, to-date, universities are engaged in short-range planning.

A third type of planning utilizes both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the external environment to determine institutional priorities and viable strategies for expansion. Specifically, devising the university's mission and deciding about long-range program additions or eliminations are usually part of the long-range planning process. However, all these endeavors are undertaken with the intent to expand or improve current conditions of any university.

At the national level in Tanzania, the patterns of operation and planning were set up to meet ad hoc situational conditions, prestige, and ensuing opportunities. The university's manner of conducting their affairs did not necessarily mirror the vision or avowed mission of the institution(Kahn, Kahn, & Khan, 1988). In this manner, institutions are likely to lose effectiveness in the long run(Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2005). With this background in mind, therefore, it will be important to note that academic institutions in Tanzania will be compelled to become more introspective and analytical, (not less) to undertake long range planning, something they did not have to do in the initial times. They will be forced to set priorities and develop strategies, overcome institutional inertia and make forced choices, amid scarce financial resources, for example, to identify areas of growing student interests and create new programs to replace those for which demand has fallen, and so on.

Theoretical Considerations:
Strategic frameworks and tools of analysis have been the subject of much academic debate over the last 20 years. The construct 'strategy' (i.e., planning) is constantly under scrutiny and posed as contradictory to planning. Critics suggest that it has not been examined carefully to establish the claimed benefits embedded in the process of strategic planning. The situation is further complicated by the more recent term "strategic thinking." The relationship between strategic planning and strategic thinking is blurry (Mintzberg, 1994a). Usually, strategic planning is often used to refer to a programmatic analytical thought processes and strategic thinking to refer to creative divergent thought processes(Mintzberg, 1994b).

Mintzberg argued that planning cannot produce strategies because it is a pragmatic, formalized and analytical process. Further, planning is what happens after strategies are decided, discovered, or simply emerge. Mintzberg sought to limit the concept of "strategic planning" by exposing some underlying fallacies in the construct. First, the fallacy of "prediction," that is the belief that planners can predict or forecast what will happen in the future in the marketplace. Second the fallacy of detachment, the premise that effective strategies can be produced through formalized processes by planners who are detached from the business operations and the market context. Third, the fallacy of formalization, the questionable idea that formalized procedures (i.e., strategic planning, strategy formulation, and strategy implementation) can in fact produce viable plans, whereas their proper function is to operationalize already existing strategies.

Furthermore, researchers and practitioners have used the term strategy freely. Those who refer to strategy generally believe that they are all working with the same mental model. No controversy surrounds the question of its existence; no debate has arisen regarding the nature of its anchoring concept. Yet virtually everyone writing on strategy agrees that no consensus on its definition exists (Gluck, Kaufman, &Walleck, 1982; Glueck, 1980; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Steiner, 1979).

Overall, the assumption is that strategy assists managers and organizations to "determine the basic long-term goals of an enterprise," and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Child, 1972, p.13). The tension belies the twin purposes of adopting actions and allocating resources. Attempts to overcome this tension in practice is challenging(Dent, 1987). However, it is reasonable that in order for an organization to improve performance, managers and the entire leadership must strive to establish goals and adopt strategic planning as a formal process to engage the short and long term operations of the institution (Boyne, 2010). The idea that clear goals, targets, data analysis, and formal plans can enhance performance has a wide appeal among practitioners and governments.

In the existing literature, scholars agree that the key to success of planning is the strategy to engage in continuous and ongoing restructuring, but this process must involve a wide range of stakeholders consisting of managers, analysts, and engineers(Chaffee, 1985; Child, 1972).Besides, to improve the current conditions of the university, effective planning includes strategy formulation and strategy implementation (Chaffee, 1985). This perspective is characteristic in Chandler's definition of strategy. Chandler (1962) suggested that strategy is (1) "the determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, (2) the adoption of courses of action and (3) the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (p. 13). But in the practical terms of carrying out the goals, this process may encounter two critical questions for consideration: first, what is the current structure of the university, and how is it likely to evolve over time? Second, what is the university's relative position in the national educational enterprise? In sum, leveraging strategic planning processes and resources to improve performance or output at the university level are likely to produce benefits in giving a sense of direction internally (within departments), and generate a momentum for securing resources from government, donors and the private sector to implement the recommendations of the plan and meet university goals (Farrant, &Fielden, 1996).

However, according to Kotler and Murphy (1981), to achieve the goals of planning, a university can include steps to enhance excellence. To do this, first, a university must carry out a careful analysis of its environment, both today's and tomorrow's**probable** one. Second, it must review its major resources as providing a key to what it can accomplish. The analyses of the environment and resources permit the university to formulate new and innovative but appropriate goals that it wishes to pursue for the planning horizon, namely in three or five or ten years. Third, goal formulation is followed by a strategy development process in which the most cost-effective strategy is chosen for reaching the anticipated goals.

A cost-effective strategy will undoubtedly indicate certain changes that the institution must make in the organizational structure as well as the training of staff if it is to implement effectively the desired strategy, some of which may involve a radical change in its organization and operations. Finally, in the fourth goal, attention is turned to improving the organization's systems of information, communication, planning, and control to permit carrying out the "anticipated" strategy effectively. When these components are aligned, they promise improved and outstanding performance—namely, excellence (Farrant & Afonso, 1997). Conversely, if a university does not clearly want a radical reorganization of its operations and if excellence" is not its goal in the plan, then, the strategic planning process should not be undertaken. A forced attempt may result in bringing on disruption to the university.

Beyond reflecting on the various authors' semantic preferences, the multiple definitions reflect three distinct, and in some ways conflicting views on strategy (Chaffee, 1985). Often, common strategic planning systems go through four stages: (1)forecasting, (2) budgeting,(3) externally oriented planning, and (4) strategic management. To reach the pinnacle of strategic management, an organization must have a sound strategic framework, that consists of a widespread strategic thinking capability, the right motivational systems and management values, and a good system for negotiation and review(Gluck, Kaufman, &Walleck, 1982).

Traditionally, strategic decisions that involve multiple competing objectives and significant uncertainties have typically, and sometimes exclusively, been considered primarily as the prerogative of top executives. However, currently in practice, this view is scrutinized by some scholars. The challenge is that the forces of competition impose a need for more effective decision-making at all levels in organizations, including universities, and in this case, perhaps participation is needed at all sectors within the institutions (Tichy, 1982).Because of the current emphasis on downsizing, retrenchment, and flattening organizations, individuals at lower levels in organizations can easily become suspicious of the intentions of managers. Therefore, all stakeholders must be involved as they may be concerned with such tradeoffs as cost versus quality, cost versus timeliness, or market-share versus short-term return on investment(Dodge, & Eadie, 1982).

Few theories appraise the tension that persists between views of broad participation in strategic planning and the concentration of power in the hands of executives. Stonehouse and Pemberton (2002)found in a study that both service and manufacturing sectors demonstrate a divide between the theoretical concepts (i.e., what should be done) and the practical realities of strategic planning (what happens in the organization). While there are strong indications of business planning among the organizations Stonehouse and Pemberton (2002) surveyed, there is less evidence of strategic thinking except among larger businesses. Even in this latter group there are only a few instances where the recognized tools of strategic management appear to play a role in planning, the exception being internal financial analysis, which is widely undertaken(Stonehouse&Pemberton, 2002).

Furthermore, theorists who debunk or inform the strategy theory (Gluck, Kaufman, &Walleck, 1982; Glueck, 1980; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Steiner, 1979) implicitly agree that the study of strategy includes both the actions taken, or the content of strategy, and the processes by which actions are decided and implemented. They agree that intended, emergent, and realized strategies may differ from one another. Moreover, they agree that firms may have both corporate strategy ("What businesses shall we be in?") and business strategy ("How shall we compete in each business?"). In fact, they concur that the making of strategy involves conceptual as well as analytical exercises. Some authors stress the analytical dimension more than others, but most affirm that the heart of strategy making is the conceptual work done by leaders of the organization.

Early seminal works on the formal planning processes(e.g. Ansoff, 1965; Lorange, 1980; 1996;Fincher, 1982), link the value of strategic planning explicitly to the management of change. The challenge for strategic planning is to provide a proper trade-off between the short-term and long-term interests of the firm. Four alternative administrative arrangements have been used to make these trade-offs in multi-business firms. The key distinction between these models is the level within the organization at which these trade-offs are made or negotiated.

Several contextual factors (e.g., institutional arrangements and priorities or corporate culture) influence the choice of a model for the firm.Lorange (1980), argued that 'the purpose ofstrategic planning is thus to accomplish a sufficientprocess of innovation and change in the firm ... if aformal system for strategic planning does not support innovation and change, it is a failure.' Consequently, Steiner(1979) concurs that "Strategic planning is not a simple aggregation of functional plans or an extrapolation of current budgets. It is truly a systems approach to maneuvering an enterprise over time through the uncertain waters of its changing environment to achieve prescribed aims" (p. 16).

Additionally, strategic plans are not all equal (Porter, 2008). It is important to differentiate effective plans that can help universities use information discovered from the time-consuming strategic planning process to reach business goals (Hartog &Herbert, 1986).Furthermore, few models or theoretical basis has been used to guide the task of institutional review. In fact, models may be used conceptually to examine the university's organizational situation and consider alternatives for coping with changes in administration.

The state of academia currently reflects the influence of two drives: the move towards the importance of management and private-sector practices (Leonard&Sensiper, 1998; Deem&Johnson, 2003), and the reduction and shifting of state funding. In recent decades, universities have progressively moved towards a market driven culture by getting involved in auxiliary services unrelated to academics but squarely immersed in business activities, which has informed their management processes (Willmott, 1995). This 'market driven culture' has translated in increasing marketization (Ball, 1990; Kenway, 1995), in the introduction of new managerialism (Leathwood, 2005;Davis, 2017), and in an increasing emphasis on accountability (Brook, 2001; Hanushek& Raymond, 2005; Barry, Born, &Weszkalnys, 2008).

These theoretical reflections clarify our understanding of strategic planning in the context of African universities. The first model to be widely adopted is linear and focuses on planning. The term linear was chosen because it connotes the methodical, directed, sequential action involved in planning. This model is inherent in Chandler's (1962) definition of strategy, as referenced previously. Accordingly, the linear view of strategy consists of integrated decisions, actions, or plans that will set and achieve viable organizational goals. Both goals and the means of achieving them are results of strategic decision. To reach these goals, universities or organizations vary their links with the environment by changing their products or markets or by performing other entrepreneurial actions. Terms associated with the linear model include strategic planning, strategy formulation, and strategy implementation.

The linear model portrays actors, namely, top managers as having considerable capacity to change the organization; that is a "determination of the   basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler, 1962, p. 13). Top managers go through a prototypical rational decision-making process. They identify their goals, generate alternative methods of achieving them, weigh the likelihood that alternative methods will succeed, and then decide which ones to implement. During this process, managers capitalize on those future trends and events that are favorable and avoid or counteract those that are not. Because this model was developed primarily for profit-seeking businesses, two of its important measures of results are profit and productivity.

As highlighted by Prichard (1996: 229), the large budgets of universities resulting from expanded enrolments, fees, student loans and auxiliary investments (e.g., rentals, bookshops, publishing, etc.,) senior university post-holders and managers are constantly under pressure to take responsibility for the processes that influence the generation and management of these funds. Universities are considered as businesses; their heads are business managers, and the students are customers. The emphasis has shifted from 'intrinsic reward' to measurable outcomes in terms of research grants and publications (see, Wilson& Corpus, 2001), teaching quality and in terms of income generation (see Parker and Jary, 1995). The shift to a managerial approach is also evident in the funding mechanisms and the systems of measurement in the language and in the systems of control and accountability (e.g. appraisal systems, performance indicators) (Priola, 2007).

In sum, as we can discern from Chandler's linear model, universities resemble businesses. Even though they are academic institutions, operationally they equally identify their goals, generate alternative methods of achieving them, weigh the likelihood that alternative methods will succeed, and lay out which ones to implement in short or long term in the future. In the course of this process, university managers capitalize on those future trends and events that are favorable and avoid or counteract those that are not. Because this model was developed primarily for profit-seeking businesses, two of its important measures of results, namely, profit and productivity, are constantly being considered and adopted in the planning that occurs at universities.

Methodology:-

In the present study, the researcher surveyed divergent views, beliefs, and assumptions about the benefits of strategic planning process. Questions in the data-gathering instrument were directed to probe these perceptions. The study employed a cross-sectional research survey design in which a questionnaire was the primary instrument used to collect data. Convenience sampling identified university-level directors, faculty members, deans, heads of units, and some auxiliary staff willing to participate in the study. In addition, document analysis, field notes from meetings, and interview data were purposefully collected from selected individuals with at least three years or more of hire at the university. The survey was sent to 80 participants with the return rate of (88.8%, n=71).

The survey questionnaire contained 12 questions. Data collection comprised surveys that included a variety of questions and response formats such as multiple-choice questions and Likert-style rating scale responses. Participants used this scale to register the extent of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement or a belief, attitude, or judgment to provide views about their vision, beliefs, perspectives, and assumptions about the process and benefits of strategic planning. The questions in the survey could be clustered into three sections (a) demographic data, work experience, and previous involvement in strategic planning; (b) opinions about university's competence in conducting a credible strategic planning process and commitment to the its process and outcomes; (c) ideas about questions of "buy-in" and implementation of the plan with high standards; and (d) open ended questions seeking opinions about the road map of building a world class university in teaching, research and service to society. Tables and charts summarize the results.

Results and Discussion:-

Demographic Characteristics and Respondents' Experiences

The researcher was interested in identifying the actors who actively contribute to the vision of the university. This study was also a barometer of levels of interest and commitment to the future of the university. To do this, demographic data were collected that included items such as sex, teaching experiences, level of education and administrative status, levels of experience and knowledge about the workings of an African university. Tables 1-5 summarize the responses gathered from the participants.

In Table 1, the results show that 64.8% of participants were male. Many respondents had teaching experience 7 to 10 years at the university (32.8%, n=20). It shows that above fifty percent of respondents in the survey had just completed master's level of education (60.3%, n=41). Around forty-seven percent of participants (46.5%, n=33) said "yes" had been in the administrative position and 42.5% of these administrators were head of units.

Table1:- General Characteristics of Respondents (n=71).

Variable	F	%
Sex		

Male	46	64.8
Female	25	35.2
Teaching experience (n=61)		
1-3years	15	24.6
4-6years	20	32.8
7-10years	20	32.8
+10years	6	9.8
Highest degree completed		
Bachelors	7	10.3
Masters	41	60.3
Masters +30/specialist	4	5.9
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	16	23.1
Administrative status		
Yes	33	46.5
No	38	53.5
Administrative positions (n=40)		
Head of unit	17	42.5
Director	2	5
Dean	4	10
Other	17	42.5

Table 2 shows on average, the total number of years in teaching (professional educator) was almost 15 (percentile 25%=8, percentile 75%=18) years; and around 9(percentile 25%=5, percentile 75%=10) years in the university as lecturers. When administrators were asked to report for how long they have been served in the position of which the average was 5 (percentile 25%=3, percentile 75%=6) years.

Table 2:- Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Experiences.

Parameters		Total number of years in teaching (professional educator-including this year)	Total number of years as university lecturer (including this year)	How long have you served this position? (number in years)
Mean		14.49	8.06	4.48
Std. Error of Mean		1.527	.733	.386
Median		13.00	7.00	4.00
Percentiles	25	7.25	5.00	3.00
	50	13.00	7.00	4.00
	75	17.75	10.00	6.00

Familiarity of the Strategic Plan

The researcher was interested to know how many respondents were familiar with the changesproposed in Vision 2043, namelythe 2021 to 2043 strategic plan. The goal was to disclose the extent of participation / engagement during the current plan in comparison to previous plans. See Figure 2.
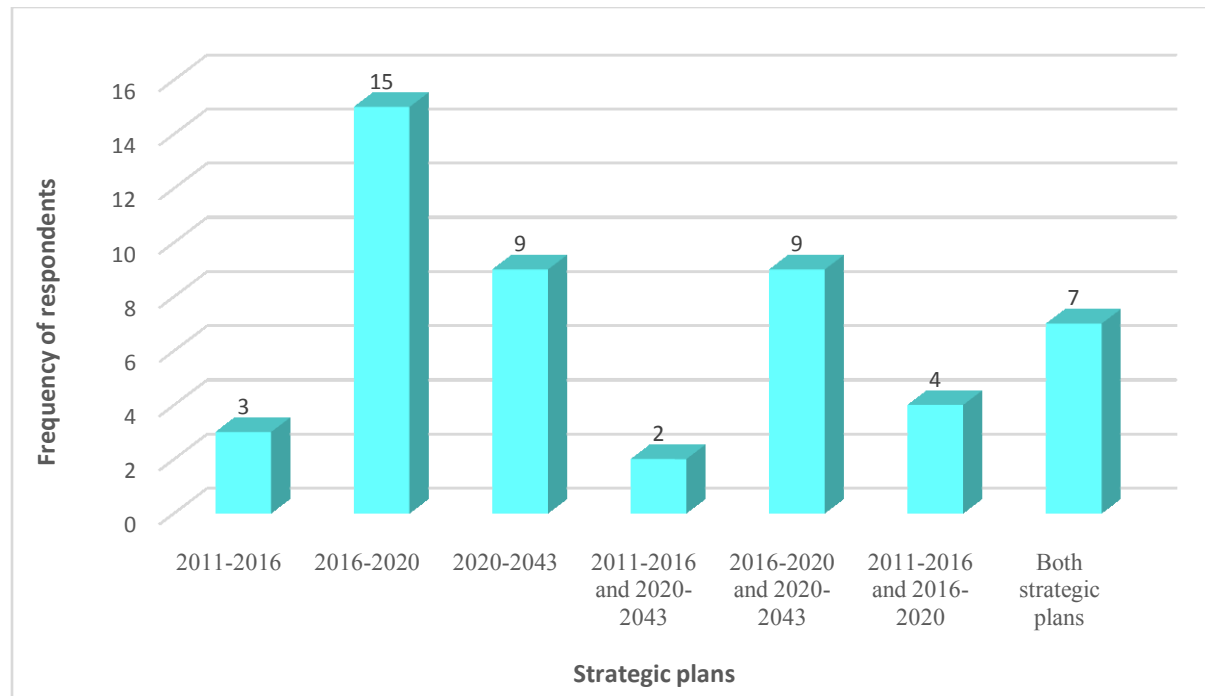
Figure1:- Participants' Familiarity with Strategic Plans.

Among respondents who succeeded to point out their familiarity (30.6%, n=15) of them were familiar with strategic plan of 2016 to 2020. In connection to that, the individuals who said to be familiar in both current and previous strategic plans especially on their planning process were (14.3%, n=7).

Table3:- Participation in the Strategic Planning Process.

Variable	Yes n(%)	No n(%)
Did you participate 2011 to 2016 strategic plan process?	16(80)	4(20)
Did you participate 2016 to 2020 strategic plan process?	6(90)	4(10)
Did you participate 2020 to 2043 strategic plan process?	28(90.3)	3(9.7)

The respondents pointed out that 22.2% out of 18 participated in the 2011 to 2016 strategic plan process and proportions of participation keep decreasing towards strategic plan process for the implementation from 2020 to 2043(22.2% to 10.7%) (Table3).It would seem however that the numbers for faculty and staff have incrementally grown as they participate in the most recent planning process.

Level of Involvement in the Strategic Management Process

The survey involved the participants to respond their level of involvement during strategic process. This aimed to know the extent to which they have been an integral part of the process.

Figure 2. Involvement in the strategic management process (n=60)
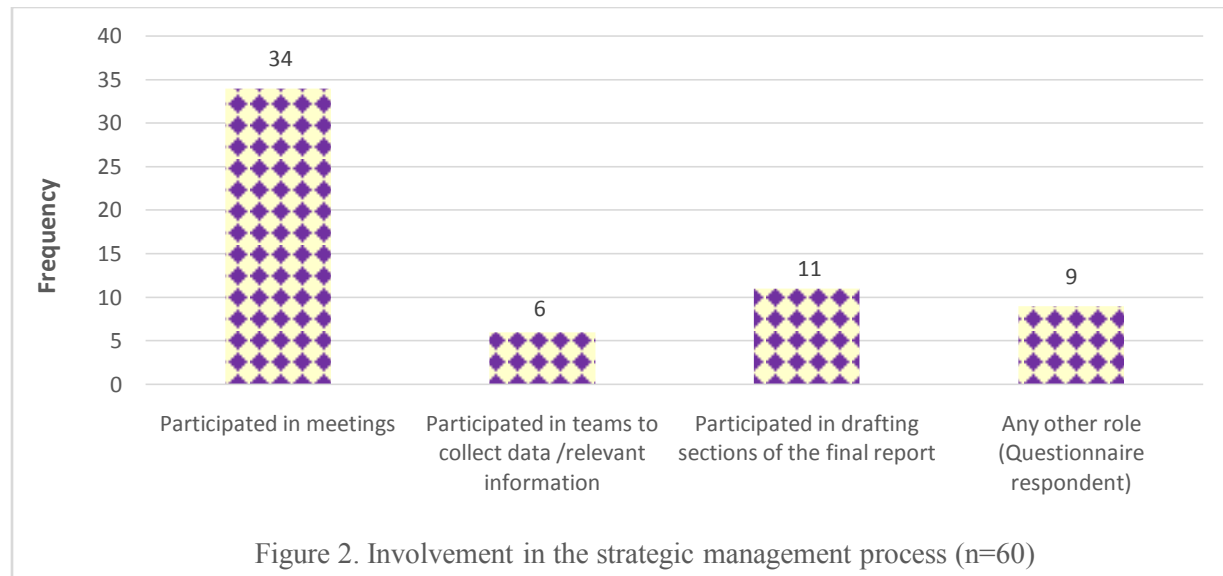
The results in Figure 2 show that about fifty-seven percent (56.7%, n=34/60) of respondents said they participated in meetings of strategic plan process. The smallest proportional was to those who participated in any other roles (15%, n=9/60).

Table 4:- Rate of Involvement in the 2020-2043 Strategic Management Process.

Variables	Rating level of involvement of staff n (%)					
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Degree of Consensus(sCns)**
The process was an excellent learning experience	1(1.8)	1(1.8)	7(12.7)	32(58.2)	14(25.5)	80.7%
The process was well organized	0(0)	1(1.9)	14(26.9)	23(44.2)	14(26.9)	78.8%
The process was thorough, and it left no stone unturned	0(0)	2(3.8)	27(51.9)	19(36.5)	4(7.7)	69.6%
I am satisfied with the final product	0(0)	1(1.9)	19(35.2)	26(48.1)	8(14.8)	75.2%
I feel we did not exhaust all the avenues	2(3.9)	14(27.5)	19(37.3)	13(29.4)	1(2.0)	58.8%
I thought the whole process was very technical	2(3.7)	10(18.5)	14(25.9)	23(42.6)	5(9.8)	67.0%
I was very unfamiliar with many terms used in discussions, and so my contribution was limited	5(9.6)	21(40.4)	12(23.1)	10(19.2)	4(7.7)	55.0%
The strategic planning process is beneficial to the university	2(3.3)	1(1.6)	7(11.5)	16(26.2)	35(57.4)	86.6%
The strategic planning process was a waste of valuable time	41(68.3)	13(21.7)	6(10)	0(0)	0(0)	28.3%

The rate of involvement in the 2020-2043 strategic management process was captured using a Likert scale. Table 4 shows that (58.2%, n=32) of the respondents agreed that the strategic plan process was an excellent learning experience. Many (68.3%, n=41) of respondents strongly disagreed that strategic planning process was a waste of valuable time. Over fifty seven percent of participants strongly agreed that the strategic planning process is beneficial to the university (57.4%, n=35) with a degree of consensus (sCns=86.6%). The degree of consensus in all statements ranged from (sCns=28.3 to 80.7%), which probably means many respondents highly rated some items and while others did not. The findings could imply that the strategic process was a valuable learning experience particularly so for individuals participating for the first time.

Ability to Conduct and Manage a Meaningful Strategic Planning Process
Table 5 summarizes the views of participants on the ability of the university toconduct and manage a meaningful strategic planning process. To obtain their viewpoints, respondents were asked to express their beliefs by picking from a list of 10 statements that represent the themes contained in the planning documents.

Table 5:-Ability to Conduct and Manage Strategic Planning Process.

Variables	Number of respondents agreed the statement (x)	Degree of agreement ((x/71)*100%)
The university can conduct a meaningful strategic plan	65	91.5%
The university has the extensive experience from the years of operation. It is well positioned to examine the internal ownership (e.g., consulting with all stakeholders: faculty, staff, students, committees) to enhance its future plans	49	69%
The strategic planning process was as extensive as it needed to be	33	46.5%
Strategic planning involves making choices and taking tough decisions	54	76.1%
This planning process was an innovative move to enhance excellence at the university	50	70.4%
This planning process considers aspirations of all academic areas	40	56.3%
The report of the strategic plan outlined all departments' desired changes	29	40.8%
The appendices included in the report left nothing lacking	16	22.5%
The realization of Vision 2043 can easily be done	30	42.3%
It will take the commitment of all administrators, faculty and staff to realize Vision 2043	54	76.1%

Many respondents (91.5%, n=65) reported that the university can conduct a meaningful strategic plan. (see Table 5). Fewer participants (22%, n=16) reported that the appendices included in the report left nothing lacking. The findings indicate that the university can conduct and manage strategic planning process because majority of these statement were positively accepted with over 50 percent (52% to 93%). The findings imply that there is accuracy that the university has the extensive experience for many years and probably well positioned to examine the internal ownership to enhance its plans. This is because almost three quarter of the participants said "yes" to this item. In fact, the findings showed that the university can conduct a meaningful strategic plan and the planning process considered aspirations of all academic areas (63%, n=38).

Level of Commitment to the Strategic Planning Process at the University

The researcher wanted to determine the level of commitment to strategic planning process at the university. This question was posed to the management team, Faculty, and staff.

Table 6:- Level of Commitment among Management Team.

	Rate of level of commitment n(%)						
Variables	Strongly	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly	Degree	of

	disagree				agree	Consensus(sCns)
Strategic planning at this university is an excellent tool to determine the situation at this campus	0(0)	0(0)	3(4.4)	19(27.9)	46(67.6)	80.0%
Strategic plan policy in our university is weak and therefore hindering implementation of the strategic plan	19(27.5)	28(40.6)	12(17.4)	7(11.9)	2(10.1)	43.8%
There is laxity which influences the implementation of strategic plans in this university	8(12.1)	16(24.2)	24(36.4)	15(22.7)	3(4.5)	56.2%
The managers are fully engaged in the initiatives of the strategic plan implementation	1(1.5)	0(0)	9(13.2)	38(55.9)	20(29.4)	82.4%
The managers have knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategic plan for this university	2(2.9)	3(4.3)	7(10.1)	36(52.2)	21(30.4)	80.0%

The findings in Table 6 show that many of respondents (46%, n=46) strongly agreed that strategic planning at university is an excellent tool to determine the situation at this campus with high degree of consensus (sCns=80.0%). The smallest degree of consensus across all statements was (sCns=43.8%), this means many participants rejected the statement that strategic plan policy in our university is weak and therefore hindering implementation of the strategic plan. The findings imply that strategic planning at this university is viewed as an excellent tool to determine the state of affairs at this campus and managers have knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategic plan, since these items were highly rated with (cCns=80%).

Table 7:- Level of Commitment among Faculty Deans and Staff.

Variables	Rate of level of commitment n(%)					
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Degree of Consensus(sCns)**
The faculty at this university are committed to implement the strategic objectives	0(0)	4(5.7)	4(5.7)	39(55.7)	23(32.9)	83.1%
The faculty on this campus freely welcome management team's initiatives in strategic	0(0)	1(1.4)	10(14.3)	43(61.4)	16(22.9)	81.1%
Faculty on this campus are actively involved in formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategic plans	0(0)	1(1.4)	7(15.9)	40(58.0)	17(24.6)	82.5%
The staff are fully engaged in the initiatives in the	2(2.9)	7(10.0)	15(21.4)	34(48.6)	12(17.1)	73.4%

strategic plan implementation						
The staff are clueless and therefore hindering implementation of the strategic plan	11(16.2)	28(41.2)	17(25.0)	10(14.7)	2(2.9)	49.4%
The staff do not have knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategic plan for this university	17(24.3)	29(41.4)	11(15.7)	10(14.3)	3(4.3)	48.1%

Table 7 shows that the faculty members at this university are committed to implement the strategic objectives; and the degree of consensus to this statement was 83.1% very high compared to other items. In addition, there was less degree of consensus to the statements that the staff are clueless and therefore hindering implementation of the strategic plan (sCns=49.4%) and the staff do not have knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategic plan for this university (sCns=48.1%). This implies that many staff and faculty deans have skills and knowledge to implement strategic plans. The findings are evidence that many faculty and staff are committed to implement strategic plan objectives.

Availability of Resources
The researcher sought to determine the availability and adequacy of financial, physical, and human resources necessary to implementthe strategic plan objectives. Table 8 summarizes the responses.

Table 8:- Availability of Resources to Implement Plan 2021—2043.

Statements	Inadequate n(%)	Adequate n(%)
Are there adequate financial resources to support the implementation of the university 's strategic objectives	35(51.5)	33(48.5)
Are there adequate physical resources to support the implementation of the university's strategic objectives	19(27.1)	51(72.9)
Are there adequate human resources to support the implementation of the university's strategic objectives	27(39.7)	41(60.3)
Are there overall adequate resources to implement the university's strategic plan, 2021 to 2043 objectives	30(44.8)	37(55.2)

The findings show 72.9% (n=51) of the respondents think the university had adequate physical resources to support the implementation of the university's strategic objectives. There were few individuals (48.5%, n=33) who said there were adequate financial resources to support the implementation. About 60% believed the university had adequate human resources (personnel) to carry out the strategic plan. Overall, however, it seems the groups are split and there are no clear sides to tip the balance. This split is likely to be because many participants were new hires or joined the administration in recent years and may not have become adequately acquainted with the workings of the university. These findings confirm that financial resources for implementing strategic process are inadequate.

General Views, Suggestions, and Readiness for Future Changes
This section captured opinions from participant that were elicited through open ended questions. Ten items sought views from participants about the role they will play in realizing Vision 2043 as instructors, researchers, or administrators and creative ways they would envisage in teaching online or using the internet or other means such as conducting ground-breaking research, all in in the pursuit of establishing an excellent university which is first in the nation. This was an opportunity to allow individuals to share their own vision of the future of the university and how they would contribute to that future.

In addition, the survey asked participants to suggest what changes are required to be done in teaching, research, and consultancy (outreach). Survey asked participants to explain the extent to which are prepared to on the use of alternative teaching towards increasing visibility of the university (instead of only lectures styles (e.g., Teaching online, using internet and visuals). Moreover, participants were asked to report the extent to what are committed in conducting ground-break research and how they are prepared in seeking funds for research aspirations. Some of the key responses that are notable include:

1. The participants highly recommend that the university aspire to build an international and reputable university (64.8%, n=13) while overall they were less inclined to think that the university needs to be involved in looking for funds for research or consultation (1.4%), by 2043.
2. Out of 71 participants, 36.6%, (n=26) said they are highly committed to carrying out the university's strategic objectives and policies. There is optimism that the proposed Vision 2043 will succeed because participants emphasized the need to tach with high standards, conduct research and publish in indexed journals (45.1% (N-32). These activities are the hallmark of a successful world-class university. Staff are dedicated to engaging the university in all ways whether intellectually or in making physical contributions. They plan to maintain ethical values in teaching in teaching (32.4% (N=20) and ensure to seek professional development as well.
3. When asked what role the participants will play in Vision 2043 to influence the ranking of the university, they reported that they aim to stay at this university and contribute as instructors (50.7%, n=36), professors (38.0%, n=27) and administrators (11.3%, n=8).
4. Many participants (45.1%, N=32) are well prepared to use alternative ways of teaching such as online, audio-visuals and the internet as a means toincrease university's visibility. They indicated that individuals are highly prepared in alternative ways instead of relying on traditional chalk and talk.
5. Finally, the participants were asked to rate the extent to which they were prepared to seek funds to support their research aspirations. The results show in Table 9 that 35.2% are engaged in grant proposal designs and 11.3% indicated they are not prepared at all to seeking funds to support their research aspirations. Perhaps this finding shows that there no clarity among members as to what or from where to find grant money to support academic research.

Table 9:- Preparation in Seeking Funds to Support Research Aspirations.

Are prepared to Seek funds to support your research aspirations	n	Return rate (n/71)*100%
Seeking collaboration from administration in seeking funds	2	2.8
Highly prepared in proposal designing	25	35.2
Expanded social capital and increased competencies	1	1.4
More collaborative projects from outside Tanzania	3	4.2
Not well prepared at all	8	11.3
Seeking funds and partnership projects	3	4.2
Writing proposals but limited exposures	2	2.8

Discussion:-

The underlying assumption of the present study was imbedded in the question: Will strategic planning lead to quality of higher education, and in turn, advance excellence in African universities? The present study examined divergent views, beliefs, and assumptions about the benefits of strategic planning process undertaken to improve excellence. Also, the study surveyed views about whether stakeholders had faith in the competence of the university to manage purposefully the daily operations and anticipate challenges or barriers that may affect the running of the university to build a stronger future.Questions in the data-gathering instrument were directed to probe such beliefs and perceptions. The study employed a cross-sectional research survey design in which a questionnaire was the key instrument used to collect primary data. Convenience sampling identified university-level directors, faculty members, deans, heads of units, and some auxiliary staff willing to participate in the study. This task was not the first time this university conducted a strategic planning process.

The open-mindedness with which the stakeholders engaged in the university strategic planning process confirmed the finding that strategic planning assists managers and organizations to "determine the basic long-term goals of an enterprise," and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Child, 1972, p. 13).Previous plans had yielded important results that theoretically may have laid the foundation for the current plan—Vision 2043. As clearly stated in the planning documents, the overall goal was to

produce an honest assessment of the present situation and ultimately give a sense of direction internally and laying out ways to secure additional resources from government, donors and the private sector, which has largely been untapped.

The current Vision 2043 introduced a unique sense of urgency to examine more carefully previous practices and views about institutional ownership of programs, physical structures, and campus climate. The utmost challenge was to keep the process manageable and finite. It was necessary to include in the planning certain parameters that delimit the scope and the duration of the evaluation process. Another challenge was to maintain some level of interest and proper conduct to prevent tactical skill from dissipating into blame game or some kind of intellectual arrogance of managers feeling to be immune to criticism. Therefore, to conduct a strategic planning process that takes up the intricacies of planning seriously and the underlying subtle distinctions made between strategic planning and strategic thinking was a serious situation with which to contend.

The results garnered from the data collected could be summed up into three sections (a) demographic data, work experience, and previous involvement in strategic planning; (b) inward-looking introspective opinions about university's competence in conducting a credible strategic planning process and commitment to its process and outcomes; (c) ideas about questions of "buy-in" and implementation of the plan with high-standards; and (d) opinions about the possible road map for building a world-class university in teaching, research and service to society.

Some findings stand out from this study and deserve mention. First, participants were asked to comment on their demographic characteristics and experiences in serving the university which were consistent with their tenure. Most participants were new to the university system but nevertheless reported enthusiasm for supporting the university's endeavors to engage faculty and staff to actively participate in shaping the future of the university. There was optimistic and reasonable levels of interest and commitment to the future of the university, including the belief that the university had the competence to conduct a reliable strategic plan. This realization was important and notable. Success is about where you want to go; therefore, to realize progress or success of any enterprise relies on the commitment to its process and outcomes and involvement of the stakeholders.

Second, equally notable is thatadministrators were relatively young and somewhat new in tenure. The results revealed that faculty and staff have a good understanding of the plan. They valued the planning process and the plan itself. The goal was to disclose the extent of participation or engagement during the current plan in comparison to previous plans. The numbers for faculty and staff have incrementally grown over the years as they participated in the most recent planning process and that the exercise was seen as an excellent learning experience, and denying that as many as 68.3%, (n=41) respondents strongly disagreed that strategic planning process was a waste of valuable time of faculty and staff. This finding would be encouraging and gratifying to most universities.

Regarding buy-in, it would seem the participants were split almost into two equal sides even though the margins are small. For example, there were few individuals (48.5%, n=33) who thought the university had adequate financial resources to support the implementation of strategic plans. This response could signal lack of interest in financial trajectories of the university or in the process of setting up budgets for different units. As it is often the case, few individuals pay close attention to these matters except the few individuals who work in the financial or budgetary office.

It was interesting to note that the stakeholders were keen to build an international and reputable university (64.8%, n=13) and much less inclined to think that the university needs to be involved in looking for funds for research or consultation (1.4%), by 2043. Members were also highly committed to carrying out the university's strategic objectives and policies. This kind of optimism is supportive to the proposed Vision 2043 which is a good sign for the university goals to succeed particularly since participants emphasized the need to teach with high standards, conduct research and publish in indexed journals (45.1% (N-32). Members plan to maintain ethical values in teaching in teaching 32.4% (N=20) and ensure to seek professional development as well.

Conclusion:-
Organizations use the strategic planning process to manage the daily operations and anticipate challenges that may affect the operations of the enterprise to build a stronger future.This university was motivated to engage in a long-term strategic plan because the leadership believed that leveraging the strategic planning processes and resources to

improve performance or output at the university level were likely to produce benefits in giving a sense of direction internally (within departments), and generate a momentum for securing resources from government, donors and the private sector to implement the recommendations of the plan and meet university goals (Farrant, &Fielden, 1996).

First, this study revealed benefits as well as challenges. The study confirmed the need for participation of stakeholders and that clear goals, targets, data analysis, and formal plans can enhance performance and has a wide appeal among practitioners and governments. In the existing literature, scholars agree that the key to success of planning is the strategy to engage continuous and ongoing restructuring, but this process must involve a wide range of stakeholders consisting of managers, analysts, and technicians involved in the operations of the institution. Such inclusive approaches are likely to support buy-in to the implementation of the plan with high-standards.This finding affirms Hambrick's (1983) assessment that strategy is not only multidimensional and situational but that such characteristics are likely to make any consensus difficult. Overall, the lessons learned from strategic plans are useful for universities and important in navigating a successful future. Take note however, not everyone in the organization sees the outcome this way. Despite the foreseen benefits embedded in strategic plans, the strategic planning process has been used in a variety of ways to meet different goals, such as restructuring, retrenchment or budgetary enhancement which might include cuts—a reality not always pleasant to the programs or individuals that face the axe.

Second, the study revealed that strategic decisions that involve multiple competing objectives and significant uncertainties have typically been considered primarily the prerogative of top executives. As rightly argued by Lorange (1980), 'the purpose ofstrategic planning is to accomplish a sufficientprocess of innovation and change in the firm ... if aformal system for strategic planning does not support innovation and change, it is a failure.' The present study showed that the management and participants of the study discerned the need for planning and that the university was taking the rights steps to support innovation and change to restructure the university for the future success and excellence. Therefore, as the study showed, all stakeholders must continue to be involved and committed to the plan as they become concerned with such tradeoffs as cost versus quality, cost versus timeliness, or market-share versus short-term return on investment (Dodge, & Eadie, 1982).

Third, the study indicated that even though stakeholders may support the planning process, they may not have internalized the goals and long-term objectives in a conventional manner. Everyone takes the term strategyto mean different things as if distinguishable mental models or stagesrather than a single model that most discussions assume.The stages of (1)forecasting, (2) budgeting,(3) externally oriented planning, and (4) strategic management, though distinct, inform every step of the analysis which aim to improve academic performance, maximize capacity of institutional structures, increase profits, and cut costs.This finding affirms that strategy is not only multidimensional and situational but that such characteristics are likely to make any consensus difficult (Hambrick (1983).The distinction drawn between multidimensional and situational analysis of an organization could be applied to the study of universities, but application of such analytical tools will depend on the structure and size of the university. Some universities are big and widespread over several campuses with diverse academic disciplines, each one justifying its existence.

The challenge likely to face big universities is the predicament to coordinate the variety of visions emerging from the planning process and harness the vision to a unitary goal to be pursued by members of the university. That is, the forces of competition impose a need for more effective decision-making at all levels in universities, and in this case, perhaps participation is needed at all sectors within the departments of the university.

Fourth, this study adds to the power of the strategic planning process. Future studies must probe further the tension between strategic planning and strategic thinking. Equally studies must dig deeper to expose the gaps that this study revealed. For example, instead of using a convenience sampling method, researchers would aim to use random sampling. Random sampling ensures that results obtained from your sample should approximate what would have been obtained if the entire population had been measured (Shadish et al., 2002). Simply put, randomly selecting the members of a sample is important because it helps prevent bias in the results.To do this, it is important that the participation in the planning process is designed to involve a wider circle of people beyond managers, analysts, and technicians. However, this move could be counter-productive since students, alumni and staff are rarely interested in the technicalities of day to day workings of the university. Since there are too few studies that have reported outcomes of a strategic planning process in indexed academic journals,this author hopes in sharing the outcomes of this study, other African academic institutions will join to share their experiences as well as the challenges.

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