

Strategic planning in university institutions: a literature review

Leonor Huamán Camacho^{1*} <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1247-9680>

Nelly Euclides Huamán Camacho² <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3219-4044>

Anita Maribel Valladolid Benavides³ <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5656-2748>

¹Universidad Nacional Agraria de la Selva, Tingo María, Perú.

²Investigador independiente.

³Universidad Nacional Intercultural Fabiola Salazar Leguía – Bagua Perú.

*Author for the mail: leonor.huaman@unas.edu.pe

ABSTRACT

The objective is focused on a systematic literature review of strategic planning in higher education institutions. It is found that strategic planning is related to the training process of students and administrative processes, it is established that the deficiency in practical knowledge in strategic management currently evidenced by university professionals can be overcome by means of preparation processes. In order to locate the documents, a bibliographic review was carried out. The results obtained show that this is slightly deficient in the real context faced by higher education institutions.

Keywords: Higher education; Strategic planning; Literature review; Student training; Administrative processes.

Introduction

If strategic planning is assumed as a culture in the context of higher education given its role as an educational institution, it implies that the extension actions and training for

the administration of education that are applied are not free; its consequent access forces the imposition of pedagogical aspects that must be contemplated from the organization of the educational activity, with an educational vision to guarantee its application, without it being seen as more work for teachers, so that it is considered as a new way of perceiving pedagogy in the students that are being formed.

The evaluation of the pedagogical contents that make up the process of extension and education according to the planning in the university context and the specific characteristics of its behavior in the university institution from the integration of the actors involved in education and administrative processes, forces to gain clarity in the structure of concepts and primary categories that are related to planning, education, promotion, theoretical constructs of current pedagogy and methods applied in the methodological work of university institutions to intervene more directly in the formation of the personality of new professionals, as well as in the forms and methods of work on a par with the education sectors of the university sector in pursuit of achieving citizens with a healthier standard of living and better care (Alpízar, 2019).

It is undeniable that strategic planning constitutes a fundamental element in the well-being of university processes. In the same way as in education, adequate attention to administrative services allows improving the quality of human resources, supplies and contributing to the strengthening of a country's higher education institutions (Aranda and Barba, 2019).

Strategic planning in university institutions is therefore a key process for defining the vision, mission, objectives and long-term strategies of the institution. This process helps the university establish a clear framework for making important decisions and coordinating its resources and efforts around shared goals. To carry out strategic planning, universities must follow a series of steps that include (Aranda and Barba, 2019).

Analysis of the current situation: The university should evaluate its current position in terms of resources, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis may include the evaluation of external factors such as the economic, political and social environment. The definition of the vision, mission and values should be taken into account: The university should define its purpose, the fundamental principles that will guide its work and its long-term vision.

There must be an establishment of strategic objectives: The university must establish specific and measurable objectives that are aligned with its vision, mission and values.

And finally a strategy development: The university must identify strategies that will enable it to achieve its objectives and fulfill its mission.

Development

In many countries on our continent, there is evidence of shortages and constant scarcity as problems derived from access to the higher education system; the reasons for this are varied, and the role played by certain national and international institutions, as well as local ones, in indiscriminately promoting the privatization of education is well known (Cevallos, et al., 2021).

At present, many important sectors of the population lack access to public or private education of good quality and the situation seems to be deteriorating, further marginalizing a large part of the population. It is a reality that educational institutions are the basis of most programs aimed at reducing the cultural gap of a society, and their cost constitutes a high proportion of the total educational expenditure of nations (De Vincenzi, 2021).

All of the above are matters that fall within the area of strategic planning in educational institutions, which in turn allow decisions to be made to identify and clarify the main functions and components of an effective educational service delivery system; to assess the state of existing services in terms of resources; to establish their strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats; to establish ways to improve the system and how to implement them, combining sound management principles with a good understanding of the unique conditions of each public or private institution (De Vincenzi, 2021).

It is of utmost importance that university management in Peru involves the use of an appropriate methodology for educational programs, since it is a priority to apply criteria of efficiency and effectiveness in practice in order to increase the quality of the educational sector in Peru.

It is necessary to have the availability of trained human resources, in addition to having quality facilities that are accessible to the population; these factors are necessary components of any basic higher education program, but they are not sufficient in themselves to offer efficient and quality services in accordance with the demands of our population (Díaz, Reyes and Bustamante, 2020).

The university is assumed as a component of the social and political structure of all countries, the best conditions of university education generate greater expectations and opportunities in the labor and productive aspect, with their corresponding implications at the micro and macroeconomic levels; becoming a support for development policies of a State or government. Since they are institutions that in general terms provide certain policies and strategies for the achievement of quality in higher education in many nations (Díaz, Reyes and Bustamante, 2020).

The provision of quality education from the point of view must respond to criteria of quantity, quality, opportunity, place and cost, confirms the relationship of inputs or input resources, supervision and monitoring process, as well as output or product (impact) which in turn can be characterized as self-sustainable (Hernandez and Reyes, 2020).

For Hernández and Reyes (2020) this process also includes the analysis of the environment in which the intervention will be carried out, the definition of indicators that will allow measuring the achievement of results and the ways of verifying these achievements. The design is the formulation of an intervention hypothesis through which we propose to solve a previously identified problem.

Finally, evaluation can be assumed to be the permanent attitude that is applied in the design, in the execution and also at the end of the intervention. The evaluation of the design, prior to implementation, is also called pre- or initial evaluation, and its objective is to guarantee the greatest possible coherence of the processes. Evaluation during implementation is called process evaluation or follow-up or monitoring, whose objective is to ensure compliance with planned activities and progress in achieving results (Infante, 2020).

For Infante (2020), university education is a permanent process based on information, knowledge and actions aimed at the training of students to enable them to acquire the necessary competencies that will allow them to enhance the quality of their students, as well as to optimize the administrative processes of the public and private sector of the State.

Hence its importance in the formative field and therefore its treatment through education as the main way for the formation of an adequate culture in students (Oviedo, Medina and Ojeda, 2018).

It is a reality that through the curricular pathway a relationship of extracurricular knowledge and informal education can be complemented, so as to obtain a

comprehensive approach and greater effectiveness in the development of the training of future professionals. The related university education as a component of all the formative work to be developed in the teaching process, this participates in the methodological work system that is developed in the university institution where the teacher through the technical and management bodies (Oviedo, Medina and Ojeda, 2018).

The performance of the professional in different universities may vary according to their position, level of experience and area of specialization. However, there are some skills and competencies that are essential for successful performance in any role within a university, such as (Oviedo, Medina, & Ojeda, 2018):

1. Technical knowledge: University professionals must have a solid technical knowledge in their area of specialization in order to be able to teach, do research or work in other areas of the university.
2. Teaching skills: University professionals who serve as professors must have effective teaching skills, such as the ability to communicate clearly, motivate students, and adapt to the needs of the students.

In all this process a fundamental role played by the professional in the different universities, have the responsibility to prepare the teaching collectives in the aspects of planning or strategic management, in the same way that teachers prepare them as educators from the priority approach of promoting education as the essence of their work, for this reason the curriculum to be implemented in university sector must be oriented and contextualized from the theory, to offer possible solutions to the real problems that arise in the institutions of the Peruvian State(Oviedo, Medina and Ojeda, 2018).

It is necessary to emphasize that cost analysis is important as long as it becomes a permanent tool to support the management of educational institutions, under the modality of a cost system, rather than a sporadic evaluation. Accepting that educational services can be seen as productive units necessarily implies that a cost system must be foreseen, as in any productive or service company, where the administrative staff must be informed about the evolution of the institution's costs and, if necessary, the costs of competing companies in order to be able to work efficiently in a highly competitive market (Ramos, 2021).

According to Ramos (2021), we know that in the university education sector, the complexity and growing cost of educational care implies a greater complexity in its administrative management and makes it necessary to adopt techniques to ensure solid support for the correct choice of the different strategies to be followed. Therefore, in order for the personnel in charge of making decisions in a higher education institution to be able to successfully carry out their management, their decisions must be based on the most appropriate and detailed knowledge possible of the functioning of university education services.

In this way, decisions will be assumed and taken with the greatest degree of certainty and the least degree of uncertainty possible, remembering that improvisation is the mother of disaster. An appropriate cost system leads to a better use or utilization of available resources, which can result in money savings, as well as an increase in the quality of educational services (Rivero, et al., 2020).

On the other hand, university management is a key process for the proper functioning of an educational institution. This management involves the planning, organization, direction and control of the university's resources and activities in order to achieve the established strategic objectives.

Among the main areas of university management are (Rivero, et al., 2020):

1. Academic management: This area is responsible for the planning, development and evaluation of the university's academic programs, as well as the training and updating of professors.
2. Human resources management: This area is responsible for the management of the university's personnel, including the selection, hiring, training, evaluation and promotion of employees.

It is not possible to talk about management without knowing the theory of cost, which is understood as the economic sacrifice necessary to obtain a good or service. From the economists' point of view, the sacrifice to be considered consists of the alternative opportunities that must be set aside when a choice is made for the use of one or more resources in a particular or specific way. It can also be understood that the opportunity cost of a resource represents the value of the sacrifice involved in it, i.e. that a given resource has several uses or employments and refers precisely to the best viable alternative in which it could have been employed (Rivero, et al., 2020).

Teachers should facilitate the proper handling of 'strategic planning, transmitting the idea that it is a support function for the internal functioning of a social organization. This is oriented to supply or provide the material elements (called goods) and the complementary activities for the operation of these elements in an optimal or guaranteed state (called services): both, goods and services, are used for the governmental production of public services, or economic goods through the different entities that constitute the public administration (Aranda and Barba, 2019).

Any activity focused on training is likely to be conceived and carried out from the phases of the administrative process. It is explained that in strategic planning in organic units are part a public institution, as the integrity of the function does not necessarily mean exclusivity of its practice by the body that plans, but rather of all its authors.

University education is characterized as a comprehensive process that seeks not only the acquisition of specific knowledge in a discipline, but also the development of skills and competencies that can cope with students in today's society. In addition, university education also includes training in principles and ethics that guide the actions of future professionals. Among the main benefits of university training are (Infante, 2020):

1. Improvement of skills and knowledge: Students acquire specific knowledge in their area of study, as well as skills that enable them to perform efficiently in their professional field.
2. Personal and professional development: University education contributes to the personal and professional development of students, allowing them to grow academically and in the workplace.
3. employment opportunities

In this sense, within the actions to be developed, the program management will include the development of the technical phases that, by nature, are oriented to the classification, capture, conservation, dissemination and updating of information to improve the level of planning decisions (Rivero et al., 2020):

1. Using the cataloging of services and goods.
2. By means of the registry of suppliers of services and goods.
3. By programming for planning.
4. By means of planning control and registration.

In the training, it is transmitted that an important control is the permanent review of administrative actions and instruments for management in each operational unit to point

out any tendency or interpretation that may break the integrity that fulfills the function of educational planning (Rivero et al., 2020).

As future professionals, they will be responsible for planning with the objective of permanently updating and using accurate information to guide the application of technical processes. Since information is conceptualized as all data that facilitates new knowledge or an increase in current knowledge, university staff should be explained that everything is a control process, necessary to coordinate with the rationalization apparatus, the usefulness of the instruments for planning should be evaluated once a year to improve administrative, technical and/or political university decision making (Infante, 2020).

Teachers will emphasize that the acquisition process is technical for the strategic planning instance. It should be conveyed to students that it consists of different technical-administrative activities of a legal nature oriented that a public or private entity, reaches the ownership, availability or power of use of goods and services on an ongoing or temporary basis. Students should understand that in each public or private institution works as a specialized body responsible. Based on the characteristics of the entity, this function can be exercised in centralized or deconcentrated ((Infante, 2020).

In this sense, it is necessary to take into account that the procurement process has its origin in previously programmed needs. They are carried out if the actual or possible non-existence of these in the higher education institution is verified. It becomes an efficient mechanism for the control and participation of the accounting, budget and treasury departments, which will probably not give course to procurement documents, services and goods required by unauthorized entities.

The teachers clearly transmit that, in any request, forecast, procurement, supply or administration of services or goods, the criteria and instruments will be exercised with austerity character established by the institution. We know that what we know as austerity does not mean or is understood as ceasing to invest, on the contrary, it means making a better and appropriate use of the economic or material resources available (De Vincenzi, 2021).

We must keep in mind that austerity in strategic planning should be understood as the balanced estimation of the needs of goods and services of the institution, the rationalized use of allocated resources and their appropriate combination, to achieve better results for the benefit of the university community in general. The vision or condition of austerity is a basic element. Its observation, application and compliance

correspond to all the instances of the public or private institution, regardless of its denomination, structure, location, managers, among others (De Vincenzi, 2021).

Austerity in strategic planning refers to the need for careful and rational planning of available resources in order to achieve the institution's strategic objectives without compromising its financial stability. In the context of strategic planning, austerity implies that the institution should be aware of the limitation of financial and material resources, and, therefore, it is necessary to make an efficient reduction of them (De Vincenzi, 2021).

According to De Vincenzi (2021) this can be achieved by identifying the priority and strategic objectives of the institution, and evaluating the resources available to achieve them. To implement austerity in strategic planning, the institution must follow some steps, such as:

1. Establish realistic objectives: The institution must define achievable and measurable objectives that are in line with available resources.
2. Identify and prioritize key projects: The institution should identify the projects that are most critical to achieving its strategic objectives and prioritize them in the substitution of resources.

Regarding the selection of articles, two criteria were taken into account, those that have the objective of reviewing articles that focus on strategic planning in higher education institutions. The other criterion is regarding the time of publication of the articles, we selected those that are necessary trying to be no older than five years and in journals indexed in official sites such as Latindex, Scopus, Scielo, among others.

Given that the type of research is applied since it uses a systematic review of literature on strategic planning in higher education educational institutions. The scope or level of this research is assumed to be exploratory and correlational, because it seeks to establish the degree of relationship between strategic planning in educational institutions as a basis for the development and formative use of this sector.

According to the results of the exploration of several national and international scientific articles, it can be affirmed that in the current university educational context there is a marked deficiency in strategic planning in the educational institutions of higher education, probably related to a lack of appropriate formative actions for their human resources. This result expresses that more adequate training mechanisms should

be established, i.e., the knowledge received in the classroom through their teachers should be closely related to the activities they will have to develop.

The development of competencies in strategic management of educational programs or management of institutions constitutes a curricular contribution, as it establishes a relationship or correspondence between professional profile, curriculum, competencies and learning activities. This development of competencies is fundamental to guarantee an effective and successful management of academic programs in an educational institution. Among the competencies that must be developed to achieve this are (Cevallos et al., 2021):

Strategic analysis and planning: This competency involves the ability to identify and analyze internal and external factors that result in program success, establish clear objectives, and develop strategic plans to achieve them.

Resource management: This competency involves the ability to effectively manage available resources, including budget, staff and facilities, to maximize program performance.

Evaluation and continuous improvement: This competency involves the ability to measure and evaluate the programs being implemented in the university context.

- a) In addition, the process related to planning, executing and evaluating curricularly is a process of the educational technical type, which implies the pedagogical reflection of the competences of the curricular units. Considering the application of structured strategies in the activities assumes that the actions developed are facilitated from a reliable context that allows certain opportunities for the safe appropriation of tools, necessary in relation to its management and assuming certain strategies as a logical and systemic structure of forms, modes and techniques that allow the potential full knowledge of what represents the university strategic planning.

Conclusions

The deficiency in practical knowledge currently evidenced by university professionals can be overcome through internship agreements in the public or private sector that

handle processes of administration and control of assets, since these are fundamental sectors to achieve the purpose of improving the quality of training of these professionals in strategic planning in higher education institutions; therefore, the curriculum and pedagogical approaches used in the different universities in Peru must also be adapted.

With the purpose of promoting the development of competencies in strategic management that will provide students with the skills and techniques, with the corresponding valuation of the environment, in order to assume a more active participation in a more demanding context, but which in turn is a challenge to the will and better decisions of those who administer university education programs.

Finally, most of the works consulted express that university strategic planning needs a contextualized curriculum where a variety of activities and workshops aimed at the process of strategic planning, management and evaluation are developed, which consolidates strategies conceived from the real needs of the university sector and satisfies the university policies assumed by the Peruvian government.