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Chapter

Strategic Thinking, Leadership and Governance for African Universities: Lessons from Successful Universities

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Abstract

In the 21st century, global competition is forcing tertiary institutions to excel in knowledge-creation that are relevant and innovative to bring solutions to societal problems. Perhaps a new system of thinking will enhance the relevance and sustainability of these universities. The paper takes a look at successful African universities and the lesson that can be learned from them. In depth discussions regards strategic thinking, leadership and governance of African universities are well digested with views and expectations collected through interviews with both past and current universities leadership. Majority of the views and expectations were drawn from successful universities in Ghana.

Keywords: African universities, governance, leadership, strategic thinking

1. Introduction

The ability to think strategically is essential for individuals and institutions. The real question is how can we continually be more focused on our strategic thinking skills in order to thrive in today's unstable higher education management? The fact is most higher education leaders in Africa are now required to be more successful with fewer resources [1]. In 2009, several authors commissioned by the Association of African Universities (AAU) pointed out that Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are struggling with strategic thinking, re-thinking, and sustainability issues and that HEIs may need to improvise on their knowledge creation ventures [2–4]. In Africa, specifically in Ghana, higher educational (universities) leaders have limited resources to varying degrees within their educational institutions. The reality, however, is that not all higher educational leaders are good strategists.

In these current times, global competition is forcing tertiary institutions to excel in knowledge-creation that are relevant and innovative to bring solutions to societal problems. Perhaps a new system of thinking will enhance the relevance and sustainability of African universities. In Ghana for example, PNDC Law provides technical leadership, entrepreneurial solutions, and support for industries for national development.

At the global frontier of knowledge-creation is the need for change forced by internal and external factors, competition, demand and supply of tertiary

education. Institutions of higher learning are advised to examine institutionalized systems, in order to innovate for the twenty-first century (C21st) emerging market and the global competition by thinking strategically [5, 6]. Strategic thinking is different from strategic planning that most institutions are noted for [7]. Strategic thinking is the construct of "ideas, processes and tools; of finding new and innovative approaches to problem solving and using policy initiatives and approaches that allow for effective implementation, monitoring and refining" [5], which strategic planning is not [7].

Evidence from research across the globe affirms that strategic thinking is more crucial at the time when in Ghana's tertiary education landscape is changing. Since 1992 there has been a policy and a gradual implementation of recommendations from the Ministry of Education Technical Committee report [8] on the conversion of Ghana Polytechnics to Technical Universities (TUs). As expected such policies are subjected to scrutiny and critique; many are wondering how ready are the Polytechnics to assume TUs and how successful is this policy for national development. Fortunately, the Ghana government and National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) have decided to start with five Polytechnics. However, the success of such a policy have a tremendous impact on tertiary education in the country and hence, a matter of concern for stakeholders. The implementation of the policy document [8] outlined strategies and plausible changes that will facilitate the growth of these institutions that are mandated to provide:

- Tertiary education in the fields of manufacturing, commerce, science, technology, applied social science, applied arts and any other fields approved by the Ministry of Education

- Opportunity for skills development, applied research and publication of research findings [8].

A review of the policy objectives shows that there are likely challenges in the policy implementation. There is the need for strategic planning, strategic management, a dyadic relation between ideals and actual performances, and the need to bring expected results in the policies and implementation framework [8].

This chapter will take an in-depth look at Strategic Thinking, Leadership and Governance for African Universities: Lessons from Successful Universities with special reference to Ghana, and Lessons learned from successful universities.

2. Strategic thinking: the concept

The concept of strategic thinking has been debated by scholars and practitioners for the last 25 years in an effort to understand its meaning and impact on organizational leadership and performance. Although the concept is gaining interest, it is still an area considered to be under-researched [9] as there is a lack of supporting empirical literature to clarify the role of strategic thinking in leadership effectiveness [10, 11]. This has resulted in a lack of theoretical understanding, leaving little guidance for leaders [10]. Fairholm and Fairholm [12] conceptualize strategic thinking competency as a work in progress in the world of academic literature. The mere lack of a common definition for strategic thinking has led to the concept being considered indecisive [13, 14] and even being confused and interchangeably used with other leadership and management concepts such as strategy, strategic planning and strategic management [9, 13, 15]. Mintzberg [16] states that 'many practitioners and theorists have wrongly assumed that strategic planning, strategic thinking, and

strategy-making are all synonymous'. However, recent studies have refined the existing literature on strategic thinking, thereby distinguishing it from the other strategy types [17–19]. This reworking of the definition of strategic thinking is triggered by the popularity of and attention to this concept as being critical to leadership effectiveness [19]. Similarly, the uncertainty, complexity and turbulence of the contemporary world of business have demanded that organizational leaders and managers think strategically in order to ensure survival of their businesses [15, 18].

What is known in literature as strategic thinking is different from strategic planning or strategic management, particularly when it comes to organizational or institutional advancement [5, 7, 20]. In Africa and other developing countries literature is silent when it comes to strategic thinking and that of higher institutional advancement. According to [20], strategic thinking is a creative endeavor fused with "dynamic, responsive, and often intuitive" (p. 456) influence on an enterprising goal. In strategic thinking, the inputs, throughouts, and outputs are expected to feed into what to change in a system to ensure efficiency within a *SMART* goal [7] – where a SMART goal means Specific, Measurable, Aligned, Realistic and Time-bound.

Edwards and Sam [6] made an attempt to encourage a *Feedback* in strategic thinking loop, whether positive or negative, whereby its effects are cumulative in an appreciative enquiry. They urge that strategic thinking in higher institutions must be guided by the *"Brain Powers"* of the institution. It is perceived that their collective *"Brain Power"* in strategic thinking will impact results if solicited systematically and efficiently. What is missing in most African literature is how institutions can encourage "the engagement of people in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" [21], through the process of strategic thinking for institutional change [6]. In effect, faculty and staffs need to contribute and own the ideas, and to provide inputs into the processes of change.

A study conducted by [1] found that strategic leadership influences activities and the thinking behind ideas in order to 'move people' to accomplish change. For example; one the institutional leader's echoed through interview that to lead strategically, *"Institutional leaders must lead academically ... and in solving social problems ... leave those politicians ... [if] they [politicians] create problems, ... We [academicians] must be there to solve them". "Our institutional leadership's commitment [is to] be solving societal problems rather than talking and lamenting with the rest of the society .... People need solutions from our research and academic activities"* (DDG, Interviewee #1). Strategic leadership when it comes to policy implementation is all about moving people with minimal efforts and maximum resources to accomplish expected goals [7, 22]. Leadership becomes strategic with much thinking about relations and tasks, not just directing, especially in higher education, but ownership to the processes [23]. Strategic leadership is a vehicle for controlling systems, planned changes, and moving people to buy-into ideas, following willingly, and sharing a common vision [7, 23].

Therefore when it comes to a whole system change in a tertiary institution in Ghana, for example, there is a gap in literature on the application of leader-follow interactions. But it is significant for the dynamic interchange of "thinking" and "influencing". First of all, every vision must be shared, communicated, and spread with a passion that becomes contagious [22]. It was evident in their study [1] that institutional leadership in African universities has to think of ways to demonstrate passion and commitment to a dream for others to believe and yield to any systematic change. Whereby strategic change can only take place when people are ready and looking forward to a better alternative [24]. According to the [24], when it comes to strategic change, leadership plays a vital role: systems will remain, individuals are comfortable, and groups will come to inertia, if leadership does

not focus on the alternative change. Where leadership is not content with traditions they provide alternatives and "strategic management methodologies can be a stimulant to strategic thinking" [5] devoid of rituals and "sacred" traditions that inhibit creativity and innovations.

2.1 Entrepreneurship and scholarship

Entrepreneurship is based on the premises of providing solutions to human problems. In an attempt to define entrepreneurship based on reviews, [25] identify "*two distinct clusters of thought on the meaning of entrepreneurship. The first … characteristics of entrepreneurship (e.g., innovation, growth, uniqueness, etc.) while the second group focused on the outcomes of entrepreneurship (e.g., creation of value)*" (p. 12). This means entrepreneurship is viewed as both characteristics and resultants. In each case, according to [25], entrepreneurship involves innovations, peculiar to creating value for new products and services, and the "creation of organizations" that result in employability (self or otherwise). However, this definition falls short of mentioning the object of entrepreneurship, which should always result in solving social or human problems [26]. Baumol [27] however, believes that entrepreneurship is more significant when it is conceived as productivity than activities. Baumol [27] contests that private enterprise is more towards profit and not necessarily innovations (*that to him is not entrepreneurship*). He argues against the conventional understanding of entrepreneurial roles when it comes to growing the economy. Rather to [27] some entrepreneurship leads to "parasitical existence that is actually damaging to the economy" (p. 894). Therefore the notion is that strategic thinking about entrepreneurship should lead to a social enterprise, especially socioeconomic development policies in Africa [28].

For strategic thinking in entrepreneurship, [26] establishes 10 rules. These 10 rules are practical, productive, and evident. They include full commitment, a search for solutions, creative thinking, acting with others (teams), acting alone (uniqueness), managing risks, learning to lead, and selling ideas (marketing), perseverance, and above all, a passion to "play the game for life". This is where strategic thinking enhances entrepreneurship to solve socioeconomic problems with dedication and commitment. According to [26] thinking, entrepreneurship has to bring about value-added and an improvement for the good of the society. Entrepreneurship without a sense of socio-moral obligation, a "*Preference for Others*" to reach attainable success can possibly lead to what is prevalent in the modern business world – *Greed* [26]. Perhaps it is this sense of socio-moral obligation, accountability, societal benefits, leads itself to a scholarship of engagement to the public good.

Scholarship is the ability to produce knowledge that can stand any academic scrutiny and general attention [29-31]. Here scholarship connotes a personal or a group attention to the creation of sound knowledge which are original and transferable. According to [29], scholarship aside from knowledge creation allows vigorous interrogation. In academia scholarship is a significant way to bring new ideas, inventions, creativity, and originality by encouraging academic attainment [30]. Scholarship is therefore evident in research, experiments, and investigations that advance theories, professional abilities, and life skills. Scholarships methodologically lead to professional acumen, aptitude, and behavioral change resulting from and through learning. These sentiments were captured in an interview with institutional leaders in Burkina Faso;

> One could see the pride of belongingness and institutional scholarship of engagement as:

> *"[We] the PSI community felt a moral commitment to engage in academic research … that brings dedication and commitment to solving Burkina problems" (Interviewee #1).*
>
> *He continued:*
>
> *"Our research has to focus on bringing social relevance which has also resulted in inventions, techniques, … and we are socio-culturally responsible for conservation and innovations as higher education community".*
>
> *Burkina Faso has a climate that result in acute water shortage, dry seasons and sanitary problems especially in the capital Ouagadougou where the case study institute is situated.*
>
> *"So, see, at PSI we specialized". "Academic excellence will come when you specialize in what you can do best"(Interviewee #1) [1].*

Thus, entrepreneurship augments scholarship, which intends leads to improved lifestyle, solutions for life problems, innovations through critical thinking, and socio-moral development, all of which culminate professionalism among citizens. Professionalism becomes more of an individual development that is associated with meaningfulness in human capital and socio moral obligation to the diversity of a given society [31]. Edwards [31] opines that professionalism brings a sense of belongingness, institutionalization of moral reasoning that usually impact on the provision of tangible solutions for the good of 'others' without a sense of discrimination [31, 32]. However literature is yet to establish significant association between moral development and scholarship of engagement in a wide perspective when it comes to benefits to society. The few research available show a nexus between moral obligation, individual self-development, and that of institutional accomplishments [32]. In other words, there is a demand for literature to show how institutions of higher learning may exert much more influence on society based on their relevant acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, contribute to scholarship of engagement for strategic development (Scholarship of Engagement, n.d., para. *Introduction*).

This is a normative conception that resonate socio-moral responsibility of public and statutorily established institutions. This is because society expects such institutions to give back for the socio-economic development. But when the society overlooks such normative conception scholarship is affected, application of scholarship in terms of relevance is deluded, and the attraction of scholarship in the society becomes illusive (Scholarship of Engagement, n.d). The concept of *Scholarship of Engagement* is a term that captures scholarship in the areas of teaching, research, and/or service … [that] engages faculty in academically relevant [solution to] … community needs" (para. *Introduction*).

2.1.1 Technology and learning

In today's tertiary education in Ghana, due to the challenge of geographical and diverse constituents, management cannot afford to lack behind in knowledge and skills in information and communication technology. Firstly, for strategic thinking management needs information fast and evidence for decision making. Finding information at a click is just request appropriate for speedy decision. Managers and leadership of higher education have to rely on new learning technologies for communicative and collaborative efforts and to facilitate 'real

time' learn. The ICT for virtuality (remote communication), authentication, and e-leadership are all available for accelerating communication, certification, and governance decisions. For example; the distance education unit in the University of Education, Winneba, has instituted a new department for e-learning to all distance education student to facilitate teaching and learning. Similarly, all students are made to offer a compulsory course in ICT. There is no doubt that researchers argue that technology can be used to develop formal thinking through stimulation. However, technology-based stimulation will not automatically develop the thinking skills of leaders unless careful thought and planning are put in place to implement them effectively.

Secondly, for teaching and learning, which is the core business of every higher education, the role of technology is prominent in instructional leadership, resources mobilization and provision, and therefore the institutionalization of technology-mediated instructional delivery is for efficiency and effectiveness. Also, for roper governance in the C21st education system there is the need to embark on digitization of contents, repository of knowledge, and electronic archiving of contents, history, and proceedings. Tertiary institutions rely mostly on evidence from the statutes, rules, regulations, and precedence. So apart from the physical and telecommunication infrastructural challenges, the intersection between e-leadership and e-learning are yet to be advanced in practice by many institutions. But for strategic planning, new learning technologies within the framework of proper management and governance have to focus on results-driven efficiency through high competencies in technology.

2.2 Strategic implementation: perspectives from African universities

In their search for sustainable advantage, researchers have realized that business performance is not concentrated on the formulation alone but also on the implementation of a given strategy and further strengthened by the processes by which competitive positions are created and maintained [33]. For [34], strategic implementation is the method by which strategies are operationalized or executed within the organization. It focuses on the processes through which strategies are achieved. Once the means and methods for achieving objectives and mission have been identified, the next step according to [35] is to begin "doing". This stage involves the continuation of some ongoing strategies as well as the beginning of some new strategies [36]. As a result, managers should consider analysis of organizational structures and systems before strategy implementation, as well as the analysis of culture, power and conflict [37]. To effectively implement and manage the strategy, managers must integrate the activities of several different functions. These activities help to achieve the best integration of people, structures, processes and resources in reaching organizational purposes.

In regard to strategic implementation, Universities such as University of Ghana, Legon, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education, Winneba, University of Cape Coast, Cape Town University in South Africa and other universities in Africa employ numerous strategic implementations such as research, teaching and learning, gender and diversity and monitoring and evaluation.

2.3 Research strategies

The core mandate of every university is to teach and research. Therefore, it argued among researchers that teaching cannot be productive with effective

research. If this argument holds, then the implication is that for university to be successful, research should be at the hob of its operations [38]. In this regard research is centralized to the every University's transformation process, and ultimately strengthening their impact and visibility both locally and internationally. A study conducted by [1, 6] shared some common features of research strategies adopted by successful universities in Ghana and Burkina Faso. Most successful universities in Africa implemented their research strategies through:

- Collaboration with local and international institutions as well as donor agencies.

- Establishing and joining global research networks.

- Establishing competitive research studentships.

- Building capacity in craftsmanship, apprenticeship and entrepreneurship.

In creating a greater focus on inter-disciplinary research, successful universities in Africa adopted the following measures:

1. Acquiring state-of-the-art equipment and improve facilities (including library access) as a necessary foundation for academic research.

2. Developing and implementing a plan for increasing the pool of University controlled funds available for academic research.

3. Establishing University-Industry partnerships to promote research in areas of industrial/national interest.

4. Developing and implementing training and career development programs for staff involved in research and research support.

5. Providing stronger institutional support across the university in the administration and development of research grants.

6. Provide stronger institutional support across the university in the administration and development of research grants [1, 39, 40].

2.4 Teaching and learning strategies

Findings from research are used to improve teaching and learning by promoting academic excellence using the highest international standards of teaching, learning and leadership development. This demands a series of academic quality improvement initiatives that will nurture a culture of continuous improvement and strengthen the teaching and learning experience of students and faculty. In the University of Ghana for example, relevant resources are used to enable the university meet the basic standards of internationalization through support of PhD training for cohort of lecturers without PhDs and phase out old system of lecturers without PhDs.

This was done through the following means:

1. Provide training and mentoring support for early career academics to enhance teaching and research skills.

2. Provide research support and research leadership training opportunities for mid-career academics.

3. Establish and enforce, through AQAU, standardized teaching methods for undergraduate and post-graduate teaching.

4. Enhance the importance and utility of the UG library system to the university community.

5. Establish and promote university-wide spaces and schedules for sharing and debating intra- and inter-disciplinary scholarly ideas targeted at the university community and the university's stakeholders.

6. Refurbish all lecture rooms and laboratories with updated pedagogical technology [8].

2.5 Gender and diversity

Most successful universities in Africa have created the best environment for equal opportunity in gender and diversity. These Universities recognizes the importance of Gender and Diversity and how it impacts on the social processes of inclusion and exclusion, and their interrelated demographics such as disability, religion, and ethnicity among others. In the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) for example, the Gender Directorate is created to ensure that gender and diversity are enshrined in all aspects of its institutional culture, in a manner that sets the example for all other academic and non-academic institutions to follow through these measures, evaluate and effectively implement.

In 2007 a study commissioned by Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) mentioned that "Gender is a systemic component of all educational studies, since transformation in education, ... cannot proceed without engaging with issues of gender equity" [41]. Gender and diversity, according to the study turn to depend on "personalities and on the beliefs and perceptions they bring to their office" (p. 129). And this has governance issues and policy implications. Institutions of higher learning should have policy, strategies, and practices that resonant a clear diversity and multicultural leadership.

2.6 Monitoring and evaluation

The quality assurance division in most African university serves as the mainstream and enforces the structures and processes for system -wide monitoring and evaluation in the Public Universities in Ghana and this is mainly carried out through:

1. Creation of an effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation systems for both students and lecturers.

2. Building a strong quality assurance culture.

3. Developing a comprehensive framework for reviewing the performance of the collegiate system.

4. Developing and implement an effective framework for staff performance management.

5. Development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation plan for the University.

6. Monitoring the achievement of internationalization in the university [42].

In summary, successful university leaders have demonstrated that strategic thinking is traditionally held in the domain of university leaders who have the primary responsibility for developing and implementing the strategic plan of the institution. Undoubtedly, Strategic thinking is a significant aspect of every leader's job: An institution may not need a strategy if it did not have to compete - it could make do simply with a plan. But strategy implies competing and outwitting competitors. In this regards leaders have to find alternative ways of competing and providing value for money. It is therefore prudent that every university has to position itself by finding alternative ways of competing with premium universities of the world.

3. The concept of governance and university governance

Ancient as it may be every society whether small or large needs to be governed. The need for governance exists anytime a group of people come together to accomplish an end. Though the governance literature proposes several definitions, most rest on three dimensions: authority, decision-making and accountability. At the higher institution level in Africa, governance determines who has power, who makes decisions, how other staff members make their voice heard and how account is rendered.

The concept has been around in both political and academic discourse for a long time, referring in a generic sense to the task of running a government, or any other appropriate entity for that matter. In this regard the general definition provided by Webster's Third New International [30] is of some assistance, indicating only that governance is a synonym for government, or "the act or process of governing, specifically authoritative direction and control". This interpretation specifically focuses on the effectiveness of the executive branch of government.

The working definition used by the British Council, however, emphasizes that "governance" is a broader notion than government (and for that matter also related concepts like the state, good government and regime), and goes on to state: "Governance involves interaction between the formal institutions and those in civil society. Governance refers to a process whereby elements in society wield power, authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and social upliftment."

In relevance to the chapter, governance has been defined to refer to the institutional structures leadership and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation of every staff member. In higher institutions in Africa governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which the institutional affairs are managed in a manner that is transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive. Undoubtedly, institutional governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable. In a broad sense, governance is about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs. It is more than the organs of the government.

International agencies such as UNDP, the World Bank, the OECD, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and others define governance as the exercise of authority or power in order to manage a country's economic, political and

administrative affairs. The [43] sees governance as 'power relationships,' 'formal and informal processes of formulating policies and allocating resources,' 'processes of decision-making' and 'mechanisms for holding governments accountable.'

Recently, in Africa, the terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature because of the way and manner African universities have been politicized by Africa leaders. The ripple effects has seen most of the Public Universities in Ghana and other African countries having leaders who were corrupt and made unproductive decision-making which has gone a long way to affect productivity in most universities. Bad governance (which is the opposite of good governance) is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within in most African universities. At the University level "governance" is a means through which senior members such as the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar who are the three most senior members make decisions, implement them, direct and control their functions. These roles help those in charge to relate to their stakeholders in order to achieve the mission and vision of the institution.

It is important to note that after independence, the state or government of various African countries were given total control over the highest learning institution. In this regard, public financing coupled with oversight, appointment and control of the organizational structure of higher learning institutions during this era was common. Most often, heads of states becoming chancellor of major state universities in Africa. This made access to higher educational institutions limited under the system with quotas on admission due to limited funds. However, demands of the citizens with pressure from groups and individuals with influence forced expansion of the system, with funding still a prevalent problem. The pressure of expansion resulted in enlargement, proliferation and diversification of providers and increase in the mode of delivery. In this process, the states turn out to be one of the providers of higher learning rather than managing higher learning in the African continent.

If the notion of institutional governance encompasses how power is distributed and shared, how policies are formulated, priorities set and stakeholders made accountable then it evidently clear that institutional governance are challenged with the following:

1. Effective representation of diverse students and staff

2. Aging teaching and non-teaching staff

3. Organizational climate and change

4. Technologies and innovation

5. Accountability, transparency, and probity

6. Student, staff and community participation [39, 40, 42]

3.1 University governance: the case of selected universities in Africa

Universities worldwide exist for purpose not different to other universities in any other country. It is assumed that universities of the globe exist for simple purpose of effective teaching, research and community engagement. On numerous occasions it is argued that the role of an African university is not clearly articulated within the African context because of the borrowed curriculum used by these universities in

Africa. For example, [44] were doubtful with regard to the capacity of African universities to carry out academic projects with their problems to manage contradictory functions of political ideologies and academic activities. Notwithstanding, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan argued that Universities in Africa must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Bloom and Reenen [45] posit that universities can aid in the development of African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars.

If these objectives are to be achieved in African universities, research and community engagement have to be well-conceived and emphasized by various university management rather than making teaching the only known function of African developing university [1]. Sebola [46] argues that the business purpose of a university (teaching, research, community engagement) is unique and does not need to be compromised. The lack of attention by leadership to the other two reasons of existence have indeed made the role of some African university no different from a high school or a further education and training institution (now called Technical Vocational Education Centers). This explains a poor scientific publication output by African universities which according to [47], contribute less than 1% of the global scientific publications. This has been a worrisome factor for long in academic discourses as to why Africans are only labeled consumers of knowledge than being producers of it. The answer to these and other worrisome factors are due to the fact that most African universities leaders lack the skills to think and manage strategically.

The success of each society is mainly based on its educated workforce that aims to contribute to economic growth and social prosperity [48, 49]. Undoubtedly, highly-skilled workforce produced at universities will be able to solve economic problems through the knowledge and research skills obtained from African universities. But on the contrary studies have shown that most African universities through their leadership (governance) have proven negligence by providing a knowledge, skills and competency mismatch that do not meet employer profiles [48, 50]. In this regard, [1] advocate that universities in Africa should make their visions and missions well known to all stakeholders rather than monopolizing them.

In most instances the African university leadership claims to operate on good governance principles but on the contrary they have created an artificial blockage between themselves and all other internal stakeholders such as staff, students and labor unions. Most of their activities seem to be shrouded in secrecy. Hence it is argued that the concept governance itself may not be a problem in African universities, because [51] argues that developing a good governance strategies among internal stakeholder may lead to the success of good governance model workable to achieve successful African university businesses. Good governance recognizes that those in authority cannot exclude the stakeholders in issues that need engagement before decisions are undertaken [52].

The high demand for higher learning in Africa by a teeming youth with a desire to improve on their knowledge created a large market for higher educational institution in Africa and this is evident by the wide spread of private universities with other public institutions being privatized. Government of various African countries, especially Ghana, saw the need to enact new laws for the management and control of the public and private universities. Some of these included granting autonomy to the universities, creating regulatory bodies, programming and maintaining standard, external quality assurance mechanisms to help in the governance of universities and upgrading of Polytechnics to university status.

If these objectives are to be achieved in Africa, and Ghana for that matter, then it is bent on leadership to formulate policies, actions and plans to achieve the visions of the universities through strategic plan, road map and actions to be undertaken to achieve their targets with the new university legislations, defining the roles and responsibilities of government, regulatory bodies among others, consequently replacing head of states as chancellors with prominent scholars, Chief Executive officers and vice chancellors.

Due to the high demand for university education in Africa, some institutions have developed courses which may have no relevance to the students, school and the country as a whole. These courses are just seen as "money making" for the universities. Students who graduate from these courses have no jobs and little to contribute to the society. For example, Cape Town University has before time planned for courses to be offered in the 2020 academic year looking at what situation demands in their community and country. The success story to be learned here is that courses should not just be introduced for 'money-making' but rather the courses pursued should have impact on the community and the country as a whole. In University of Education, for example, the blending of education and business courses such as Banking and Finance, Procurement, Marketing, Purchasing and Supply Chain introduced in 2015/2016 academic year has enabled student to gain employment both as qualified teacher and entrepreneurs.

3.1.1 Leadership and governance in African universities

In Ghana and for that matter most African country, universities are established based on legal status. In Ghana, for example, all the Public Universities were established by an Act. For example, the University of Ghana was established by the University of Ghana Act, 1961 (Act 79) to replace the then University College of Ghana. The Act was amended in 2010 by the University of Ghana Act, 2010 (Act 806). All the Public Universities in Ghana are considered as a corporate with a legal personality and can sue and be sued in its own name. University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Cape Coast and University of Education, are all governed by the University Council members appointed by the Government whose duties include but are not limited to determining the strategic direction of the University, promoting means of generating income for the university and appointing professors to the University.

The University Council is also responsible for the management and administration of the finances and properties of the University. Council also has general control over the affairs and public relations of the University including the use of the common seal of the University. The Vice Chancellor is the academic and administrative head and chief disciplinary officer of the University, while the Registrar is the chief operating officer responsible for the day to day administration of the affairs of the University. The Office of the Vice-Chancellor in most Public Universities in Ghana coordinates all the major activities of the University. The office basically comprises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor's offices.

3.2 Lessons for successful universities in Africa

If Strategic thinking and leadership is needed for a creative endeavor and a dynamic, responsive change to influence the change of governance in most African universities, then [1] argue that the possibility lies through the emergence of both developing strategic thinking skills among leaders in African universities, this to a large extent encourage professionalism and responsiveness to societal needs. Through interviews with 12 African University leaders (both past and current)

it was clear that the success of African universities lies in the following practices including organizational trust, student participation and stakeholder's involvement.

In an effort to govern successfully universities in Africa, one is tempted to offer a word of caution by repeating what by Wayne Turmel in 2007: Avoid governing with BIG 'L' entitlement:

> *These are the people who are in positions of authority –leaders in a company. They are "Big L" leaders. They're expected to lead because that's what their job title says they do. After all, if you're paid more than me and have a more impressive title, I'd like to assume that you're leading the parade.*

Leadership is everything; leaders chart uncharted courses; and if leadership is the cause, then all others are effects.

3.2.1 Organizational trust

According to [53], trust is analyzed in two categories: trust among individuals, and trust in abstract systems. In its broadest meaning, organizational trust is the dispositional beliefs that employees have for their organizations [54]. Organizational trust also reflects the perceptions of an employee related to the support provided by the organization [55]. Taylor [56] points out that organizational trust is a phenomenon developed through harmonious behavior based on mutual respect and courtesy, and is realized over time. This implies that for University leadership to develop organizational trust among staff member, they must respect and give their members the due courtesy and vice versa.

This implies that leadership and staff members who work together in the University ought to have a trusting work relationship because if they do not trust one another, they are not likely to disclose information openly to each other. The issues of transparency, openness, accountability and democracy are some of the factors of most successful universities across the globe. Newcombe and McCormick [57] points out that the desire to be involved or not to be involved in the decision-making may stem from lack of trust in the decision makers and the decision-making processes which at the university level is the beginning of successful leadership.

3.2.2 Students participation

The inclusion of students in the management of Universities in Africa is long overdue. It will be argued that all the universities in Africa have Student Representative Council (SRC) Members who serve on the University Council and mediate between students and the universities. It time for University management to recognize that without these students there will not be any institutions called University. Lesson learned from successful universities in Africa indicate for African universities to be successful, the involvement of students in decision-making is important at the tertiary level [1]. Most successful universities across the globe have demonstrated that student participation in decision-making may lead to increase in academic performance and decrease in indiscipline among university students. However, the bureaucratic structures that exit in most African universities challenges barely make student participation flourish.

Observational studies in most Ghanaian Universities have shown that university student leaders are constantly threatened whenever they tend to disagree with university authorities. It is however, worthwhile to note that some university leadership still monopolize decision-making despite available literature that replete with known and huge benefits to be derived from participatory decision-making.

It is worrisome that University leadership who ought to know better about the best leadership styles for achieving optimal student participation for goal attainment are still excluding students from some aspects of school decision-making. Students, in particular, are the recipients of the core business in universities; therefore, their contributions assist in the discussion of pedagogical matters and other matters which directly affect them which is why they need to be involved in the management of the universities.

3.2.3 Stakeholders involvement

The term "stakeholders" has become fashionable in many African countries, including Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa. The term is based on the assumption that certain groups and individuals have an interest, or a "stake" in the activities of an institution. According to [58] the stakeholders are all those people who have a legitimate interest in the continuing effectiveness and success of an institution. In contextualizing this definition, one gets a picture of an ideal situation where various stakeholders in a university setting (parents, lectures, business entities, learners, government, community) come together and make decisions in pursuit of a common interest. This fashionable idea of stakeholders' involvement poses a challenge for institutional leaders in most African universities in regard of their skills and capacities as they have to adopt more collaborative and inclusive decision-making processes.

Research into the ever-changing institutional environment and the dynamic roles of University leadership clearly shows that there is now a far greater focus on their interpersonal skills and capabilities, since they are now required to lead the whole institutional community while facilitating participation and collaboration among stakeholders in decision-making, planning and budgeting, their leadership skills and capacities are critical [38]. This implies that to avoid making sole, arbitrary, and emotional decisions that are detrimental to optimum goal attainment, the University leadership should gather all available data or information concerning institutional related issues to be decided upon and make most effective use of available data by sharing with staff and all concerned stakeholders. This becomes easier and possible when the leaders taps from the ideas, knowledge, opinions, and suggestions from all stakeholders and make them understand that their inputs count in making administrative decisions.

Additionally, existing literature advocate for the following as pillars supporting successful African universities.

1. Using Information and Communication Technologies effectively for instructional delivery, professional communication, to develop, produce, acquire and distribute knowledge, skills and competencies across the continent as fast as they are available;

2. Building human resource base that will seek newer and effective ways to combat diseases, reduce energy costs and address climate change;

3. Creating centers of excellence within each region of the continent to develop robust postgraduate studies and develop strong research base with global competitive advantage; and,

4. Seeking opportunities for collaboration and partnership on equal and mutually beneficial platforms with the international world including universities in other continents, development partners, organization and agencies genuinely interested in higher education in Africa.

5. Prioritizing what matters. When working on content, much time should be spent on crafting wonderful headlines, finding great photo and writing a good caption. This may be a more effective strategy than spending too much time on the body copy. The header and image will be responsible for turning a scanner into a reader. Without a grabbing headline, no one is going to read the body copy.

6. Risk taking. Always challenge the status quo and measure energy when a new idea is introduced. Look for ideas that get people talking. In some cases, it can be red flag sign when everyone loves your work. It means it is too familiar, too safe and too comfortable to make a memorable difference.

7. Strategically planning the objectives of the school. Planning the objectives of the school should cover years to come and working towards achieving those objectives.

8. Keeping doors open for new opportunities.

9. Giving back to the society in which the school operates. By so doing, the school reaps back the financial rewards.

In conclusion, [1] argue that the following lessons can be learned from successful universities:

- A policy should be designed to augment the status of all universities to concentrate on applied research and innovation towards industries. The marriage between academic research and industry should be exemplary. The policy should spell out financial incentives for research and entrepreneurship within the Universities and a strong collaboration among academics and students.

- There should also be a strategic plan to encourage synergy between academic researchers and industries in Ghana. Part of the policy is to award scholarship and reward innovations among TU institutes. Practicable policies should be developed to encourage technical training, vocational competencies, and non-traditional academic pursuits among children right from the basic level of education to solve problems related to the society.

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