

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF STRATEGIC
PLANS IN GHANAIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

BY
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Faculty of Humanities, Christian Service University College, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Science degree in
Monitoring and Evaluation

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

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Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the Christian Service University College.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: DR. STEPHEN APPIAH TAKYI

ABSTRACT

The study used the descriptive research approach to assess the performance of the strategic plan implementation of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and Christian Service University College (CSUC) in Ghana. This research targeted middle-level managers including heads of departments, registrars, finance officers and union leaders. Methodologically, face-to-face interviews from 20 respondents were conducted to obtain primary data aided by an interview guide and this was complemented by secondary data. The results of the study showed that CSUC which is a private university recorded higher implementation rate of their strategic plan (85%) than UCC which is a public university with 70% due to committed staff, visible support from the President and reduced bureaucracies. The findings established that both UCC and CSUC did not prioritize monitoring and evaluation of their strategic plans. The findings on the barriers to strategy implementation showed that the major challenges encountered during the implementation of the strategic plans were: funding, resistance to change, low awareness by the key stakeholders. In order to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the strategic plans, the management of CSUC and UCC should adopt management practices that encourage effective communication among the top, middle, and bottom staff of their institutions. This will help bridge the gap between strategy formulators and implementers. Additionally, the institutional managers should ensure that annual budget always aligns with the strategic plan. The institutions should also use innovative strategies to generate alternative funding sources and these should be allocated to each of the key actions in the strategic plan.

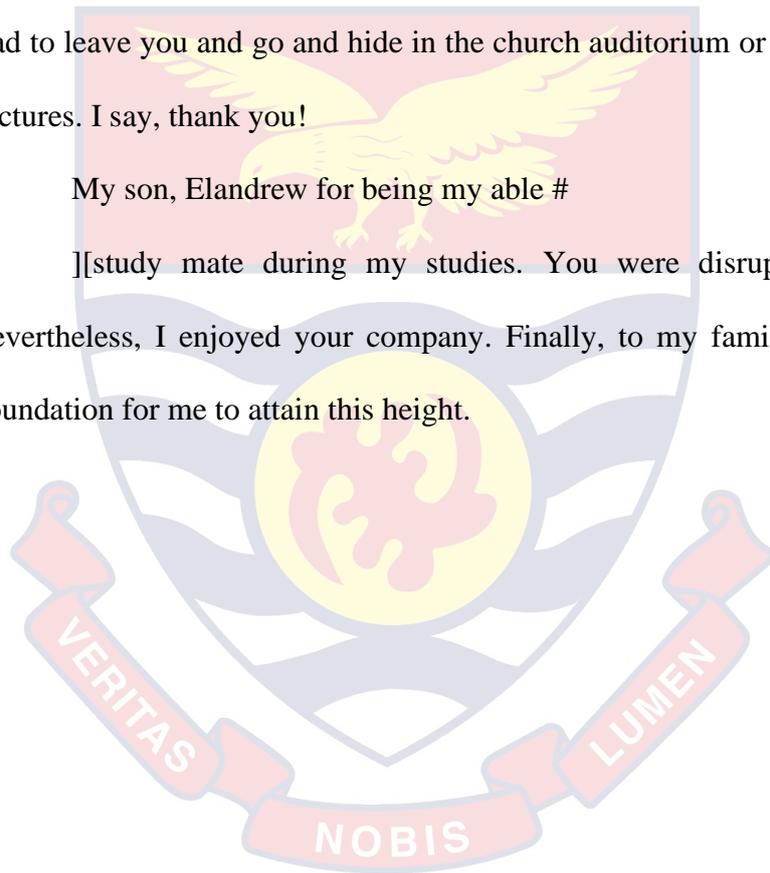
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My son, Elandrew for being my able #

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DEDICATION

To my family, wife and children.

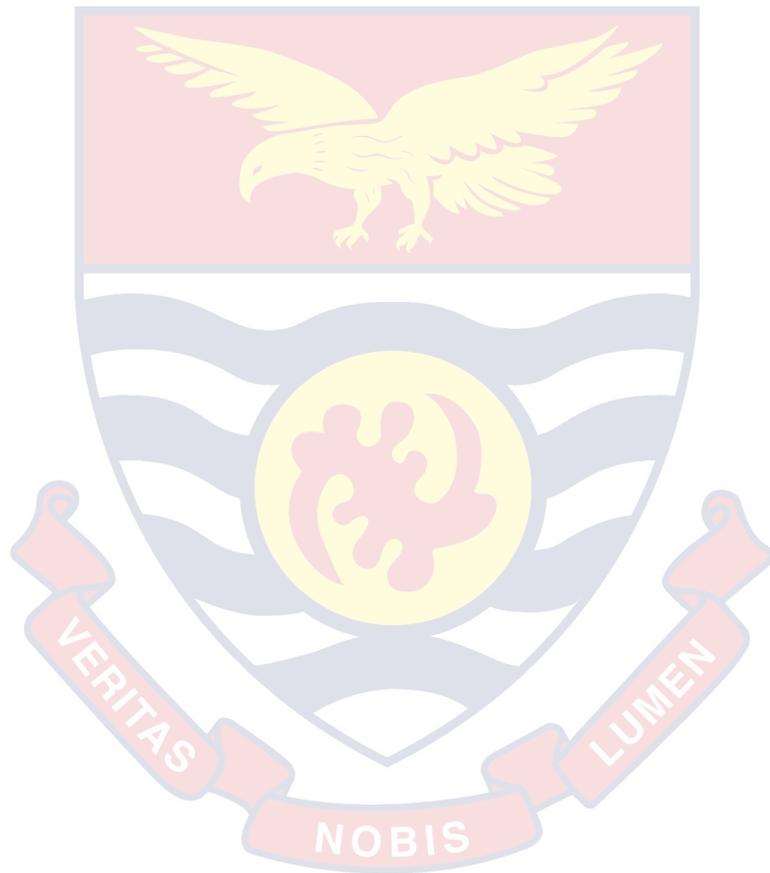


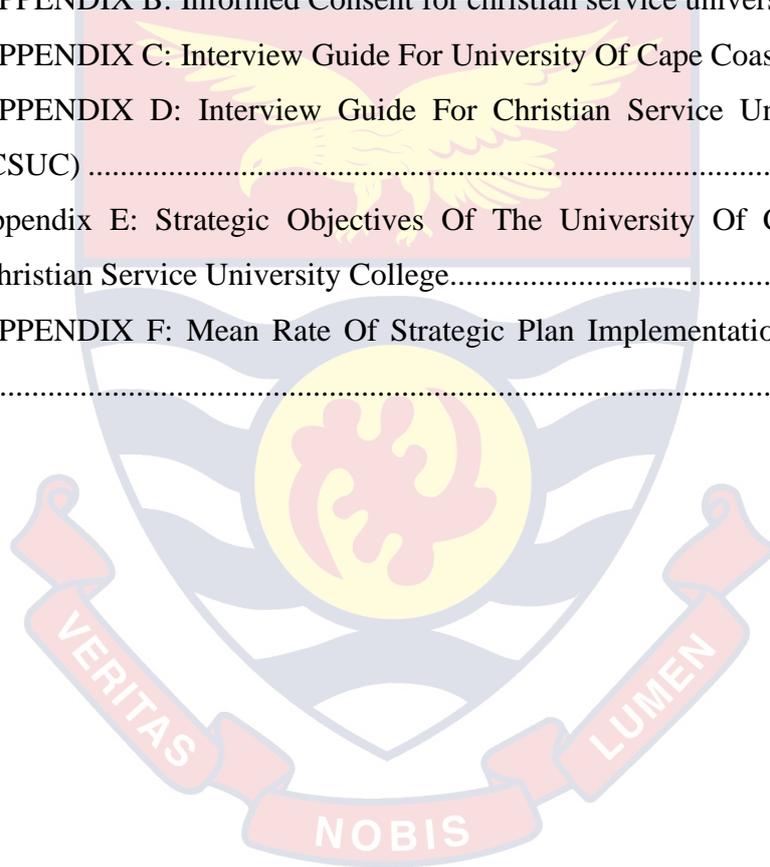
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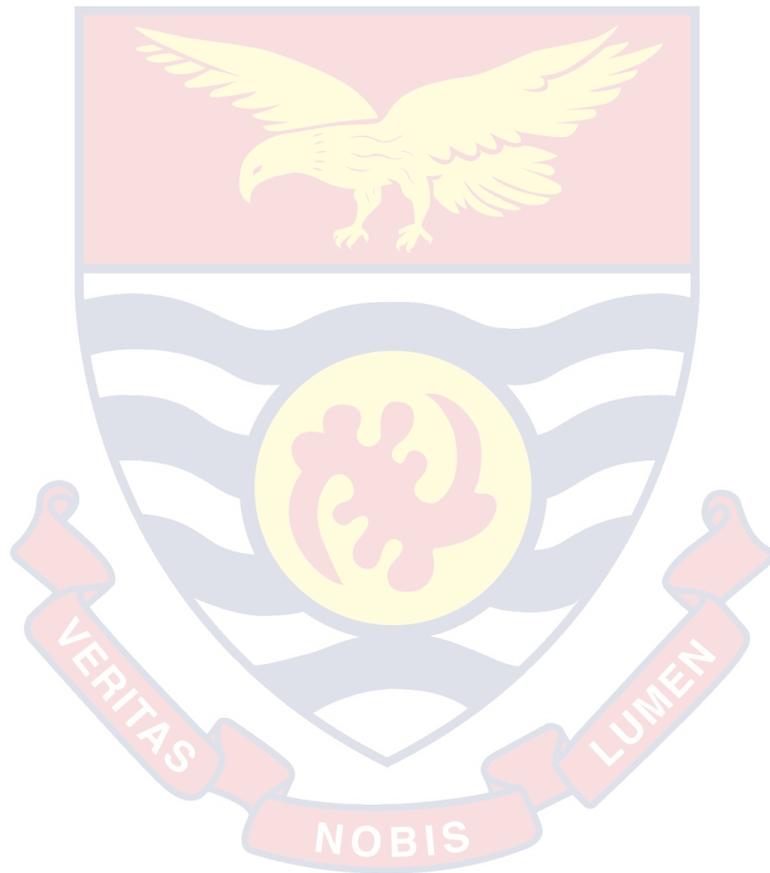
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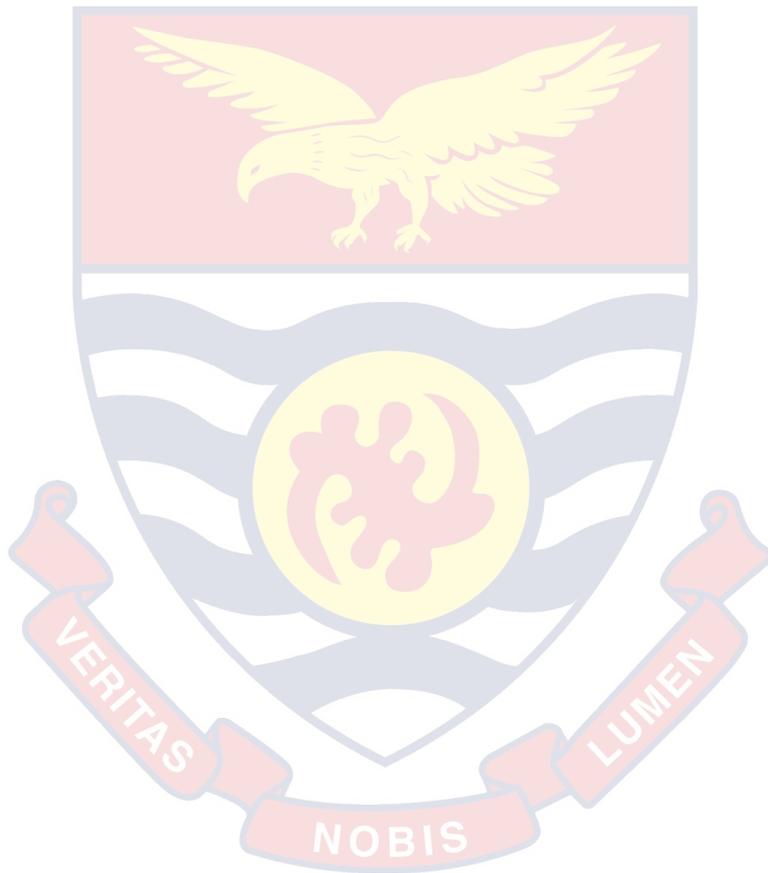
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Association of African Universities
BIC	Business Incubation Centre
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
DAPQA	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
DICTS	Directorate of Information, Communication and Technology Services
DRIC	Directors for the Directorate for Research, Innovation and Consultancy
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation in Development
TEMA	Trademark East Africa
UCC	University of Cape Coast
SRC	Students' Representative Council
UTAG	University Teachers' Association
SSAG-UCC	Senior Staff Association of Ghana, UCC
TEWU	Tertiary Education Workers' Union
UCC	University of Cape Coast
CSUC	Christian Service University College

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In an era in which competition, accountability and cost-effectiveness are valued, Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are under pressure not only to improve their performance but also to demonstrate improvement and dynamism. Criticisms of weak accountability mechanisms and poor institutional learning within the higher education system are widespread. The Association of African Universities (AAU) stated that these pressures can be traced to the tenets of globalization, technological advances in education, massification, changing student demographics and competition (Association of African Universities, 2016).

In the face of these and other pressures, HEIs are expected to demonstrate their ability to be successful, maintain stability in a changing environment and respond constructively to increasing competition or external threats (Davies, 2008). Dziyaba, (2016) lays strong emphasis on strategic planning and evidence-based decision making by arguing that if higher education institutions are to survive and remain relevant then there is the need for them to be committed to the strategic planning process. Strategic planning when adopted guarantees success and sustainability of organizational goals and objectives (Mugo, 2017). Additionally, an understanding of the factors that promote or hinder successful strategic plan implementation is important to ensure the success and sustainability of strategic planning initiatives.

Strategic planning refers to the management of the decisions and activities which define a company's long-term performance (Amornpinyo, 2016) or defining where the company will be next year or the following years, how they will get there and whether that will be achieved or not (Akyel, KorkusuzPolat, & Arslankay, 2012). Strategic planning is a participatory process that involves formulating goals, objectives, and action steps, and monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, and revising the plan. This is achieved by analyzing the institutions present and future situation to design a future for the institution.

When implemented well, strategic planning can help university administrators and employees build consensus to drive action towards the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives (Goldman & Salem, 2015). It can also empower middle managers to align routine activities to the broad goals of the institution. Strategic planning also encourages and promote evidence-based decision making.

Meanwhile, other authors including Dooris, (2003) argue that strategic planning might not solve real problems but rather increase bureaucratic processes which can repress institutional creativity (Taylor & Machado, 2006) and decrease an organization's ability to take advantage of unplanned opportunities (Goldman & Salem, 2015).

While many researchers have commented on the strategic plan implementation processes and its attendant challenges, few attentions have been given to the factors that contribute to or inhibit successful strategy implementation, especially in Ghanaian universities. This study is set to

examine the factors that contribute to and/or inhibit strategic plan implementation among higher educational institutions in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Higher education in Africa has witnessed significant expansion since the 1960s, engendered by factors including globalization, population growth and growing demand, expansion of African economies and the resultant need for skilled labour, establishment and proliferation of a private higher education sub-sector (Association of African Universities, 2016).

The continuous massification of enrolments comes with attendant challenges. These include, among others, the leadership and management capacity of higher education institutions to deliver on the core mandates of their institutions, the quality of the degrees and other qualification being churned out, pressures on infrastructure; need to have relevant pedagogies to shape the content of the courses being run, and scholarly productivity and global competitiveness. There is also the need for higher education institution managers to pursue resource mobilization without affecting the quality of their products (Association of African Universities, 2016).

These challenges impose on university managers a burden to develop strategic plans to increase the quality of higher education and excellence in the face of competition. These plans are usually a long term that enables university administrators to develop a coherent and methodical blueprint to drive the future direction of the university. Davies (2008) emphasized the need for schools to adopt strategic planning approaches and processes, and in the process described

such schools as being strategically focused. As a result, many universities have developed and implemented strategic plans over the years to address their peculiar needs.

Many universities have initiated strategies that have failed to achieve the intended goals for varying reasons. Among these myriads of reasons include the lack of understanding for and usefulness of monitoring and evaluation practices, insufficient resources, communication barriers, weak capacities of staff, neglecting employees and other stakeholders as well as weak leadership (Muteti, 2017; Schaap, 2012; Smith & Cantrell, 2011).

Researchers such as Davis (2008); Ofori & Atiogbe (2012); Hinton, (2012) and Goldman & Salem (2015) have examined the role of strategic planning in higher education; however, their studies failed to highlight the factors that promote and/or inhibit successful implementation of the strategic plan (Johnson & Scholes, 2002; Hrebianiak, 2013). The value of strategic plan lies with its successful implementation. It is therefore important to identify and understand the factors that contribute to or inhibit the successful implementation of strategic plan in Ghanaian universities since they have significant implications for future strategic plan formulation initiatives.

This study will investigate the factors that promote or inhibit the successful implementation of strategic plan at the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of this study is to assess the factors that promote and/or inhibit the implementation of strategic plans in tertiary institutions in Ghana.

The specific objectives that can help in achieving this goal include:

- i. To assess the extent to which the strategic targets of selected Ghanaian tertiary institutions have been achieved.
- ii. To examine the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions.
- iii. To assess the barriers to the successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent are strategic targets stipulated in the institutional strategic plans achieved?
- ii. What are the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions?
- iii. What are the barriers to a successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focused on assessing the performance of the strategic planning initiatives of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College by observing the extent of achievement of the strategic objectives and the factors that contributed to achievement or hindered the process. These institutions were selected based on their history of developing

and implementing strategic plans, the similarity in the content of their strategic plan document and implementation periods.

Three research questions were posed to stimulate evidence for the study. The first question relates to the extent to which strategic targets were achieved. This study, therefore, examines the extent to which targets stipulated in the key thrusts have been achieved; the added value of the strategic plan (McKinsey, 2006), frequent monitoring and evaluation (Franken, et al., (2009), leadership commitment (Waterman, et al. 2003), meeting targets on time (Jorgensen, et al, 2008), level of stakeholder buy-in (Raps & Kauffman, 2005).

The second research question looked at the barriers to strategic plan implementation which was measured against indicators such as: resource barriers (Schaap, 2012; Niven, 2002), leadership (Niven, 2002), communication barriers (Muteti, 2017; Ofori & Atiogbe, 2012; Smith & Cantrell, 2011), lack or weak monitoring and evaluation practices (Malei, 2015; Young, 2001), and non-participatory approaches (Lindblom & Ohlsson, 2011; Harter, et al, 2010) to strategy implementation.

The final research question sought answers for the factors that promote successful strategic plan implementation. These required measuring variables such as clear communication (Muteti, 2017); employee and stakeholder involvement (Mugambi, 2017); leadership (Macharia, 2013); adoption of monitoring and evaluation practices (Dziyaba, 2016; Malei, 2015; Young, 2001) and sufficient resources (Alharty, Rashid and Pagliar, 2017).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The growing popularity of strategic planning as an important management tool in the face of incessant challenges that confront higher education, calls for an understanding of the factors that promote or inhibit successful strategic plan implementation. This understanding is required because even the carefully drafted strategies can crumble for several reasons. It is for this reason that the present study sought to assess the performance of strategic planning initiatives in two Ghanaian universities; one public (University of Cape Coast) and one private (Christian Service University College). The results of the study will form the basis for assessing the success or otherwise of ongoing and future strategic planning initiatives in institutions of higher learning.

The results of this study will further help administrators of the universities to understand the challenges of strategy implementation and how to overcome them in order to achieve success and gain a competitive advantage over their rivals. Additionally, this research will help in enlightening the key decision-makers in the universities in policies formulation and on how to successfully implement their strategies and how they could purpose to mitigate the challenges facing it. The findings of the study will also be useful to stakeholders such as financiers and investors in formulating and planning areas of intervention and support.

Finally, the study will provide additional knowledge to existing and future institutions on challenges to strategy implementation and provide information to potential and current scholars on strategic planning in Ghana.

This will expand their knowledge on strategy implementation and also identify areas of further study. The study will be a source of reference material for future researchers on other related topics; it will also help other academicians who undertake the same topic in their studies. The study will also highlight other important relationships that require further research; this may be in the areas of relationships between successful strategy implementation and institutional performance.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the fact that the study respondents are very busy office holders thus, making it difficult to access them to participate in the interviews. The researcher therefore resorted to using working through their administrators to remind the respondent and arrange a suitable time for the interviews. The researcher also employed various communication channels including email, WhatsApp and Text messages in addition to phone calls to remind and arrange a suitable time with the respondents. This approach proved relevant in accessing the respondents especially during hours in which they were less busy with other commitments to conduct the interviews.

Data saturation was attained after 15 interviews, in spite of several reminders, the unavailability of some of the respondents reduced the probability of reaching more participants. However, this difficulty did not compromise the conclusions of the study given the fact that the data obtained was sufficient to draw reliable conclusions having attained data saturation.

Responses for the study were obtained from sampled union leaders, senior members both teaching and non-teaching from the University of Cape

Coast and Christian Service University for the study. Thus, the views of other stakeholders such as junior staff and students were omitted from the study, whose opinions could have further enriched the findings of the study.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study has been organized into five main chapters with each chapter addressing a major component of the research objectives. Chapter One gives a general overview of the study and provides the justification as well as significance of the study along with the key research questions the study seeks to answer. The literature review which was discussed in Chapter Two and provided an insight into the empirical evidence on the subject matter under consideration. This chapter is an expansion of the research questions and will elaborate on the arguments surrounding strategic planning in higher education, promoters and barriers to implementing strategic plans as well as the performance of strategic plans.

Chapter Three presented a discussion of the research methodology employed in order to answer the research questions and while the fourth Chapter consisted of the research findings in light of the data collected. Chapter Five comprised of four sub-sections namely: summary of research findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature on strategic planning in higher education. The subtopics in this chapter to be discussed include an overview of strategic planning, strategic planning in higher education, why higher educational institutions need strategic planning as well as the factors that contribute to or inhibit successful strategic plan implementation. The components of this chapter were informed by research questions in order to give the theoretical basis for the analysis of the research results.

2.2 Meaning of Strategic Planning

Literature is replete with definition of strategic planning. Perera and Peiro (2012) defined strategic planning as the systematic process of creating a document that indicates the way an organization plans to progress from its current state to the desired future. To other authors, strategic planning involves identifying the desired future and developing the appropriate decision-making guidelines that leads to the achievement of the goals of the organization (Swayne, Duncan & Ginter, 2006). Strategic planning therefore necessitates the development of long-term goals and objectives along with the associated operational activities to drive the future engagements of the institution.

Strategic planning can also imply a deliberate (Dincer, et. al, 2006) and systematic analysis and evaluation of procedures (David, 2011) that is initiated by the top management to determine the mission, major objectives and

strategies that govern resource acquisition and allocation to achieve the organization's aims (Stoney, 2001).

Several models have been advanced to support the development of strategic planning. According to Ofori and Atiogbe (2011), basic strategic planning originated from Ansoff (1965; 1987) with his five-stage model which involved formulation of objectives, internal and external scan, strategy evaluation and operationalization and work plan. However, this model has been seen to be rigid and promote bureaucracy (Chaffee, 1985). Following Ansoff (1965; 1987) came the Hax model (1990) which posits that components of the strategic plan must be framed along managerial responsibilities, viz, corporate, business and functional. According to Hax (1990), corporate level responsibilities include determining institutional missions, identification of business units and allocation of resources in line with the strategic priorities. The business unit is responsible for coordinating activities to enhance the competitive advantage of the institution while at the functional level, competency development issues including human resource, administrative procedures and infrastructure, financing, logistics and technology as dealt.

Recent strategic planning models have incorporated the issue of close monitoring to spot and remedy problems early before they degenerate. This dynamic approach ensures effective implementation of the strategy (David 2009). This notwithstanding, there is evidence that strategic planning is often neglected and ill-conceived Sashittal, & Jassawalla, (2001) or the implementation process is not properly understood (McGuinness & Morgan, 2005). McGuinness and Morgan (2005) also recognized that for strategic

planning to yield its intended results, strategy formulation and implementation should be prioritized and conducted separately, yet in a sequential manner.

Congruent to the fact that there is no single definition for strategic planning, Parnell (2006) and McGuinness and Morgan (2005) acknowledged that no single strategic process has the capability to result to a sustainable competitive advantage. Consequently, in a dynamic environment, organizations need to adjust their characteristics and choose from a wide range of strategies in order to succeed rather than depend on specific aspects. Also, classical understanding of strategic planning must be replaced with more dynamic approaches (Abraham, 2005) and organizations should prioritize learning new concepts, embrace creativity and innovation and systemic thinking that embrace business process redesign rather than dwell on past successes (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005).

In this study, strategic planning is defined as a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organized strategies, policies, and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them. This involves the identification, implementation and monitoring of strategies of the institution of the institution.

2.3 Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Over the past few decades, the quality of higher education has attracted considerable attention for numerous reasons. These concerns stem from the recognition of the potential of higher education to influence change and development congruent with the challenges and changes that confront higher

educational institutions. Some of these concerns include the public fear of compromising educational quality in favour of expansion in enrolment, decreasing financial support for education, rapid technological advancement (Materu, 2007), outdated academic programmes and curricular, increasing competition from private and transnational education providers (Tavernier, 2005; Lerner, 1999). Many universities therefore resort to strategic planning as a means to effect beneficial and strategic changes to their operations in order to respond to the challenges and changes, they face (Lerner, 1999).

While strategic planning has its roots in the military and business, many universities and higher educational institutions around the world have applied it as a management tool (Taylor, de Lourdes Machado, & Peterson, 2008). Universities in the advanced and OECD countries such as Australia (Anderson, Johnson, & Milligan, 1999), USA (Hayward, 2008; HR, 2013) and the UK (Maassen, & Olsen, 2007) have a longstanding history of developing and implementing strategic plans.

Goldman and Salem (2015) have also supported universities in South Korea, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to develop strategic plans. Universities in Mexico such as the University of Guadalajara (2014-2030) and Malaysian universities all have strategic planning efforts (Farley & Johor, 2012).

In Africa, Hayward, Ncayiyana and Johnson (2003) published a guidance handbook for developing strategic plan in African universities. Their USAID funded research drew from strategic planning experiences from selected universities from South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda and the United States. Ngwana

(2003) also studied strategic planning at the University of Buea in Cameroon in which he observed the strategic choices in the strategic planning process while Luhanga (2010) also researched in to strategic planning at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. In his research, Luhanga (2010) argued that the University started to pursue strategic planning in 1989 as a self-controlled planning exercise to respond to the political and socio-economic challenges of the 1980s.

In Ghana, some of the popular universities have a long history of developing strategic plans. Some of the most recent strategic plans include that of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and technology (2005-2014), University of Ghana (2014-2024), University for Development Studies (2017-2023), University of Mines and Technology (2015-2024), University of Cape Coast (2012-2017; 2017-2022) and Christian Service University College (2012-2022). Ofori and Atiogbe (2011) observed the strategic planning processes in three public universities, namely the University of Cape Coast, University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of science and Technology. Their study focused on the strategies adopted in the development of the plan, the implementation process, the challenges encountered and the factors that led to successful implementation of their strategic plans. This study focused on only public universities, however, this study will examine the factors that contribute to the success and /or inhibit strategic planning in both public (University of Cape Coast) and private (Christian Service University College) tertiary institutions in Ghana.

While the foregoing literature support the adoption of strategic planning in higher education and also provide a framework for understanding the

conditions and processes for developing strategic planning, the current study will examine strategic planning in both public and private universities in Ghana.

2.4 Why Higher Educational Institutions Need Strategic Plans

Higher education institutions around the world have been faced with several challenges including the dwindling provision of public funds and the increasing social demands on higher education. Consequently, higher educational institutions are taking on more responsibility for their own future planning; hence, the need to further strengthen their capacity for strategic planning and performance.

However, there are many reservations that strategic planning in higher education can result to institutional change and development. Zechlin (2008), argued that most universities lacked the capacity to develop and implement strategic plans because of their operational orientation. Majority of the university leaders are either unable or unwilling to focus on activities that will result to systematic change. Consequently, many strategic plans are reactionary rather than conscious and systematic effort to make changes in the goals, and strategies of the institution. Again, only few universities have been able to achieve significant result from strategic planning initiatives, while in some instances, the result generated controversies (Lerner, 1999). Taylor, de Lourdes Machado and Peterson (2008) also suggested that most strategic planning initiatives in higher educational institutions fail because, most institutions pursue strategic planning to avoid being seen as lacking leadership or to create a façade with ulterior motives.

Notwithstanding the various criticisms on the application of the strategic planning processes in the management of tertiary institutions, research has shown that strategic planning can provide several benefits to achieve an institution. Peterson (2004) believed that strategic planning is an important tool for institutional effectiveness. Thus, institutions that develop and implement their strategic plans are more likely to be successful.

Empirical results from strategic planning studies have shown that, universities resort to strategic planning as a requirement for accreditation (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2012), to manage changes in both internal and external environments (Goldman & Salem, 2015), to respond to political and socio-economic factors, emerging technologies and changes in government regulations (Materu, 2007). These pressures help the universities to align their strategic plans to the institutional values to ensure the efficient and effective running of the university and direct the attention of the university to meet the demands of their various stakeholders.

Strategic planning has many benefits to higher educational institutions. Strategic planning can help university managers to formulate a blueprint to analyze and translate intended strategies into actionable activities and allocate scarce resources. Goldman and Salem, (2015) conceded that strategic planning has the potential to help guide senior management, empower middle managers and encourage evidence-based decision making.

2.5 Assessing the Extent of Strategy Achievement

Arriving at an accurate estimate of the rate of success or failure of strategic plan implementation has been difficult to achieve. Several attempts by

researchers and management consulting firms to quantify the rate of success or failure of strategic plan implementation have produced mixed results.

Raps and Kauffman (2005), reported that only 10% to 30% of intended strategies are achieved. In most cases, the primary objectives of the strategic plans are somehow dissipated as the strategy implementation takes effect. The key to achieving greater success rate in the implementation of the strategic plan is an integrative view of the implementation process (Raps and Kauffman, 2005).

According to the August 2010 edition of the Fortune magazine, 90% of the strategic plans are unsuccessful, and single most important cause of this is believed to be the weak application of the strategic plans (Waterman, et al. 2003). Although it has been widely accepted that change is necessary for the growth of organizations, Higgs and Rowland (2005) observed that more than 70% of change-oriented attempts in the name of strategic plans are unsuccessful.

Other studies have estimated the rate of strategic plan implementation failure at 33% (Markins & Steele, 2005), 28% (McKinsey, 2006), 59% (Jorgensen, Owen & Neus, 2008), 34% (Franken, Edwards & Lambert, 2009), 44% (Project Management Institute, 2014; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2013). Indicators of failure were defined by achieving less than 50% of the potential financial performance of the strategic plan (Markins & Steele, 2005), perceived effectiveness of the plan (McKinsey, 2006) and failure to meet strategic objectives such as time, budget or quality goals (Jorgensen, et al, 2008).

According to Franken, et al., (2009), 34% of the organizations they sampled reported strategy implementation performance below average.

Although it can be claimed that between 50% - 90% of strategic initiatives fail, as provided in the literature, this is likely to be an overestimation, because the true rate of implementation failure or success remains undetermined (Candido & Santos, 2015).

2.6 Barriers to Strategic Plan Implementation

Strategic plan implementation is said to be more difficult to achieve than developing a sound strategic plan but also more critical than just having the plan on paper (Muteti, 2017). Muteti (2017), Ceba (2015), Abuya (2014) and Avigoke (2013) among others concede that most strategic plans fail to achieve the intended results due to implementation challenges.

Niven (2002) identified four barriers to strategy implementation: vision barrier, people barrier, management barrier and resource barrier. Vision barriers occur due to unawareness of the vision and strategy by the organization. It is argued that only 5% of the staff understand the strategy. Vision statement is often the first step in strategic planning process (Misankova & Kocisova, 2014), but weak communication of the vision and strategy makes it difficult for the workforce and lower management levels to understand their roles in the implementation of the plan (Muteti, 2017; Ahmed, et al., 2005). This also has implications on the commitment and buy-in of the plan (Abuya, 2014).

People barrier occurs when managers link personal objectives and short-term financial gains to the strategy instead of the long-term initiatives that support the implementation of the plan (Niven, 2002). Muteti (2017) stated that

adequate training and reward systems provide energy to drive the execution of the strategy. Thus, strategy implementers become the barrier when their immediate personal objectives cannot be met. People are key strategic resources (Brinkschroder, 2014) that organizations can tap into the know-how of their employees to support the strategy implementation. Human resources include the abilities and skills of management and employees, adequate time, training and instructions as well as sufficient funding (Mugambi, 2017), behaviours and attitudes (Upadhyay, Upadhyay & Palo (2013). Thus, the effectiveness of strategy implementation is affected the quality and competence of the people involved in the process (Ongonga'a, 2014).

Muteti (2017), Cepa (2015), Mirvis (2012), Welch (2011) and Harter, et al, (2010), all recognize that neglecting the employees and key stakeholders in the strategic plan will result to low buy-in of the strategic plan. It is the employees who do the actual implementation of the plan. Thus, people will generally not support an initiative that they have an anemic or non-existent level of engagement and input into (Harter, et al, 2010). Successful implementation of the strategy requires the total corporation and participation of employees and relevant stakeholders (Lindblom & Ohlsson, 2011). Management should therefore, always perform stakeholder analysis to identify the various types of stakeholders and their needs, issues and concerns that may affect the strategy implementation.

Resource barrier is the result of having insufficient resources to execute the strategy. Niven (2002) argued that about 60% of organizations do not link their budget to the strategy. This is due to weak cooperation between the

budgeting and planning departments. In a study to examine the role of senior level managers in strategy implementation, Schaap (2012), demonstrated that lack of or inadequate resources contribute to strategy implementation problems. Many strategies fail when resources are not aligned with the strategy or when allocated resources are not enough to guarantee successful implementation of the strategy.

Management barrier occurs as a result of less attention given to discussing the strategy. Niven (2002) observed that during operation reviews, 85% of strategic executive teams usually dedicate majority of the time to discussing financial results, looking at budget versus the actual variances with little attention to the strategy since the budgets are often not linked to the strategic plan.

Lack of communication has been cited as an important barrier to strategy implementation in many organizations (Muteti, 2017; Ofori & Atiogbe, 2012; Smith & Cantrell, 2011). Lack of communication between management and workforce leads to misinterpretation, misunderstanding and low buy-in. A well-conceived strategy communicated to the rest of the organization is equated to strong implementation; thus, weak communication has negative implications on the strategy implementations (Muteti, 2017).

Hrebiniak (2005) observes that problems in strategy implementation often include cost overruns, inadequate allocation of resources, vague definition of strategy, power struggle with organizational structure, lack of understanding of organizational structure, poor communication, poor coordination methods, unclear responsibility and accountability in the implementation process and the

inability to manage change including aligning organizational culture with strategy and failure to involve employees in strategy implementation process.

2.7 Factors that Contribute to Strategic Plan Implementation Success

It is widely accepted that a clever strategic plan on paper in itself does not guarantee success. For strategic plans be useful, strategy managers must ensure that the strategies are implemented effectively and efficiently, because the best strategic plan is the one that is implemented properly and achieve its intended purposes (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). It is therefore, important to explore and understand the factors that contribute to strategy implementation success (Hrebianiak, 2013).

A successful strategic plan implementation is the one that allows for collaboration between and among the relevant stakeholders that will lead to a strategy that is financially, socially and ethically adequate for the organization or institution to implement (Alharty, Rashid and Pagliar, 2017).

Muteti (2017), examined the barriers to strategy implementation among real estate companies in Kenya and observed that for strategic plan to be successful, there should be clear communication between top management and other operational units, adequate allocation of financial resources to execute the plan, a well-motivated and sensitized staff on the strategic plan, proper monitoring system for the implementation of the strategic plan and a flexible strategic plan that can accommodate emerging and unforeseen circumstances such as inflation and changes in government policies. For strategic plans to be successful, the strategies in the plan must be translated into actionable

guidelines that can be directed, controlled and allow for adjustments to be made where necessary.

Mugambi (2017) conducted an exploratory research to explore the factors that affected the implementation of the Trademark East Africa (TEMA) and attributed the success of the TEMA strategic plan to adequate training of their employees, adequate financial support for the implementation of the plan, democratic management style and organizational structure. These factors gave TEMA some level of competitive advantage over their close competitors (Mugambi, 2017). When the employees and other stakeholders are involved and their opinions, and aspirations are taken into consideration, it promotes ownership and buy-in and ensure that the implementation process is in synchrony with their personal objectives, passion, skills and talents.

Successful implementation of a strategic plan requires thoughtful planning on the part of change leaders and the involvement of those to be affected by it. Macharia (2013) researched the strategic plan implementation practices at the Chase Bank in Kenya and revealed that successful strategy implementation involves requesting, determining, attainability, planning, implementing and evaluating changes resulting from the implementation of the strategic plan. However, the bank underestimated the implementation time; thus, most of the implementation deadlines were subjected to approximation due to unexpected developments.

Regular and continuous assessment of the performance of the strategic plan is a prerequisite for successful implementation. Monitoring and evaluation allow for detecting and correcting errors as well as provide evidence for

continuous improvement and decision making. Monitoring and evaluation is an important component of strategic management because it helps to determine whether an initiative has had the desired effect or outcome. Monitoring and evaluation is a powerful strategic management tool (Rist & Kusek, 2004) but it might not produce the desired results when it is not applied properly. For monitoring and evaluation to be useful, it must be participatory and linked to all aspects of the strategic plan. Monitoring and evaluation helps to monitor all activities related to the strategic plan implementation (Alharty, Rashid and Pagliar, 2017). Through this, the status of progress on strategies, objectives and goals can be assessed (Dziyaba, 2016). This is the reason why M&E is an integral component of strategic management.

The successful strategic plan implementation is the key survival asset of the organization. Meanwhile, many organizations fail to achieve the desired results. The factors that affect successful strategic plan implementation differ from one organization to the other and from one country to another. Nonetheless, the presence and convergence of these factors have huge implications on the implementation of strategies. These identified factors thus need to be taken into the consideration by organizations when setting strategies that they intend to successfully implement.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The achievement of strategic plan objectives is crucial in facilitating change in a competitive world. The successful strategic plan implementation is affected by several factors; some to promote smooth implementation towards the realization of the strategic objectives, while others work to frustrate the

implementation process as well as the extent to which the plan realize what it set out to achieve.

The study argues that the challenges encountered during the implementation (Independent variable) process can negatively impact the extent of achievement (dependent variable) of the strategic plan's objectives. Since strategy implementation occurs within a certain environment with its own structures and modus operandi, the study sought to examine the factors that promote or hinder strategic plan implementation.

Empirical evidence from strategic management literature support the argument in the conceptual framework that, strategic plan implementation is impacted by two opposing factors that affect the performance of the plan; one that promote smooth implementation and the other that hinder the process. Therefore, it is important to identify and minimize the effects of the challenges that are encountered during the implementation process, while committing more attention to the factors that promote smooth implementation in order to ensure greater achievement of the strategic plan's objectives.

The study has therefore reviewed literature in line with the schematic diagram to depict the relationships between the variables under consideration. Conceptual framework shows the way the researcher approaches the research regarding the ways the independent, dependent and intervening variables interact. The three types of variables have indicators that have been captured in the conceptual framework as indicated in Figure 1.

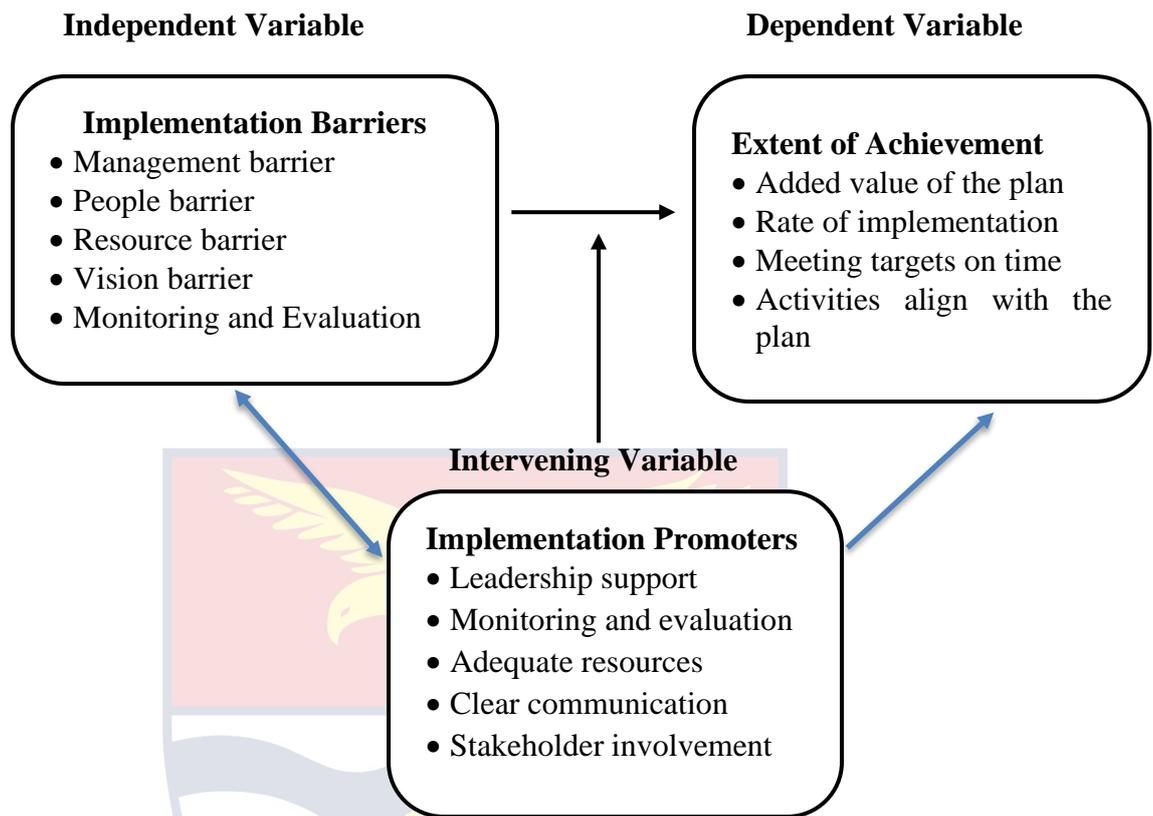


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's construct, 2018.

2.9 Summary of Literature and Emerging Issues

Strategic planning is a critical management tool that has the potential to steer an institution to achieve relevance and maintain stability in a volatile environment. Higher educational institutions embraced strategic planning to get ahead with the challenges they faced and engineer strategic change.

However, empirical studies on the factors that influence strategic plan implementation in management literature have produced mixed results, even though an agreed definition for the concept strategic planning has been difficult to determine. This study sees strategic planning as a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its

environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organized strategies, policies, and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them. This involves the identification, implementation and monitoring of strategies of the institution.

Factors such as poor communication (Muteti, 2017; Ofori & Atiogbe, 2012), resource constraints, non-participatory approaches (Lindblom & Ohlsson, 2011), weak leadership (Niven, 2002) and lack of understanding of monitoring and evaluation have been cited to hinder successful strategy implementation. On the one hand, clear communication (Muteti, 2017), adequate resources, stakeholder involvement (Mugambi, 2017), robust monitoring and evaluation system (Rist & Kusek, 2004; Macharia, 2013), training and motivation have been said to result to successful strategy implementation. The factors enumerated above were derived from studies from in other sectors other than education. Thus, the current study applied the concepts and variables generated by these studies to assess performance of strategic planning in in the educational sector in Ghana.

The next chapter discusses the research methods applied to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insight into the methods used and why they were used to answer the research questions in order to achieve the research objectives. The chapter specifically looked at the research design, research setting, population sample, and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure and the procedure used in analyzing the data. The chapter also presents a brief description of the case study.

3.2 Description of Institutional Case Study-University of Case Coast

The University of Cape Coast was inaugurated on December 15, 1962 as a University College and placed in a special relationship with the University of Ghana. On October 1, 1971, the University attained the status of a full and independent university with the authority of confer its own degrees, diplomas and certificates by an Act of Parliament – the University of Cape Coast Act 1971 (Act 390) and subsequently the University of Cape Coast Law 1992 (PNDC Law 278).

The University of Cape Coast was established out of a need for highly qualified and skilled manpower in the teaching and development of the nation's human capital; thus, it was established to train graduates teachers for second cycle institutions, Teacher Training Colleges and Technical Institute; a mission that the two Universities existing at the time were ill-equipped to fulfil.

Currently, the University is structured into five colleges, with six faculties and eight schools. The University has since its establishment added to

its function programmes of study such as educational planning and administration; accounting, management studies and human resource management; nursing and medicine; environmental science, governance and agriculturalists. It is therefore playing a unique and vital role in the nation's efforts at strengthening its educational sector and to become a university of worldwide acclaim (University of Cape Coast, 2017).

The University of Cape Coast, Ghana, is one of the rare sea front universities in the world. It is located along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, which spans along the west coast of Africa. Its main entrance is only about 50 meters from the Atlantic Ocean.

3.2.1 The Corporate Strategy of the University of Cape Coast (2012 – 2017)

The first ever strategic plan of the University of Cape Coast was launched in 2003 for a five-year period (2003 – 2008). The overall objective of the maiden plan was to (1) chart a course for the University that is in line with national aspirations and expectations and (2) place University of Cape Coast as the **University of Choice** in Ghana with worldwide acclaim. However, it became necessary to review the 2003-2008 strategic plan to respond to changing educational environment of the 21st Century.

The mandate of the University Cape Coast, as stipulated in its establishment Act (University of Cape Coast, 2017), is very specific: to provide tertiary education for Ghanaians and the rest of the world, a mandate the University has been able to carry out since its inception. However, the emerging challenges of the new global environment have to some extent inhibited the

university's ability to effectively and efficiently implement its mandate. It has therefore become necessary for the institution to strategically reposition itself to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in the light of these emerging challenges. The process of repositioning is based on the definition and analysis of the key factor that typify the changing environment in which it operates. The outputs thus derived, will serve as the raw material for the development of Core Values, Vision, Mission and Strategies.

The time frame of the University's strategic plan is set at five years commencing from January 2012. This choice was driven by the fact that the plan's relevance needed to be reviewed within a relatively short time-frame to ensure that the efforts at establishing the vision could be reviewed against the unpredictability inherent in both the national and global environment. The University of Cape Coast's strategic agenda is defined by eleven strategic thrusts (Appendix E)

3.3 Description of Institutional Case Study- Christian Service University College (CSUC)

The Christian Service University College was founded as a non-denominational institution of higher education to provide spiritual, moral, academic and professional training for effective Christian ministry, participation in the labour market and lifelong learning (Christian Service University College, 2012). It was established in 1974 as Christian Service College and attained a University College status on 31st October, 2005. The University was started as a joint-venture between local Evangelical Christian leaders and a British missionary organisation.

The University College is located at about 120 meters from the Odeneho-Kwadaso road off the Santasi-Obiasu highway. The management of the institution is headed by a Board of Trustees, followed by a Council whilst the day-to-day administration of the University College is headed by the President.

In its 38 years of existence, the institution is the first four-year Liberal Arts Christian University in the Ashanti and northern sector of Ghana. The institution has produced over 2000 graduates serving in various capacities as Bible preachers, teachers, civil servants, finance service providers and management of NGOs. With a student population in excess of 2000 students, the University College has become the leading private Christian university college in the Ashanti and Northern Sector of Ghana.

The institution currently runs 12 undergraduate programmes in its 3 Faculties (Humanities, Education, Health and Applied Sciences), and the School of Business as well as 3 graduate programmes at the School of Graduate Studies. The University College is affiliated to the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for its various academic programmes. All the programmes are accredited by the National Accreditation Board (NAB).

In tandem with its Christian foundations, the faith of potential candidates are assessed as part of the staff recruitment process. However, admission of students into the University College is not based on their faith. But all students are required to participate in the activities organized by the Chaplaincy during their stay on campus.

The University College has recently embarked on programmes to transform itself into an efficient, contemporary and high-quality Christian tertiary institution that is better positioned to train efficient and morally upright professionals who will contribute towards the industrial and socio-economic development of Ghana and the international community. Hence the need for the strategic plan.

3.3.1 The Corporate Strategy of the Christian Service University College (2012-2022)

The 2012 – 2022 strategic plan which has been dubbed the “Charter Plan” is a revision of the 2009 – 2014 strategic plan in order to capture the vision and policy measures of the new Chairman of the Council to develop CSUC as a faith-based University of excellence with a strong financial resource base with accredited academic programmes backed by continuous stakeholder and industry inputs, comprehensive information, communication and technology infrastructure where ICT is fully integrated and applied in all academic programmes and activities (Christian Service University College, 2012).

The overall goal of the University College is to diversify its sources of income to ensure financial sustainability, develop the required human resource capacity, academic programmes and infrastructure facilities to satisfy the requirements and conditions of the national supervisory bodies including the National Accreditation Board, maintain its status as a University College to achieve a full-fledged university status with a Presidential Charter by the year 2022. The University College plans to achieve twelve strategic objectives (Appendix E).

3.4 Study Population

The respondents for this study were all middle level managers, which comprise of the heads of departments, deans (or vice deans), registrar, union leaders and finance officers of University of Cape Coast between 2012 to 2017 and Christian Service University College.

3.5 Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive approach with a qualitative orientation to assess the performance of strategic plans of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College. Descriptive research aims at observing the relationships between variables in their settings as they occur (Ofori & Atiogbe, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the focus was on the factors that promote or hinder strategic plan implementation in public and private universities in Ghana. Descriptive research was considered appropriate for the study since the goal of the study is not to explore new concepts in strategic planning but to apply existing concepts to strategic planning initiatives in higher education in Ghana.

Descriptive survey enabled the researcher to use interviews to explore the lived experiences of the staff of the universities who were directly involved in the implementation of their strategic plans. A qualitative research as indicated by Babbie (2010) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) is a broad term for an array of interpretative techniques that seeks to describe, decode, translate and come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. The use of qualitative research in this study helped in the

collection of rich narrative information and this led to the conduct of in-depth investigation using a flexible research design (Polit & Beck, 2010).

Studying the performance of two distinct institutions allows for comparison. The comparative approach was chosen because of its inherent strength to enhance our understanding of one's own society by placing its familiar structures and routines against those of other systems; thereby, heightening our awareness of how other systems operate (Esser & Vliegenthart, 2017). Unlike non-comparative research methods, the comparative approach helped in reaching conclusions beyond single cases and also led to the assessment of the differences and similarities between objects of analysis and relations between objects against the backdrop of their contextual conditions. Additionally, the comparative nature of this research helped in understanding how characteristic factors of the contextual environment shape communication processes differently in different settings

The current study sought to obtain a rich and better understanding of the strategic planning initiatives by comparing their performance in one public (University of Cape Coast) and one private (Christian Service University College) university in Ghana.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

The literature recognize that a number of stakeholders are involved in the drafting and implementation of strategic plans. However, it will be an impossible task to include all the stakeholders in the study. It is therefore, important that at least full variety of stakeholders are represented in this study.

Purposive sampling, which attempts to link the correct respondents with the research questions (Bryman, 2008), was employed in order to identify the primary stakeholders that represent this variety. Specifically, the sample comprised heads of departments and union executives. These key informants were chosen because they were considered to be influential and well informed and responsible for the formulation, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the strategic planning initiative in their institutions. They can therefore, provide the interviewer an informative picture on the performance of their strategic plans.

Twenty middle level managers were interviewed for the study. Fifteen respondents were drawn from the University of Cape Coast, comprised of 13 heads of departments, and 2 union executives. At the Christian Service University College, 5 respondents made of 3 heads of departments, 1 registrar and finance officer were purposely selected to participate in the study. Baker and Edwards (2013) suggested between 12 to 101 interviews for a qualitative research. Braun and Clarke (2013) also recommended from 10 to 50 interviews for participant-generated text for studies that involve thematic analysis. Generally, 0.70 Cronbach's alpha is acceptable. Guest, Bunce and Johnson, (2006) revealed that the Cronbach's alpha of .70 is achieved after 12 interviews; thus, concluding that data saturation occurs after 12 interviews. Data saturation occurs when collecting more data does not add further themes to the already gathered data. To increase the understanding of the performance of strategic planning implementation in the universities in Ghana, two stages of data collection were employed.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

3.7.1 Secondary Data Collection-Desk Study

Desk analysis of secondary data explored the current and previous strategic plans, annual reports and brochures, evaluation reports, websites from the two universities. This analysis helped to (1) develop an understanding of the setting under study (Bryman, 2014); (2) to identify the sample population; (3) assist in deciding upon the appropriate methods for primary data collection (Patton, 2002) and to stimulate the of inquiry for the primary data collection (Jennings, 2010).

3.7.2 Primary Data Collection: Face-to-Face Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were undertaken with key informants from the two institutions who were directly involved in the implementation of the strategic plan in order to obtain primary data. Interview is a longstanding methodological tool within organizational and social science research (Cassell, 2009). Stake (2010) asserts that the key purpose of interviewing is to find out about 'a thing' that the researchers were unable to observe themselves. It is exactly for this purpose that face-to-face interviews were chosen to collect data about the factors that promote or inhibit strategic plan implementation. A key practical strength of interviews is that they enable access to large amounts of data in a relatively short period of time and permit the researcher to clarify the interviewee's responses immediately (Bryman, 2014). In addition, interviews can reveal multiple realities and viewpoints (Jennings, 2010). Each of the aforementioned potential qualities of in-depth interviews supported the decision to utilize the method in this research.

Each interview lasted not more than 30 minutes. Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher called or met the respondents to arrange on the date, time and venue for the interview. Given the busy schedules of the interviewees, the researcher sent reminders through phone calls, emails, WhatsApp and/or text message to the respondents at least a day before the interview to learn of any change in the schedule of the interviewee or otherwise. The interviews were conducted at the offices of the study participants.

The collection was facilitated with the aid of a researcher designed interview guide, consisting of four main section as shown in Appendix C and D. The contents of the interview guide were structured along the study's research objectives. The first section elicited the background information of the interview such as the gender, age, years of service in the institution, their understanding of strategic planning as well as the role they played in the strategic planning process. Section B focused on the extent of achievement of strategic objectives, while section C gathered information about the factors that promote strategic plan implementation. The last section emphasized on the challenges encountered during the implementation of the strategic plan. The data for the study revolved around the most recent strategic plan implemented by the case study institutions: (2012-2017) for the University of Cape Coast and (2012-2017) for Christian Service University College.

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Once data were obtained, they were processed for analysis. According to Burns and Grove (2007:536), data analysis is the technique used to reduce, organise and give meaning to the data. Qualitative data analysis involves the

integration and synthesis of narrative non-numeric data into themes or categories with the aid of a coding procedure (Brink, et al. 2006).

Thematic analysis was adopted to allow for in-depth appreciation of the thoughts of the respondents on the study objective. Van Heerden (2012). Thematic analysis is useful for identifying a collection of themes, ‘some level of patterned responses or meaning’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fugard & Potts, 2015) within a dataset. It moves beyond counting phrases or words to identifying and describing both the manifest and latent ideas (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). It is a popular method for understanding experiences, perceptions, practices and establishing causal factors underlying phenomena in the healthcare search, social research and psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fugard & Potts, 2015).

Data was transcribed immediately after the interviews in order not to miss any important information. The transcribed interviews were captured onto a master file on a Microsoft Excel document. The researcher read and re-read the transcripts to establish a deeper understanding of the participant’s responses in order to identify recurring themes and patterns among the themes (Creswell, 2009). This involved breaking down the narrative data into smaller units, coding and naming the units according to the themes represented. The themes were then categorised according to the research questions (refer to Table 1) and exhaustively described, supported with verbatim quotes from the participants with reference to the research objectives (Creswell, 2009).

Thematic analysis was virtually unobtrusive and is suited for analyzing in-depth face-to-face interview data. It is also cost effective since it involves

limited resource requirements and provides a means to study trends and processes that may have occurred over a long period of time.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which a research tool consistently produces the results it was designed to produce. The challenge for qualitative researchers is how to convince readers that they should believe the results of their study and the conclusions they draw. The current study was planned in such a way that multiple sources of data (triangulation) were used to maintain the validity of the research. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews and document review and then looked for common themes that appear in the data gathered from the two instruments. As a result of a chain of evidence used on different aspects investigated

Validity measures the ability of the research instrument to measure exactly what it was designed to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The measurement scales for the study were derived from review of existing empirical studies. Awino and Gituro (2011) identified three levels of validity, viz, face, content and construct validity. Content validity was achieved by structuring the interview guide into four sections. Each section contained specific variables that addresses each of the three research objectives of the study. To ensure that the instruments accurately measured the variables of interest to the study, each of the items in the interview guide were discussed with peers and research supervisors. Construct validity was checked with the conceptual framework to ensure that the right relationships are established between and among the variables under consideration. The content of the

interview guide was considered to have face validity because they reflected the key issues that promote or hinder strategic plan implementation that in turn affect its performance.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained an introductory letter to the case study institutions in order to be granted access to carry out the research. Participants were informed of the purpose and nature of the research.

Participants were made aware about their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions. Participants' names were replaced with pseudonym, where UCC_HoD 1 to 15 represent respondents drawn from the University of Cape Coast while CSUC 1 to 6 denote those from Christian Service University College) before the analysis in order to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants. Respondents' consent was sought and signed a consent form attached to the research instrument by the researcher prior to the data collection as indicated in Appendix A and B.

3.11 Summary of Research Methods and Emerging Issues

The chapter looked at the research design to be used for the study. Data for the study was derived from institutional publications and face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher. The chapter also explains the target population and the sampling design which will include the sampling technique to be used to get the sample size for the study. Fifteen middle level managers consisting of deans, heads of departments and union executives and five faculty members were interviewed from the University of Cape Coast and Christian

Service University College respectively. The data collection methods and the research procedures to be used are explained and finally the method on how to analyze and interpret data is explained. The research process has been summarized in Figure 2 below. The next chapter presented the results and findings from the analyzed data.

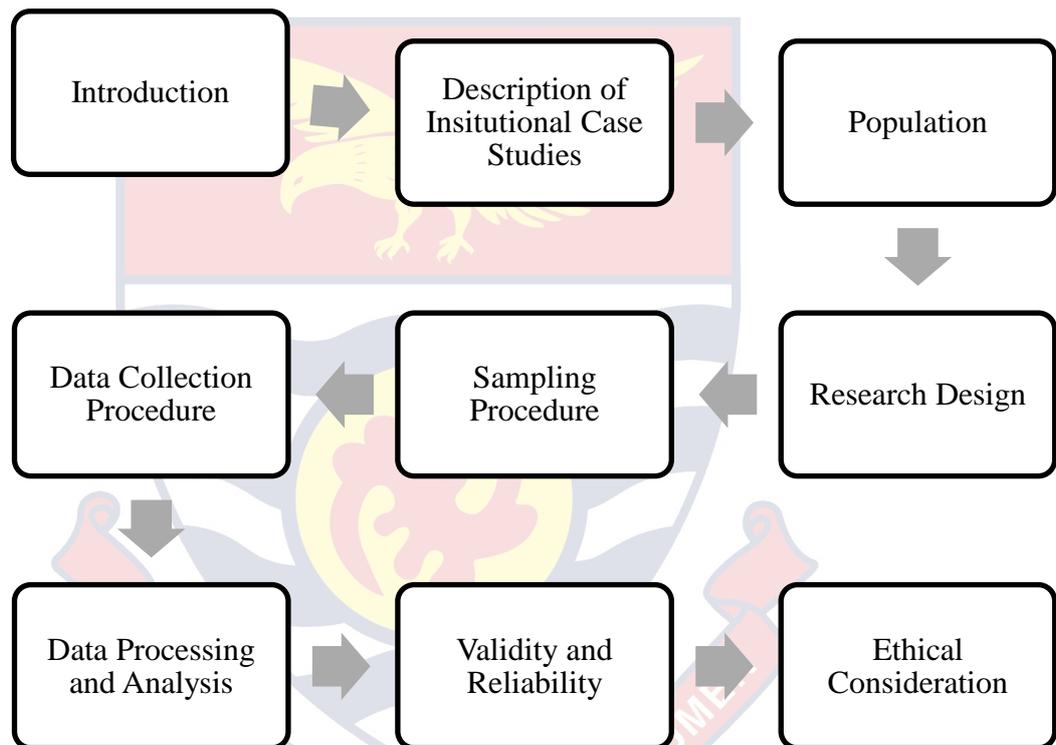


Figure 2: Summary of Research Process

Source: Author's construct

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the data obtained from the field as well as secondary sources in line with the research questions of the study. The study sought to explore the performance of strategic planning initiatives of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College and was guided by the following research questions: To what extent are strategic targets stipulated in the institutional strategic plans achieved?; What are the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions? and what are the barriers to successful implementation of strategic plans in Ghanaian tertiary institutions?

The analysis was done within the remit of the conceptual framework and the available relevant literature. Qualitative data obtained through the interviews were transcribed and organized into themes according to the research objectives. The presentation of the analysis in this chapter are organized into four thematic areas; the first theme explored the socio-demographic background of the research participants in order to put the analysis and discussion into perspective, while the remaining three themes relate to the three research questions the study seek to address.

4.2 Background Information of Participants

Fifteen heads of departments at the University of Cape Coast were interviewed. Obtaining the background information of the research participants is important to show how well they are qualified to respond to the issues of the

study. Fergusson and Mulwafu (2004) emphasized that participants' background influences their understanding and level of participation on issues. All the participants interviewed in the study hold doctorate degrees except one union leader who holds a master's degree. They have also worked in the University for at least between 5 to 10 or more years and have served in various capacities.

4.2.1 Respondents' understanding of Strategic Planning

The results of the study showed that majority of the respondents have some level of understanding in strategic planning. The interviewees were quick to relate strategic planning to putting systems in place that guides the management of an institution's actions in order to achieve the mission and vision within a specified period of time. The interaction with the interviewees shows that they regard strategic planning as a living document that has key actions with a set of activities to be undertaken within a certain context with specific timelines in terms of where we are currently and where we want to attain in the future. Participants were given enough time to express themselves; hence, describing their understanding of the concept in the following ways:

“Strategic planning involves a written document for the next couple of years either 5 years or 10 years depending on how long you want to achieve your goals to move the institution from one stage to the other and making plans to ascertain whether the plan was achieved or not.” [UCC_HoD 6]

UCC HoD_4, a former head of a department during the strategic plan implementation period between 2012-2017 and who has worked in the University for 16 years, explained strategic plan as:

“My understanding of strategic planning is putting systems in place to have the University to see itself clearly in the future where it wants to see itself where we will be able to play our roles effectively and efficiently without too many difficulties and also to be attractive to the outside world in terms of what we are offering so we need the strategic plan to be the driving force otherwise, you don't know where you are going.” [UCC_HoD 4]

In responding to the same question, respondents from the Christian Service University College (CSUC) described strategic planning as:

“A time-bound, short- or long-term strategy to be adopted to achieve defined organisational goals. Departmental goals all align with the institutional plan and set goals could be altered in the course of implementation due to unexpected future developments.” [CSUC 3] and “encompassing the vision, mission and how you position yourself to identify the weaknesses, strengths and opportunities around you to bring about change” [CSUC 5].

The statements by respondents throw more light on the participants' understanding and appreciation of strategic planning. The expression of the participants agrees with the definitions of the concept offered by Perera and Peiro (2012); Swayne, Duncan and Ginter (2006); David (2011) and Stoney

(2001). According to Perera and Peiro (2012), strategic planning is a systematic process of creating a document that indicates the way an organization plans to progress from its current state to the desired future. To affirm the position of Perera and Peiro (2012), David (2011) believes that strategic planning is initiated by the top managers of an institution to determine the mission, major objectives and strategies that govern resource acquisition and allocation to achieve the organization's aims (Stoney, 2001).

UCC_HoD 4 and CSUC 3's expression validates Peterson (2004) view on the potential benefits of strategic planning. Peterson (2004) emphasized that strategic planning is an effective tool for achieving institutional effectiveness, manage both internal and external and changes and expectations as well as guide senior management and empower middle managers to translate intended strategies into actionable activities and resource allocation (Goldman & Salem, 2015).

UCC_HoD 6 believed that strategic planning involves making plans to ascertain whether intended goals and objectives have been achieved. This position has been supported by Goldman and Salem, (2015) who stressed that strategic planning encourages evidence-based decision making through reporting the status of progress on strategies, objectives and goals (Dziyaba, 2016). Furthermore, CSUC 5's view of strategic planning echoes Lindblom and Ohlsson (2011) stance on the role of relevant stakeholders and participatory approaches to successful strategic plan implementation.

However, the assertion by the UCC_HoD6 that strategic planning refers to a "document" is erroneous and mistaken. The strategic plan is intended to

guide the actions and decision-making process of an institution’s leaders as suggested by CSUC 3 and affirmed by DiNapoli (2003). Strategic planning as discussed earlier, is an on-going, systematic process that takes a forward-looking approach to an organization’s goals and objectives whereas, a strategic plan is a results-oriented blueprint consisting of goals, objectives and strategies in order to achieve a desired vision (DiNapoli, 2003).

4.3 Analysis of Research Questions

The data obtained from the field were organized into themes according to the research questions. The main themes and sub-themes generated for the analysis have been illustrated in Table 2.

Table 1: Analysis of Research Questions

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Research Question 1: Extent of achievement of strategic thrusts	i. Rate of implementation ii. Added value of the strategic plan iii. Activities align with the strategic plan iv. Achieving targets on time v. Stakeholder participation and ownership
Research Question 2: Factors that promote strategic plans implementation	i. Leadership support ii. The DAPQA Effect: the role of monitoring and evaluation
Research Question 3: Barriers to strategic plan implementation	i. Vision barrier ii. People barrier iii. Resource barrier iv. Management barrier v. Monitoring and evaluation

Source: Field survey, Keney (2018).

4.4 Research Question 1: Extent of achievement of strategic thrusts

The first theme sought to ascertain the participant's lived experiences of the strategic plan implementation process with respect to the extent to which the key thrusts in the strategic plan were achieved. The interviewees responded to questions such as, do you think the strategic plan satisfactorily delivered what it set out to achieve?; what would you say was the added value of the strategic plan to the University and for whom?; were the objectives and targets achieved on time and were the activities undertaken during the period consistent with the key actions of the strategic plan as well as stakeholder participation and ownership?

4.4.1 Assessment of the rate of implementation of the strategic plan

There seem to be a mutual agreement between the participants (85%) that the strategic plan of the University of Cape Coast failed to live up to expectation in achieving its stated objectives. This is what a former union leader had to say:

“When you look the 11 key thrusts, some were very critical such that if we had achieved them, we would have been better off as a University. For example, key thrusts on ICT infrastructure (7), physical development (8), financial discipline (11), and security but we missed majority of the targets for these key areas.” [Union Leader 1]

Emphasizing the expression of Union Leader1, UCC_HoD 2 added:

When you look at the strategic plan, there are very beautiful and wonderful ideas in there but the extent of implementation left much to be desired because some issues were left hanging and we did not see full implementation

because there was no coherent implementation strategy and follow up system in place. [UCC_HoD 2]

In order to ascertain the full extent of achievement of the strategic objectives of the two case institutions, participants were asked to estimate the rate of implementation on a scale of 0 to 2. The average score was for each of the strategic objectives was computed and summed to generate the total rate of implementation for the case institution. The total score was then compared with the ranking and a decision is made on the rate of implementation. The ranking score is then compared with what pertains in literature for discussion. The rating scale and interpretation are presented in (Appendix F). Table 2 presents the performance of University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College on the implementation of their strategic objectives.

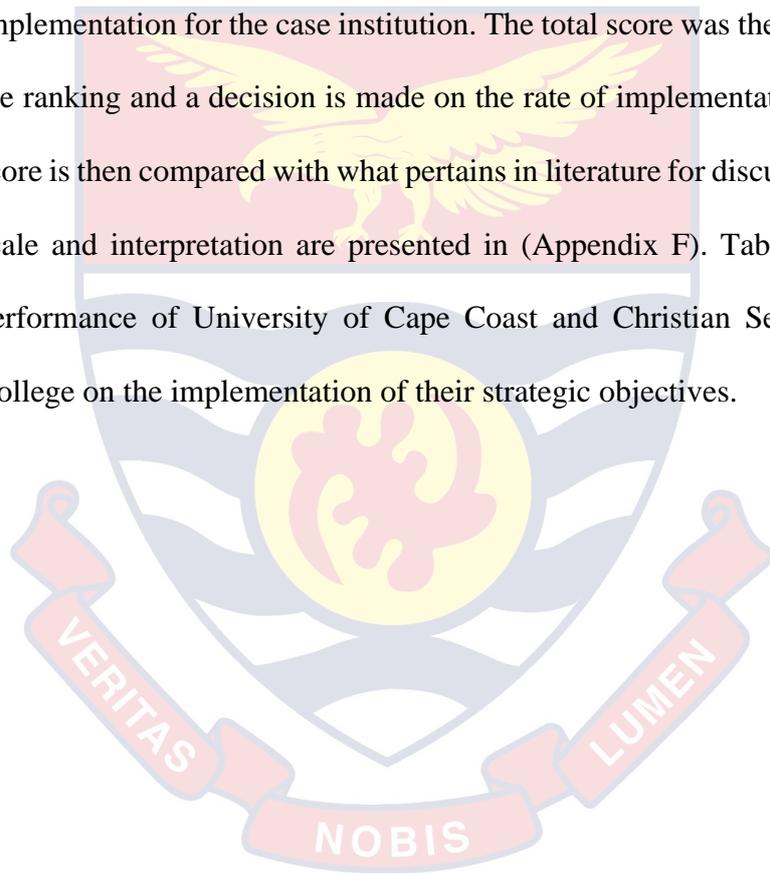


Table 2: Rate of Implementation of UCC and CSUC

CSUC Strategic Objective	Mean	UCC Key Thrusts	Mean
i. To strengthen the Chaplaincy towards spiritual growth of staff and students	2	i. Create an environment that seeks to improve student life, foster student-focused learning and student with strong ethics and commitment to society.	1.4
ii. To establish well-resourced faculties with NAB accredited programmes and obtain Presidential Charter	1	ii. To create a conducive working environment which recognizes equal opportunities for faculty, staff and students.	1.4
iii. To diversify the sources of funding to ensure financial sustainability of the institution	1.25	iii. Recruit, develop and retain high caliber and motivated faculty and administrative staff.	1.13
iv. To expand the administrative structure of the institution and appoint three new key officers	1.5	iv. Create a learning organization culture that enhances teamwork, efficiency, discipline and commitment.	1.4
v. To recruit, develop and retain academically and professionally qualified and committed Christians	1.75	v. Promote active and reflective teaching and learning, research and outreach that strongly position University of Cape Coast as a center of excellence.	1.33
vi. To increase student population	1.25	vi. Develop new and relevant programmes, periodically revise existing ones and vigorously pursue distance and sandwich education.	1.2
vii. To expand and maintain infrastructure and facilities	1.5	vii. Develop and strengthen integrated ICT infrastructure and support services that enhance teaching and learning, research and outreach.	1.33
viii. To expand ICT facilities and institutionalize its application for teaching and administration	2	viii. Improve upon physical infrastructure and support services that enhance teaching and learning, research and outreach.	1.53
ix. To source for research funding and develop research culture among academic staff	1	ix. Aggressively develop linkages with local and foreign institutions and partnership with industries.	1.2
x. To mainstream quality assurance practices in the University College	2	x. Improve upon management capacity and institutional governance system.	1.47
xi. To improve the environmental conditions, security and safety on the two campuses of the University College	1.25	xi. Vigorously work to improve revenue generation and enforce fiscal discipline.	1.33
xii. To enhance the image of the institution locally and internationally to attract students and scholars.	1.5		
Total	18.00 (85%)		14.73 (70%)

Source: Field survey, Keney (2018)

From Table 2, the interviewees from both institutions attributed reasons for their ratings to issues such as inadequate communication of the plan to its constituents, lack of implementation committee, failure to achieve targets on time, absence of a monitoring and evaluation system and committee to track and report implementation progress, low awareness among staff and not disaggregating roles to specific implementers. Additionally, failure to link key actions and activities with the annual budget of the university was peculiar to UCC, whereas limited funding was identified at CSUC.

These indicators of failure suggested by the participants alludes to empirical findings from previous researches. These include, inability to achieve financial targets (Markins & Steele, 2005); failure to achieve strategic objectives and targets on time (Jorgensen, et al, 2008); poor communication, late implementation and lack of a monitoring and feedback system (McKinsey, 2006).

Waterman, et al. (2003), also demonstrated that weak application of the strategic plan constitutes the most significant contributor to strategic plan implementation failure. For instance, commenting on the implementation of the UCC strategic plan, UCC_HoD 2 lamented that “...some issues were left hanging...” because there was no one to check and monitor the implementation process and as a result full implementation of the plan was not achieved. This finding was not surprising because Raps and Kauffman (2005) demonstrated that only 10% to 30% of intended strategic targets are achieved because somehow, the primary objectives get dissipated in the course of implementation

leading to lose of momentum and focus. Raps and Kauffman (2005) therefore recommended an integrative approach to implementation.

Christian Service University College achieved high individual mean score of 2.00 on three of the twelve strategic objectives (I, VII and X) while thrust *II* was ranked the lowest mean score. At the University of Cape Coast, the highest average rate of implementation was objective number *VII* at 1.53 followed by thrust *X* with 1.47. Importantly, Christian Service University College achieved a higher rate of implementation at 18.00 points (85%) compared with the University of Cape Coast with 14.7 (70%). Therefore, the University of Cape Coast's achieved medium rate of implementation corroborates Jorgensen, Owen and Neus (2008), who argued that 59% of strategies are achieved. on the other hand, the high rate of achievement (85%) recorded by Christian Service University College find empirical support in Franken, Edwards and Lambert (2009) who suggested that 34% of planned strategies fail.

Generally, complexities involved in implement strategic plans within smaller organisations is minimal compared to bigger organisations with large and complex hierarchy (Nyakeriga, 2015). Also, in large organisations, the strategic apex where decisions on the strategic plan are made is usually farther from the constituents than those in smaller organisations. Comparing the two case institutions, the University of Cape Coast is bigger and more complex in every sense than the Christian University College. For example, in terms of staff strength, resources and student population University of Cape Coast is more endowed than Christian Service University College. Therefore, the performance

of CSUC relative to UCC could be attributed to its relatively smaller size and the closeness of the strategic apex to the operational core but not due to chance. Additionally, public institutions normally have bureaucratic process which normally serves as a barrier to the implementation of strategic plans.

4.4.2 Assessment of the added value of the strategic plan to the institution

At the University of Cape Coast, there were opposing views as to whether the 2012-2017 strategic plan really yielded any significant change to the University during its 5-year implementation period. About seventy percent of the interviewees who argued that the strategic plan had accrued additional benefits to the University cited the establishment and subsequent appointment of Directors for the Directorate for Research, Innovation and Consultancy (DRIC) and the Directorate of Information, Communication and Technology Services (DICTS), Business Incubation Centre (BIC), the introduction of students-management consultative meeting as well as the development of new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The established and resourcing of DRIC, DICTS, BIC and the University Business Services (UCC-Goil Filling Station, U-Splash) are in direct fulfillment of key thrusts X, VII, I, XI respectively (Refer to Table 3). Since its inception, DRIC has spearheaded the research and consultancy agenda of the University by ushering in an award scheme for best and emerging researchers, providing research grants to staff and students as well as other publications on the research performance of the institution. However, one participant disagrees to some extent and had this to say:

Over the past five years (2012-2017), we have made progress in some areas but these are the core areas that the University is supposed to improve upon such as academic work, visibility, etcetera, but even with that we are struggling in terms of even the ranking of the University. And also, the introduction of the collegiate system was not part of the strategic plan and I think that it has not benefited the University any much; it only introduces bureaucracies and things are not moving the way they are supposed to be. [Union Leader 2]

The foregoing divergent views about the value addition of the strategic plan to the university corroborate the conclusions by Lerner (1999). Lerner believed that in most cases, the results of strategic planning initiatives by universities often generate controversies.

When the Christian Service University College respondents were asked what has changed since the implementation of the short to medium term of the Charter Plan (2012-2017), the interview participants mentioned a number of developments that have taken place. These include the appointment of a full time Chaplain, enhanced staff recruitment and development, establishment of a Counselling Unit, introduction of new undergraduate and undergraduate programmes and improved publicity of the University College. An interview respondent for example noted that:

“The University College has appointed a full-time Chaplain, created a Counselling Unit to respond to both student and staff needs, sponsored short courses for the academic staff as well as

introduce new academic programmes such as MSC in Monitoring and Evaluation [CSUC 3].

This is attested to by the Christiaan Service University College becoming the first institution in West Africa to introduce a programme in monitoring and evaluation at the master's level. Prior to its introduction, monitoring and evaluation has been treated as course within programmes such as project management, development studies, public health and planning. The period also witnessed expansion in the academic structure of the University college with the creation of the Faculty of Education.

Notwithstanding, the institution strive to achieve the ultimate goal of the strategic plan which is to attain the Presidential Charter by 2022. Therefore, the University College continue to pursue measures that will enhance its visibility as an institution of excellence through enhancing the publicity drive of the institution.

“The University also continue to enhance its publicity as a preferred venue for Senior High School debates and rallies for religious bodies.” [CSUC 1].

4.4.3 Assessment of whether activities undertaken align with the strategic plan

Strategic plan implementation requires that often abstract ideas are translated into actionable everyday work of the organization. This calls for adequate attention and commitment of resources to ensure that strategic activities are executed in the day-to-day workplan of the organization by the

operational core. Without these prerequisites, there is an obvious likelihood for the new plan to botch and rob the organisation of its objectives. This section seeks to examine the extent to which operational activities were informed by the strategic plan in the case universities.

The interview respondents from the University of Cape Coast recounted that the top-down approach adopted by the University at the corporate level influenced the implementation strategy of the strategic plan at the collegiate, faculty and departmental levels. To this, UCC_HoD 7 expressed that:

“We looked at the faculty’s strategic plan to develop one for our department. This is because the faculty’s strategic plan is influenced by that of the college, which was also carved from the main corporate strategic plan. So, when you look at it carefully, there was some kind of influence from the top to the bottom, that is from the Corporate level to the departmental levels.”

[UCC_HoD 7]

To buttress this view, UCC_HoD 2 added that:

“Although the content of the strategic was not disseminated well, some leaders for such as the Deans of Faculties seem to be aware so I want to believe that my Dean knowing this factored this into most of the activities. So, we were not aware this is strategic planning but virtually whatever we were doing seem to align with the plan.” [UCC_HoD 2]

On the contrary, some interview respondents believed that some activities were undertaken that were not stipulated in the strategic plan, from their responses, it showed that:

“There was no follow up to link up the key actions and activities with the budget” (UCC_HoD 5) and also several vehicles were procured by the University within the period but management always complained of not having money” [UCC_HoD 4].

The expressions by UCC_HoD 2 and UCC_HoD 7 validate the Hax (1990) model of strategic planning, which identifies three levels of strategy formulation and implementation. At the University of Cape Coast, the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar are responsible for deciding the strategic direction of the institution while the business unit (College level led by a Provost) oversees the coordination of activities of the schools and faculties (led by a Dean) to achieve the mission and strategic objectives of the institution. At the bottom is the functional unit (led by Head of Department or Director) where administrative procedures, human resources, technology, logistics and financing are combined to drive action towards the achievement of the mission and vision of the institution. Thus, any interruption in communication at any of the levels of authority promises to affect the implementation of the plan, as argued by UCC_HoD 2.

Also, within the period, there were projects and programmes which were implemented outside the strategic plan. At the University level, the most prominent project which was implemented outside the Strategic Plan was the adoption of the Collegiate system. Although captured in the Statute of the University, this major transformation of the academic system was not part of the strategic plan. The outcome was that it took place without the requisite financial, human and physical resources.

The concerns of the participants who thought that the activities undertaken by the University of Cape Coast were not consistent with the provisions in the plan are valid and finds empirical backing in Sashittal and Jassawalla (2005) who argue that most strategic plans are often neglected after they have been commissioned. McGuinness and Morgan (2005) also concluded that most strategy implementers lack a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process. It is therefore important that strategy formulation and implementation should be conducted in a sequential manner to ensure that the intended results are achieved (McGuinness & Morgan, 2005).

Unlike UCC, the Charter Plan of CSUC is still being implemented; hence, the comments represent participants' experience within the first 5 years of implementation (short and medium-term). Sixty-seven percent of the respondents at Christian Service University College believed that the plan is on course to achieve its strategic objectives:

“The plan is still under implementation in line the NAB (National Accreditation Board) requirements for the University College status. Three new Faculties have been established within the short term with an additional Faculty to be established in the medium term which will be functional shortly. Efforts continue to be made to improve and acquire new infrastructure, improve staffing situation whiles application for Presidential have been submitted to the NAB.” [CSUC 2]

A senior management officer corroborated the above submission, adding that:

“Critical activities to help the University College to achieve its objectives continue to be pursued such as faculty staff development and increased student population.” [CSUC 4]

Notwithstanding the praise on the effort of the University College management to align the day-to-day administration of the institution with the strategic plan, one respondent took cognizance of the potential effect of external factors on the implementation of the Charter Plan.

“External circumstances play key role in the execution of the plan and leadership provide appropriate responses to these external influences on the strategic plan”. [CSUC 1]

This assertion is true given that the strategic plan implementation occurs within an environment with many interwoven components. As a University College, the institution is affiliated to other universities to run their programmes as well as other national agencies particularly the National Accreditation Board (NAB). The NAB is the national agency responsible for accrediting all institutions of higher learning in Ghana including both public and private institutions. The affiliate institutions also provide oversight responsibilities including moderating of examinations and mentoring the University College until it attains the Presidential Charter. These interactions put the institution at the mercy of these bodies to exert some level of influence on the its activities. For instance, they are required to pay affiliation fees to the University of Ghana, KNUST and the University of Cape Coast as part of memorandum of understanding whilst NAB also collects accreditation related fees.

Given the foregoing discussions, the strategic planning process should always involve making concrete provisions for implementation, especially at the operational level.

4.4.4 Assessment of whether targets were achieved on time

Very often implementation activities articulated in the strategic plan document are influenced by several factors, including but not limited resource availability, capacity of implementing personnel and organisational structure and procedures. This sub-section aims to assess the timeliness of the achievement of the key targets of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College.

Unlike the preceding sub theme, the participants were united in their response on key actions and achievement of targets on time. Overall, the interview respondents argued that some of the key actions were not achieved on time. For example, a participant from the University of Cape Coast pointed out that:

Because the strategic plan was launched a year late so, definitely the implementation was delayed, therefore, some key actions and objectives especially for the first year of implementation were not achieved. [UCC_HoD 4]; After the launching of the strategic plan, everything came back to normal. [UCC_HoD 8]

Some participants blamed it on the implementation approach used to implement the strategic plan:

“There was an issue with the implementation approach. Even though the stakeholders who were to execute the key actions and

activities were indicated in the responsibility matrix, the individuals best suited to execute these actions were not disaggregated so people really didn't know their actual roles on the strategic plan so until the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) prompted the management, nobody was actually implementing the plan.” [UCC_HoD 10]

The concerns expressed in relation to time reflect the argument by (Jorgensen, et al, 2008) indicators of failure to meet strategic objectives such as time, budget or quality goals. These findings also support Macharia (2013) determination that when implementation time is compromised or underestimated, implementation deadlines becomes subjected to approximation.

However, the fact that the implementation delayed and duty bearers did not really know their roles does not suggest that nothing was achieved. In the 2014/2015 academic year, the University of Cape Coast commenced the construction of a 5-storey Superannuation hostel, 3-storey block of flats, UCC Broadcasting Centre, 1-storey water bottling structure (Objectives VIII and XI) and spectators stand (at the UCC park (UCC, 2015). At the end of the 2016/2017 academic year, the UCC Bottling Production, UCC Goil Filling Station and UCC Detergent Unit were fully in operation in fulfillment of objective 8. Additionally, under Key thrust 6 of the University of Cape Coast, a number of new departments and academic programmes have also been introduced within the period, while a number of both local and international collaborations were pursued as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Key Thrust 9 Achievements (2012-2017)

Academic Year	No. of Collaborations established	No. of Institutions and Organizations that Visited UCC	No. of Ambassadors/ High Commissioners that Visited UCC	No. of Heads of Institutions that Visited UCC
2012/2013	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013/2014	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014/2015	12	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015/2016	12	N/A	4	10
2016/2017	N/A	13	2	6
Total	32	13	6	16

Source: Field survey, Keney (2018)

Meanwhile at the Christian Service University College, the implementation of the short- and medium-term strategies of the Charter Plan has witnessed a growth in the number of academic programmes run at the university as well as the number of faculties and departments. One out of the three proposed faculties have been created, viz, the Faculty of Education and subsequent appointment of a founding Dean. The others are Faculty of Informatics and Communication Technology and Institute for Continuing and Distance Education. Again, three out of the five proposed academic programmes have been introduced. These include Bachelor of Education in Basic Education, Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education and Master of Science in Corporate Planning. This is a partial achievement of

strategic objective II, with the attainment of autonomous status yet to be achieved.

Within the period, sufficient amount of evidence exists on the achievement of key thrusts I, X, VIII, IV (refer to Table 3). This translates to the appointment of a full-time Chaplain, robust internal quality assurance system which permeates every aspect of the institution. Currently, all students' registration of courses, checking of examination results and verification of fee status are conducted online. There are Wi-Fi hotspots which are accessible to all students, but first the students need to obtain a user account from the Information, Communication and Technology Department before one can access it. In order to enhance the research drive within the institution, publications are a requirement for appointment, promotion and renewal of contract for all academic staff. Lecturers are therefore to publish at least one peer-reviewed article a year.

4.5 Research Question 2: Factors that Promote the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The preliminary literature review identified five variables that will be used to assess the factors that promote strategic plan implementation. These factors which have been enumerated in the conceptual framework include: leadership support, monitoring and evaluation system, provision of adequate resources, clear and concise communication and stakeholder participation and ownership. These factors are crucial in responding to the contemporary challenges that tertiary institutions have to contend with. Advancing these factors promise to engender smooth implementation of the strategic plan, while

at the same time minimizing the effects of the challenges encountered during the strategic plan implementation process.

Participants were asked to indicate the major factors that facilitated the implementation of the strategic plan and achievement of the objectives discussed in the preceding sub-topic. Participants from the University of Cape Coast explained 40% of the factors including the role of leadership and monitoring and evaluation while the remaining 60% of the variables (communication, stakeholder participation involvement and provision of adequate resources) were explained in terms of the challenges they encountered with those variables during the implementation period.

4.5.1 The role of leadership

Leadership plays a critical role in strategic plan implementation. leaders provide direction, makes resources available for implementation and use strategic plan information for decision making. At the University of Cape Coast, one of the respondents detailed the Vice Chancellor's support for the strategic plan as follows:

The then Vice Chancellor, Prof. D. D. Kuupole when he came into office, referred to the strategic plan to develop his vision for the University during his tenure, so all that he did was in line with the strategic plan. [UCC_HoD 10]

Other respondents believed the deliberate attempt of the University Management provided the enabling environment for the strategic plan. UCC HoD 9 explained that:

I would say the deliberate attempt by the leadership to ensure that some things are being done such as expansion in enrolment, improvement in campus security and visibility of the University.

[UCC_HoD 9]

In relation to the creation of a Directorate of Information, Communication and Technology and subsequent appointment of a director to administer the office, which directly relate to Key Thrust 7, UCC_HoD 8 thought that:

There were serious challenges with ICT on campus so management gave it attention and resources in order to improve the situation. [UCC_HoD 8]

The views of UCC_HoD 9 and UCC_HoD 8 resonate Dincer, et. al, (2006) definition of strategic planning as being a deliberate and conscious attempt by top management of an institution to drive institutional change and development. In support of Dincer, et al, (2006), Macharia (2013) concluded that, successful strategy implementation requires requesting, determining, planning, attainability, implementing and evaluating changes resulting from the implementation of the strategic plan. Thus, the conscious effort of the managers of the institution to map corrective measures to respond to the critical challenges they faced provided a lever for the implementation of the plan.

Responses from CSUC also resonate part of the issues raised by their colleagues at the University of Cape Coast. For them, factors such as effective coordination by the leadership, committed staff from both old and young to aspirations of the institution and continuous stakeholder engagement on the plan

play key roles during the implementation of the short and medium term of the Charter Plan.

“There is effective coordination of all activities by management and particularly the Quality Assurance Unit has been a major factor. The President has been very instrumental in that aspect also even though the Implementation Committee for the strategic plan has not been formed” [CSUC 5]

The interplay of the role of President of the University College and the Quality Assurance Unit in the implementation process highlight the levels of authority in the institution. While the President and the institutional leadership set the strategic focus for the institution, it is the responsibility of the line managers such as the Head of the Quality Assurance Unit to translate these ideas into daily work plans for execution (Nyakeriga, 2015; Nasi & Mantere, 2002). It is their responsibility to communicate the strategy, motivate the workforce to follow the strategy while the management exercise oversight responsibility over the entire process.

4.5.2 The DAPQA Effect - The role of monitoring and evaluation in the University of Cape Coast strategic plan implementation

With no visible constituent or unit of the University of Cape Coast assigned to oversee the monitoring and evaluation needs of the strategic plan, it took the intervention of the Directorate of Academic of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to bring the status of implementation of the strategic into the lime light and to the attention of the University management.

Many people were not working towards achieving the key objectives of the strategic plan until DAPQA took it up to supervise the implementation process by producing a monitoring report on the state of implementation in 2014 that pushed the management to begin to act on the plan by requesting all colleges, faculties and school as well as departments and units to develop their own strategic plan in line with the corporate plan.

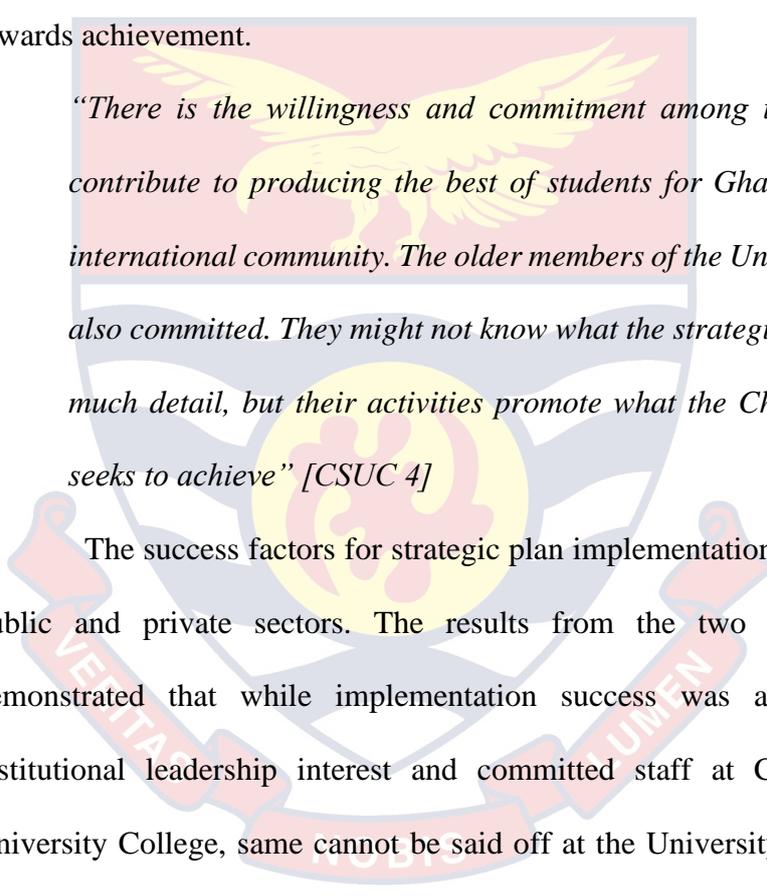
[UCC_HoD 10]

Dynamic approach to strategic planning as described by David (2009) articulates the potential of monitoring and evaluation to promote effectiveness and efficiency in implementation. Monitoring and evaluation help to spot and remedy problems early, support decision making as well as institutional learning and improvement (David, 2009; Rist & Kusek, 2004). It is against this backdrop that the intervention of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) in 2014 paved the way to arouse interest and drive action to see through the implementation of the strategic plan. Through the monitoring and dissemination of the status of implementation of the strategic plan's activities, the Directorate succeeded in keeping management on their toes as well as providing evidence to rally all the other units and stakeholders to the plan.

4.5.3 Assessing staff commitment to the implementation of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College strategic plan

Human resource management literature supports the idea that when employees are treated as partners within the institutional framework, their

interests are respected, and they have a voice on matters of concern is an invaluable organizational asset (Nyakeriga, 2015). Healthy staff-management relation sets the tone to create a congenial atmosphere between managers and the members of their teams to share information on the mission, values and objectives of the organisation. This creates mutual understanding on what is to be achieved as well create a platform for managing and developing the team towards achievement.



“There is the willingness and commitment among the staff to contribute to producing the best of students for Ghana and the international community. The older members of the University are also committed. They might not know what the strategic plan is in much detail, but their activities promote what the Charter Plan seeks to achieve” [CSUC 4]

The success factors for strategic plan implementation are different for public and private sectors. The results from the two case institutions demonstrated that while implementation success was attributed to the institutional leadership interest and committed staff at Christian Service University College, same cannot be said off at the University of Cape Coast. Rodriguez and Hickson (1995) argued that motivation and participation are the major bane of strategy implementation in the public sector, in this case, University of Cape Coast. Motivation drives participation in public sector strategy implementation. As observed from the responses from UCC, many staff were lukewarm towards the strategic plan, unlike at CSUC where there was

visible commitment to get things done. Thus, confirming the conclusions by Rodriguez and Hickson (1995).

4.6 Research Question 3: Challenges Encountered During the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The challenges encountered during strategic plan implementation were fashioned along Niven (2002) barriers to strategy implementation including vision barrier, people barrier, management barrier and resource barrier. A fifth challenge, monitoring and evaluation, was identified during the literature and added to the factors to examine in the study. In order to obtain fair response, participants were asked to articulate the challenges they identified during the implementation of the strategic plan. The interviews were transcribed and organized into themes along the five variables. The results of the study under this theme are discussed as follow:

4.6.1 Resource constraints

Strategic plan implementation consumes a lot of resources, therefore having access to resources in any form could be considered a competitive advantage. When asked to comment on the challenges encountered with resources during the implementation, participants from both universities expressed dissatisfaction with issues relating to resources, especially human and financial resources. On the human resources, at UCC, the issue has to do with inadequate staff strength due to a cap on employment while CSUC the problem has to do with recruiting and retaining high caliber staff, especially academic staff. UCC_HOD 1 recounted;

“The has been a cap on employment for some time now so it has become quite difficult to recruit new staff to augment the existing capacity, making it difficult for the small existing staff to take charge of all the other activities.” [UCC_HoD 1]

The importance of training and capacity building for the implementers of the strategic plan cannot be underestimated. Interaction with the interviewees revealed that for most of them, this happen to be their first ever involvement in strategic plan implementation. It therefore suggests that for them to effectively discharge their duties, they need adequate training. But UCC_HoD 11 had this to say:

“A lot of the appointments are made without adequate training so you have people occupying offices and they have to learn on the job.” [UCC_HoD 11]

While the University of Cape Coast is strongly positioned to recruit and retain highly performing staff, Christian Service University College cannot boast of same. While the institution has made some progress in appointing a full-time Chaplain, a Registrar and Director of Finance, as well as some administrative and academic staff within the plan implementation period, some staff have left their post to other institutions and industry.

“We have a difficulty in recruiting and retaining well qualified academic and professional staff due to competition from the other higher education arena and industry” [CSUC 2]

Different people play different roles in strategy implementation. Therefore, the effectiveness of strategy implementation is dependent on the

quality of the people involved in the implementation process, both for management and non-management personnel. Organisational leadership must demonstrate commitment to build the capacity of their employees to perform towards the overall achievement of the strategic objectives of the organization.

On the issue of financial resources, respondents from UCC highlighted the fundamental flaw in the 2012-2017 corporate strategic plan of the institution in not defining the sources of funding nor cost allocation for various items in the strategic plan.

“In strategic planning, when you plan you have to define the sources of funding for achieving the key actions of the plan, but unfortunately for us as a University we didn’t do that; we didn’t know where the money will come from for us to implement each of the key thrusts of the strategic plan so the key actions were not linked up with the resources.” [UCC_HoD 10]

UCC_HoD 14 added that:

There are times you refer to the strategic plan to undertake an activity and write to the appropriate for clearance then the Directorate of Finance will tell you we don’t have the money and so whatever request you make, even if it is pertinent and it is within your budgetary allocation, it was subject to the availability of funds. [UCC_HoD 5]

In support of Niven (2002), the results of the study showed that key strategies in the plan were not linked to the budget process of the University. Additionally, there were no budgetary allocation for the key strategies and

activities outlined in the plan. Without any benchmark against which to assess progress or otherwise, the actual cost of implementing of the plan was not known. This then makes it difficult to determine whether the plan was efficient while leaving its effectiveness and sustainability subject to individual interpretations.

For CSUC, their main challenge has to do with access to financial resources. The greater proportion of the institution income continue to come from student fees. It goes to suggest that the institution is negatively affected whenever, students delay paying their fees or that the institution is unable to achieve the projected number of students for admission into their programmes.

“Difficulty in recruiting and retaining well qualified academic and professional staff due to competition from the other higher education arena and industry” [CSUC 2]

The resources problem of these two institutions have been human and financial resources. On the human resource front, the University of Cape Coast possess the power to attract high quality staff but their problem is orienting and building their capacity to perform their duties, while CSUC on the other hand, is plagued with retaining high quality professionals. However, the lack of training, orientation and effective engagement on the strategic plan has created a lukewarm and unmotivated disposition among the staff of the university towards the strategic plan. This is manifested in the weak implementation of the plan as discussed earlier.

On financial resources, CSUC outlined the cost allocations for the various strategies in the strategic plan; however, have been unsuccessful to

some extent to diversify their sources of income, since their major source of fund continue to be generated from student fees. The University of Cape Coast on the contrary, has the resources but failed to plan its allocation. A number of the components of the Strategic Plan could not be achieved because they were not costed and the sources of funding were not indicated. For instance, in Key Thrust IX, departments were expected develop a number of new academic programmes, yet there is no linkage with financial allocation for the programmes. It was assumed that either the government or some entities will provide the needed resources for planned projects and programmes. And therefore, the plans were expected to take care of themselves.

The process of strategy planning must incorporate conscious efforts for staff training, orientation and capacity development. Plans should also be made to use the strategic plan as a tool for to attract funding for implementation. This creates a sense of motivation and appreciation to drive performance towards the achievement of the strategic objectives of the institution.

4.6.2 Vision barrier

This indicator examined the strategies used to communicate the strategic plan to the wider University audience. It is anchored on the extent to which the people in the institution are aware of the strategic plan and its content. The results showed that most of the participants from the University of Cape Coast were not pleased with the approach and outcome of the communication channels used by management with regards to the implementation of the strategic plan. for example, UCC_HoD 1 thought that the strategic plan was plagued with low awareness among the various staff clusters:

I have observed that a lot of people, both senior members, senior and junior staff didn't really know what was in the strategic plan and so in terms of decision making it becomes difficult to align the decisions with the strategic plan. I think that information dissemination on the strategic plan was not done well so it makes it difficult to rally the people to support the plan when information is limited to a few people who hold specific positions. [UCC_HoD 1]

On the issue of clarity on the content of the strategic plan, UCC_HoD 3 reported that:

I think that some of the key thrusts in the strategic plan were not clearly defined. Some of the key actions were obviously happening but if we had added some further explanations to the key thrusts such as to create a conducive working environment, this is what we are looking for then, that would have made it easier to work towards achieving them but that was not done. [UCC_HoD 3]

These concerns are in line with the assertions by Muteti (2017) and Niven (2002). Commenting on why many strategic plans fail, Niven (2002) observed that only about 5% of the staff of an institution really understand the institution's strategic plan. In support of Niven (2002), Muteti (2017) explained that it becomes difficult for the staff and lower level managers to adequately understand their roles in the implementation of the plan when it is not properly communicated to them, a situation described by Niven (2002) as vision barrier.

The Centre for Disease Control (CDC, 2011), described communication as the sharing of information about the strategic plan in ways that make the plan understandable and useful to the stakeholders throughout the duration of the plan. With such a diverse stakeholder groups, it was imperative on the part of management to communicate the institution's goals to everyone in the university in order to rally their support for the plan (Abuya, 2014) for institutional change (Scott, 2016). The clientele of the University of Cape Coast consists of both internal and external customers. The internal customers include the students, staff (junior staff, senior staff, senior members, and management) while external customers include surrounding communities, donors and partners. Communication therefore should identify these stakeholder groups and define what information they need and how to communicate it to them.

Although the strategic plan recognized the importance of communication in the strategic planning process, there no communication strategy included in the plan. However, several opportunities exist to communicate the plan to the various stakeholder. Examples include student-management consultative meetings, convocation meetings, staff-management consultative meeting, orientation and matriculations as well as graduation and annual award. Others include presentations at regional or national conferences, press conferences or media briefings.

4.6.3 Management barrier

Successful implementation of a strategic plan requires thoughtful planning, attention and commitment on the part of change leaders and the involvement of those to be affected by it (Macharia 2013). This variable measures the level of

attention and commitment given to the implementation of the key actions of the strategic plan of the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College. Commenting on the issue, UCC_HoD 8 who has been working at the University of Cape Coast since 2009, complained about poor communication and lack of a feedback mechanism of the strategic plan. He explained, thus:

“We had copies of the strategic plan but nobody referred to it after it was launched so we don’t even know what was achieved and what was not achieved because there was no commitment on the part of management to track achievement of the plan.”

[UCC_HoD 8]

Another respondent blamed the management for not paying attention to the implementation or creating the enabling environment for smooth implementation of the plan. He said:

We did not pay attention to the implementation of the things we finely talked about because the leadership did not create the enabling environment for everybody to be fully aware of what was in the strategic plan and to be carried along with it. [UCC_HoD

9]

Niven (2002) identified the critical role of the management of an institution to the success or failure of their strategic plan such that the slightest error or misjudgment on their part can jeopardize the entire fortunes of the plan. He emphasized that management barrier occurs when the leaders of an organization focuses on other things such as financial returns rather than the actual deliverables of the strategic plan.

For instance, during the plan implementation period, the three arms of planning in the University of Cape Coast worked independent of each other. They are, the Directorate of Finance (DoF), Directorate of Physical Development and Estate (DPDE) and the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA). These three bodies are responsible for planning the financial, physical and academic matters in the University respectively and their activities are expected to be coordinated through the Planning and Resource Committee. However, within the period of the strategic plan, the Committee met only once a year to discuss annual budget allocations.

Academic programmes are discussed at Academic Planning and Management Committee meetings, where the Directors of Finance and Physical Planning are not represented; financial issues are discussed at Finance Committee where the Director of DAPQA is not represented. Thus, these three arms operated in silos. For instance, new Institutes, Schools/Faculties and Departments as well as academic programmes were approved for implementation without considering the financial implications as well as available spaces, facilities and personnel. These weak links in structures and systems affected the implementation of some of the activities identified in the Plan.

This goes to reaffirm the assertion by Zechlin (2008) and Lerner (1999). According to Zechlin (2008), most universities lacked the capacity to develop and implement strategic plans because of their operational orientation while Lerner (1999) thought that majority of the university leaders are either unable or unwilling to focus on activities that will result to systematic change. Although

the strategic plan identified the various duty bearers such as the office of the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments, their roles were not disaggregated nor specified. It then begs the question; who is responsible for what, and how is accountability ensured?

A similar issue emerged at the CSUC where the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee which will be “*responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the programmes and projects defined in the Plan Framework*” has neither been formed nor commissioned at the time of drafting this report. The Committee was supposed to have the President as the Chairman, with the Vice President, Registrar, Finance Officer, Chaplain, Librarian, Head of ICT and Deputy Registrar as members.

4.6.4 People barrier

This variable measured the extent to which people identified themselves with the strategic plan. Niven (2002) argued that ownership is contingent upon certain incentives such as financial gains and support systems. The participants were asked to explain the strategies employed to encourage participation and ownership of the strategic plan. An interview participant from the University of Cape Coast for example argued that, there was no ownership of the strategic plan. According to the interviewee,

“There was no plan for ownership so the strategic plan was just there until DAPQA produced the first monitoring report on the implementation of the strategic plan to the management that necessitated some departments, faculties and colleges to develop their own strategic plans.” [UCC_HoD 3]

According to UCC_HoD 5, there was an initial stakeholder engagement during the formulation stages of the plan, but then everything came back to business as usual after the plan was finally launched.

The strategic plan planning committee held consultations with the relevant stakeholders including the unions (SRC, UTAG, SSAGUCC and TEWU), Deans, HoDs to gather information to prepare the strategic plan but everything ended after the plan was launched. All these stakeholders had representations on the planning committee that developed the plan. [UCC_HoD 5]

In support of UCC_HoD 5, UCC_HoD 10 also said that participation and ownership of the plan was poorly done:

“Many people did not identify themselves with the strategic plan even though they recognize it was there. A strategic plan should actually evolve from the bottom to the top; which means that the individual workers of the organization should make input into the plan, that is when they identify themselves with the plan but if you constitute a committee to develop the plan it becomes a top-down approach and this method doesn’t really help members of the institution to identify themselves with the plan.” [UCC_HoD 10]

These sentiments expressed by the UCC respondents culminate in organizational resistance to change which arises when certain expectations are not fulfilled, which was duly summarized by the respondents from CSUC.

“There is resistance to change by some of the members of staff and some influence by external factors such as the National

Accreditation Board which keep changing their regulations all the time” [CSUC 4]

Niven (2002) refers to these expectations as “support systems”. Resistance to change arises when individuals lack the skill or knowledge to enable them to do their work effectively and also receive insufficient support to build the necessary capabilities to enhance performance. It was apparent especially at UCC that undue delay of promotion, favoritism and denial of career building opportunities constituted some of the major reasons for the resistance.

Congruent to the assertion by Niven (2002), 80% of the stakeholders and duty bearers interviewed in this research from the University of Cape Coast did not actually identify themselves with the strategic plan because whether they do or not “*the system was evolving on its own*” (UCC_HoD 7). There were no accountability measures to ensure that people actually followed and owned the strategic plan.

Brinkschroder (2014) observed that the people in an organization constitute rare strategic resource that the organization can tap into to drive action towards the achievement of their strategic goals. Generally, people feel appreciated when involved and consulted on relevant issues (Harter, et al, 2010). However, after initial contact with the union representatives to draft the strategic plan, there were no further attempts to engage the various stakeholder groups to discuss the plan and the sections that relate with them.

After the launching of the plan, there was the need for public engagement and discourse for the various stakeholder groups on the need for

the institution and everyone to see to the success of the plan. This would have been an opportune time for the management to explain the plan and the parts that pertain to group and seek for their support for the plan. Lindblom and Ohlsson (2011) demonstrated that successful implementation of the strategy requires the total corporation and participation of employees and relevant stakeholders.

4.6.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The inclusion of this variable in the study was informed by David (2009) findings on emerging strategic planning models which incorporate close monitoring and feedback system to detect and remedy problems in the implementation process. The participants explained the impact of the strategic plan's approach to monitoring and evaluation and the impact it had on the implementation process.

The analysis of this variable at the University of Cape Coast revealed that monitoring and evaluation was not incorporated into the plan, record keeping was a problem as there were in most cases no record of activities conducted and it took the intervention of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to bring the strategic plan to the attention of both management and the university community before actions were taken to implement the plan.

“To be honest with you, there was no monitoring and evaluation system built in the strategic plan and it was not until DAPQA came in that they developed tools to monitor the implementation process”. [UCC_HoD 10]

UCC_HoD 9 thought that no one was monitoring the implementation process:

“Nobody was actually following up on the implementation. For instance, the then Director of DAPQA made a lot of advocates for us to quickly review the strategic plan when it was about to end to see where we are and what we have been able to achieve. And so, if there was a monitoring and evaluation system in place, then when the plan was ending there wouldn’t have been that slow attempt to get the document to learn whether we have made progress. But it was at the tail end he kept on complaining that the plan was about to end and so we have to review it before management commissioned a committee to review the plan in order to develop a new one.” [UCC_HoD 9]

Much like UCC, it emerged that the Charter Plan of CSUC has not been monitored nor evaluated because the evaluation committee has not been constituted. The plan made provision for the creation of a committee that will be responsible for monitoring, evaluation and reporting progress on achievement of key indicators of the plan. However, during the short to medium term implementation of the Charter Plan, there was no evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

Researchers including Alharty, Rashid and Pagliar, (2017); Dziyaba (2016) as well as Rist and Kusek, (2004) among others have emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation in governance and strategy implementation. Rist and Kusek (2004) described monitoring and evaluation as

a powerful management tool for good governance. Alharty, Rashid and Pagliar, (2017) added that monitoring and evaluation helps to monitor, evaluate and report progress on all activities in the plan in a participatory manner. Without any monitoring and evaluation plan in place, the strategic plan was left to its fate until DAPQA intervened in 2014. Through this, management get to know the true state of implementation of the plan and quickly actions were taken to address the findings of the monitoring report. Thus, Dziyaba (2016) concluded that monitoring helps to assess the status of progress on the plan, key objectives and targets.

Although the two case institutions recognized the value of monitoring and evaluation to the implementation of the institutional plans, neither of them took concrete steps to integrate and institutionalize M&E in the implementation process.

4.7 Summary of Findings and Emerging Issues

This chapter presented the findings of the study and the discussion thereof on the performance of the strategic plans of UCC and Christian Service University College. The initial analysis explored some background information on the study participants, followed by a thematic presentation of the study findings along the research questions.

The respondents demonstrated their understanding of strategic planning; however, its application could be problematic since some of them confused strategic planning with strategic plan.

Analysis of research question one revealed that Christian Service University College achieved a high implementation rate (85%) compared to

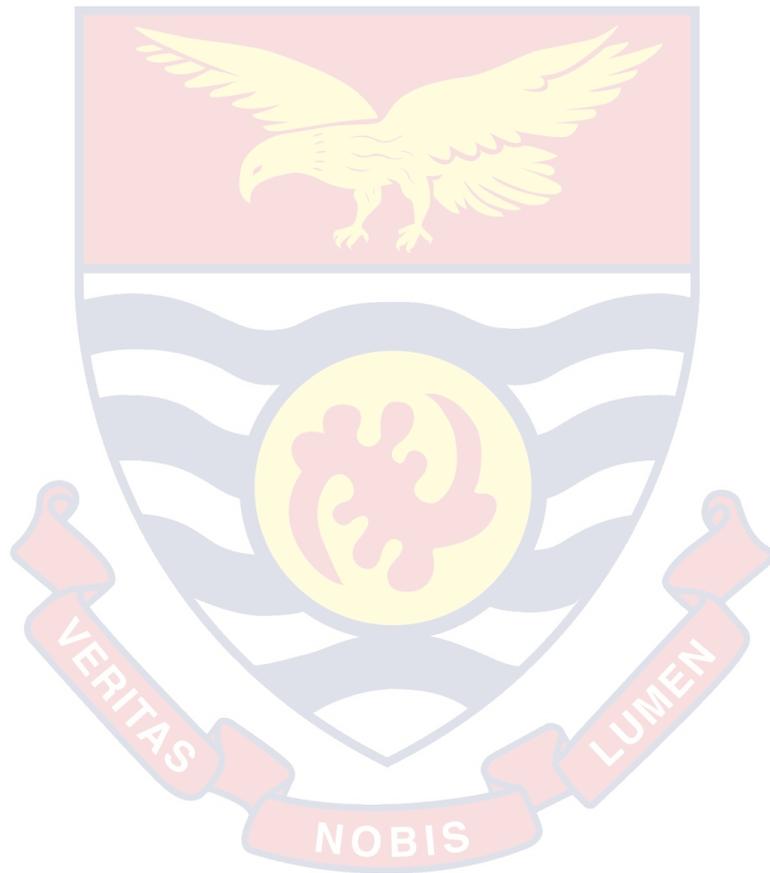
University of Cape Coast which recorded a medium rate of implementation of 67%. Both institutions recorded significant changes especially in terms of academic programmes and ICT infrastructure, however, several key targets were not achieved on time and major activities executed were not informed by the strategic plan. Again, both institutions recognize the value of stakeholders in the implementation process, however, integrating it into the implementation process became problematic.

Research question two explored the factors that contributed to strategy implementation success at UCC and CSUC and the results revealed that while effective leadership and committed staff were critical to the implementation successes achieved at CSUC, the same remained mere rhetoric at UCC.

With respect to the implementation challenges, while UCC was more endowed with resources than CSUC, its major bane was its failure to identify sources of funding and costing the various activities in the plan. Christian Service University College, on the other hand, grappled with limited sources of funding because of the over reliance of student fees to fund the implementation of the plan. Also, neither of the two institutions prioritized monitoring and evaluation during the implementation period of the strategic plan. The results therefore, validated Niven (2002) four barriers in strategy implementation, viz, vision barrier, people barrier, management barrier and resource barrier.

In reference to the conceptual framework, the results also demonstrate that due to weak attention given to the intervening variables (factors that promote implementation success) resulted to the independent variables (implementation barriers) being magnified to negatively impact the extent of

achievement (dependent variable) of the strategic objectives of the two case institutions.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the performance of the strategic plans of two Ghanaian universities: one public and the other private. This chapter provides a summary of the major findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, followed by the recommendations and suggestions for further research on the subject matter. The study was guided by three research objectives.

The first objective sought to determine the extent of achievement of the strategic plan. The second objective was set to establish the factors that promoted the implementation of strategic plans while the third objective focused on the challenges encountered during the implementation of the strategic plans in the institutions?

5.2 Summary of Findings

This dissertation focused the performance of strategic plans of selected public and private universities in Ghana. The conceptual framework for the study was derived from the literature review. The study selected University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College because of their unique characteristics and the fact they have a history of developing and implementing strategic plans. The respondents for the study were heads of departments and union leaders during the duration of the 2012-2017 strategic plan of the University of Cape Coast and the 2012-2017 plan of Christian Service University College. The data collection tool used was an interview guide with

an attached consent form as per the data collection procedure explained in chapter three.

The results of first objective indicated that the rate of implementation of the strategic plan was moderate for the University of Cape Coast, obtaining 14 (70%) out of 21 points while Christian Service University College scored 18 (85%) points out 21. Although, the strategic plan achieved some successes, in most cases the activities were not aligned with the strategic plan and some targets were not achieved on time. In both the University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College, the plan was launched a year late and there was no strategy implementation committee was in. Also, the indicators of failure identified by the study included poor communication of the plan, lack of M&E, late implementation and failure to meet key targets and objectives corroborate the findings of Markins and Steele (2005); Jorgensen, et al, (2008) and McKinsey (2006).

The second objective sought to establish factors that facilitated the implementation process towards the achievement of the plan's objectives. At UCC, the results showed that the intervention by the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) which was manifested in the role of monitoring and evaluation constituted the major factor identified by the study respondents. The implementation process at CSUC was bolstered by committed staff and effective coordination of the plan by the institutional leadership, notably the President. Although, five variables were articulated in the conceptual framework, the study participants explained the remaining factors

(communication, stakeholder participation and provision of adequate resources) in terms of how they worked against the implementation process.

The last objective was intended to establish the challenges encountered during the implementation of the plan. The results indicated that there was no plan for accountability, monitoring and evaluation in the plan. Achieving the strategic goals requires an accountability and feedback system to report progress on the activities and key actions of the plan. At UCC, the study also found that there were no mechanisms for engaging the various stakeholder groups following the official launching of the strategic plan and also there was no budgetary allocations for the various key strategies and activities articulated in the plan, resulting to low awareness, identification and ownership of the plan. The strategic plan of CSUC was not launched neither was the implementation committee commissioned and funding remained the major bottleneck to the implementation of the plan.

5.3 Conclusions

The extent of achievement in the implementation of strategic plans can be determined by factors such as the rate of implementation, the added value of the plan to the university, aligning activities with the plan, achieving targets on time as well as the level of stakeholder participation and ownership.

When stakeholder participation is strong, it drives every unit of the institution to own the strategic plan. This in turn ensures that the activities of every constituent of the institution are aligned with the strategic plan. The various constituents then work together, though independently towards the timely achievements of the targets. Higher rate of implementation is achieved

when the various units within the organization work in a concerted manner to attain greater value addition to the institution. The study agreed that factors such as stakeholder involvement, communication and M&E information systems were needed to ensure effective implementation. However, a higher rate of achievement was not attained due to lack of prioritization of these critical factors.

The study further concluded that the factors that promoted the implementation of the plan include leadership support and monitoring and evaluation and committed staff. The monitoring exercise conducted by the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance in 2014 caught the attention of the University's leadership which necessitated a roundtable discussion at Busua Beach to discuss the fallout of the implementation status report. The outcome was the mandatory development of strategic plans by every constituent of the University in conformity with the Corporate strategic plan. This then provided the platform for concerted action towards achieving the targets and objectives of the plan. The Christian Service University College underscored the importance of team work and leadership to the implementation of strategic plans.

Additionally, the results of the research showed a weak linkage between the budgeting process of the University of Cape Coast and the strategic plan. In strategic planning, the budget of the institution must be linked with activities outlined in the strategic plan. However, the 2012-2017 strategic plan of the University was developed without a costing each of the activities in the plan and

so whenever budgets are prepared, they were done without recourse to the strategic plan.

Also, there was a general lack of attention and focus to supervise the implementation of the strategic plan. There was no plan for M&E, participation and ownership. Even though the strategic plan was elaborate enough, the implementation left much to be desired. Neither the management nor staff cared about the strategic plan, whether it succeed or not, because it was not mandatory to follow it to the letter.

Within the period, major projects and programmes which were implemented outside the strategic plan. Prominent among them was the adoption of the Collegiate system. Although captured in the Statute of the University, this major transformation of the academic system was not part of the strategic plan. The outcome was that it took place without the requisite financial, human and physical resources. As a private institution, access to funding remained the critical challenge to Christian Service University College implementation of the strategic plan.

Effective strategic planning initiatives calls for a concerted effort where everyone's voice is heard and considered and where all the constituents of the system work together in unison. It is also important to harmonise and coordinate the various units to drive action towards the achievement of the strategic priorities. Communication of the strategic plan must not end with the official launching of the plan. It must follow throughout the life of the plan. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems provides early warning signs about the

strategic plan. It should therefore not be left half-done. Resources must be allocated for effective monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

5.4 Recommendations

From the discussion of the findings, the study recommends that:

The University management of UCC and CSUC should provide adequate training for newly appointed office holders before they assume office to help them to appreciate and understand some basic concepts in management and administrative procedures. Pre-implementation education on the plan should also be provided for the constituents of the institutions. These should include what new responsibilities, tasks and duties will be required from the employees in order to implement the strategy.

The Universities should adopt management practices that encourages effective communication among top-middle-bottom staff of the institution. They should make information and communication easily accessible through open and supportive communication channels. The managers of the institutions should also introduce incentives, support systems and performance management processes that encourage the performance of the staff towards the implementation of the plan.

The Management of UCC and the Directorate of Finance should ensure that annual budget preparation always aligns with the strategic plan. Also, the cost allocation of the key actions in the strategic plan should be indicated. The leadership of the Christian Service University College are also encouraged to identify and prioritize alternative sources of income to fund the implementation of the plan.

Management of the institutions must work to whip up the interest of everyone in the institution in the key thrusts of the strategic plan. Management through the Directorate of Human Resource and Public Affairs should organize regular forums on the strategic plan for the various staff clusters and highlight the areas that are relevant to them and to seek their continued support for the plan.

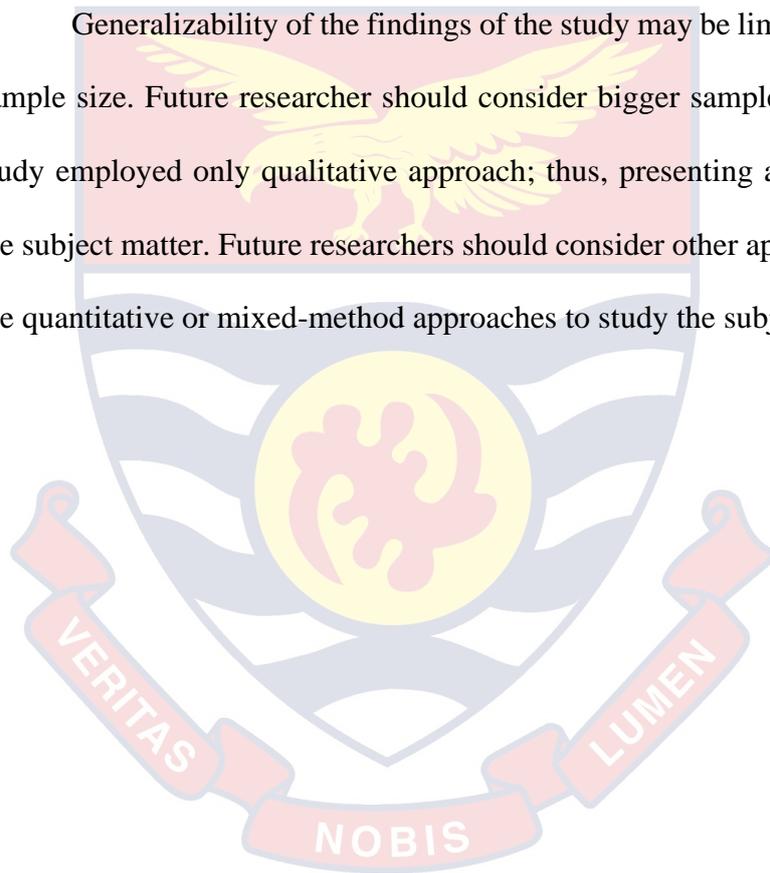
Middle level managers including Provosts, Deans and Heads of Departments (HoDs) should set up sub-committees at the college, faculty or school and departmental levels respectively whose responsibility will be to ensure that the activities stipulated in the strategic plan are implemented accordingly. Additionally, Provosts, Deans and HoDs should monitor and request for at least quarterly implementation progress reports on the plan. This will ensure that people are kept on their toes and work towards the plan. Management should also resource and strengthen the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) and other planning units in their institutions to effectively monitor and evaluate the strategic plan implementation.

The various unions in the University including the SRC, UTAG, TEWU and Senior Staff Association should take active interest in keeping management on its toes by developing their own monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor and report on the implementation of the strategic plan. With the strategic plan, the University management, staff clusters, students and all relevant stakeholders need to work in a concerted manner to its elaborate content realistic.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study was conducted on just two institutions, one public and one private. To support the results from this research, the same study could be conducted covering more institutions across the education divide to verify the results and check if there are any observed differences in the performance of their strategic plans.

Generalizability of the findings of the study may be limited by the small sample size. Future researcher should consider bigger sample sizes. Also, the study employed only qualitative approach; thus, presenting a limited view of the subject matter. Future researchers should consider other approaches such as the quantitative or mixed-method approaches to study the subject matter.



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**APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FOR UNIVERSITY OF CAPE
COAST**

**An Assessment of The Performance of Strategic Plans in Ghanaian
Universities: Case Study of The University of Cape Coast and Christian
Service University College**

Dear Sir/Madam:

This study seeks to assess the factors that promote or inhibit strategic planning initiatives in Ghanaian universities. You are invited to participate in this research project as a stakeholder of the Institution by responding to the statements contained in the research instrument below. This instrument was designed to elicit information on issues relating to **the 2012 – 2017 implementation** of the Corporate Strategic Plan of the University of Cape Coast.

The information collected is purely for academic purpose and will be treated with confidence and while pseudonyms will be used in place of names to ensure anonymity the research participants. Please indicate your consent to participate in this research by appending your signature or initials in the space provided below. **Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to stop at any time without any repercussions to you.**

It is hoped that the findings of the research are meant to identify the gaps that exist in strategic plan implementation in higher education and this information will enrich the sector and facilitate other researchers to use the findings as well as equip the body of knowledge in strategic management.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Keney, MSc. Monitoring and Evaluation (0267778227/0209028150)

Christian Service University College, Kumasi, Ghana.

Signature/Initial of Participant:

Date:

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

An Assessment of The Performance of Strategic Plans in Ghanaian Universities: Case Study of The University of Cape Coast and Christian Service University College

Dear Sir/Madam:

This study seeks to assess the factors that promote or inhibit strategic planning initiatives in Ghanaian universities. You are invited to participate in this research project as a stakeholder of the Institution by responding to the statements contained in the research instrument below. This instrument was designed to elicit information on issues relating to **the Short to Medium Term (2012 – 2017) implementation** of the 2012 – 2022 Strategic Plan of the University College.

The information collected is purely for academic purpose and will be treated with confidence and while pseudonyms will be used names to ensure anonymity the research participants. Please indicate your consent to participate in this research by appending your signature or initials in the space provided below. **Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to stop at any time without any repercussions to you.**

It is hoped that the findings of the research are meant to identify the gaps that exist in strategic plan implementation in higher education and this information will enrich the sector and facilitate other researchers to use the findings as well as equip the body of knowledge in strategic management.

Signature/Initial of Participant: **Date:**

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Keney, MSc. Monitoring and Evaluation (gkeney@stu.csuc.edu.gh)
(0267778227/020902815)

Christian Service University College, Kumasi, Ghana.

**APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITY OF CAPE
COAST**

Instruction: Complete the information contained in this instrument by ticking or responding to the appropriate question. **Do not write your name, contact address or any information that can be used to identify you on this instrument. Tick (✓) where appropriate.**

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How do you understand the concept of strategic planning?
2. Do you have any previous experience in strategic plan implementation?
Yes No
3. Are you aware of the existence of the 2012 – 2017m./ strategic plan of your institution?
Yes No

SECTION B: EXTENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

10. Given your knowledge of the strategic plan, were the strategies in the strategic plan consistent with the objectives of the institution? Yes
No
Explain your response,
11. What would you say was the added value of the strategic plan to the University and for whom?
12. How were stakeholders such as staff and students involved in the strategic planning process?
13. Was the strategic plan monitored or evaluation between 2012 – 2017 (during the Short to Medium Term)?
Yes No

14. In your opinion, how would you rate implementation of the strategic plan's objectives from 2012 – 2017 (i.e. Short term to Medium term) between 0-2 where

0 = (No Evidence of Implementation);

1 (Some amount of evidence of implementation but objective was not fully achieved) 2 (Sufficient amount of evidence on implementation exist)

No.	Strategic objective	0	1	2
i.	Create an environment that seeks to improve student's life, foster student – focused learning and students with strong ethics and commitment to society.			
ii.	Create a conducive working environment which recognises equal opportunities for faculty, staff and students			
iii.	Recruit, develop and retain high calibre and motivated faculty and administrative staff			
iv.	Create a learning organisation culture that enhances teamwork, efficiency, discipline commitment			
v.	Promote active and reflective teaching and learning, research and outreach that strongly position UCC as centre of excellence			
vi.	Develop new and relevant programmes, periodically revise existing ones and vigorously pursue distance and sandwich education			
vii.	Develop and strength integrated ICT infrastructure and facilities that robustly support teaching and learning, research and outreach			
viii.	Improve upon physical infrastructure and support services that enhance teaching and learning, research and outreach			
ix.	Aggressively develop linkages with local and foreign institutions and partnership with industries			
x.	Improve upon management capacity and institutional governance system			
xi.	Vigorously work to improve revenue generation and enforce fiscal discipline			

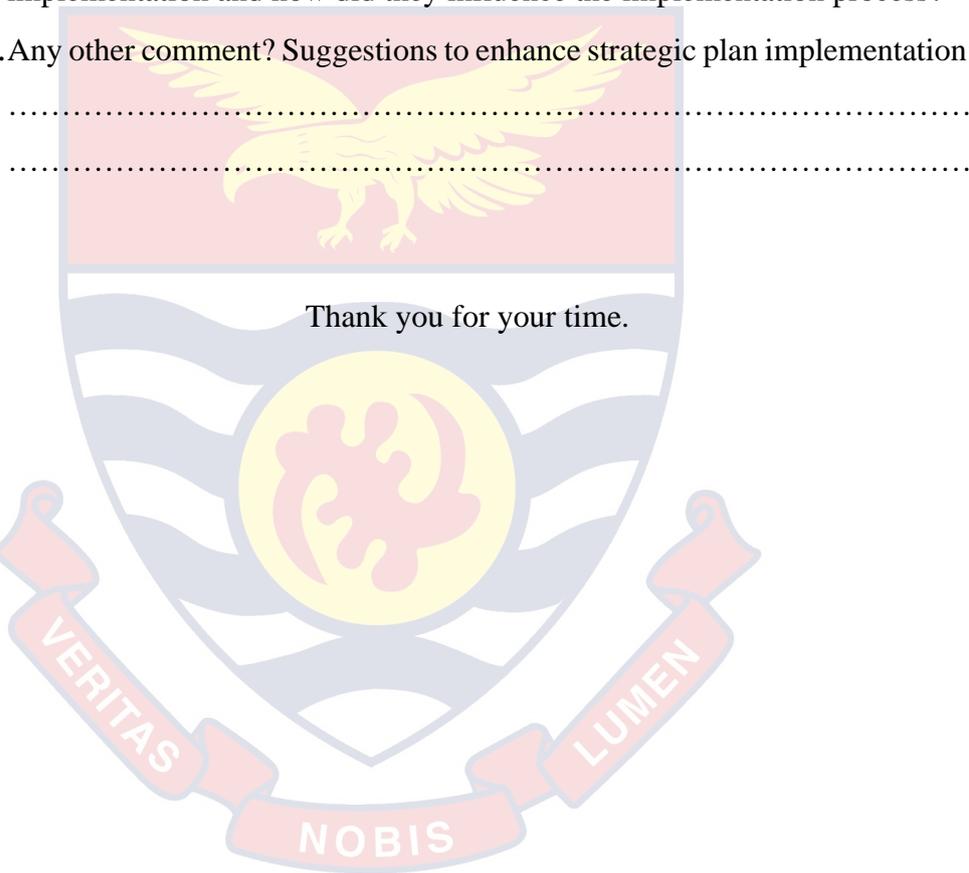
SECTION C: FACTORS THAT PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION

15. What were the major factors that contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the plan?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING IMPLEMENTATION

16. What kinds of challenges or problems emerged during the strategy implementation and how did they influence the implementation process?

17. Any other comment? Suggestions to enhance strategic plan implementation:



APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (CSUC)

Instruction: Complete the information contained in this instrument by ticking or responding to the appropriate question. **Do not write your name, contact address or any information that can be used to identify you on this instrument. Tick (✓) where appropriate.**

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. How do you understand the concept of strategic planning?
5. Do you have any previous experience in strategic plan implementation?
Yes No
6. Are you aware of the existence of the 2012 – 2022 strategic plan of your institution?
Yes No

SECTION B: EXTENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

18. Given your knowledge of the strategic plan, were the strategies in the strategic plan consistent with the objectives of the institution?
Yes No
Explain your response:.....
19. What would you say was the added value of the strategic plan to the University and for whom?
20. How were stakeholders such as staff and students involved in the strategic planning process?
21. Was the strategic plan monitored or evaluation between 2012 – 2017 (during the Short to Medium Term)?
Yes No

22. In your opinion, how would you rate implementation of the strategic plan's objectives from 2012 – 2017 (i.e. Short term to Medium term) between 0-2 where

0 = (No Evidence of Implementation);

1 (Some amount of evidence of implementation but objective was not fully achieved) 2 (Sufficient amount of evidence on implementation exist)

No.	Strategic objective	0	1	2
i.	To strengthen the Chaplaincy towards spiritual growth of staff and students			
ii.	To establish well-resourced faculties with NAB accredited programmes and obtain Presidential Charter			
iii.	To diversify the sources of funding to ensure financial sustainability of the institution			
iv.	To expand the administrative structure of the institution and appoint three new Key Officers			
v.	To recruit, develop and retain academically and professionally qualified and committed Christians			
vi.	To increase student population			
vii.	To expand and maintain infrastructure and facilities			
viii.	To expand ICT facilities and institutionalize its application for teaching and administration			
ix.	To source for research funding and develop research culture among academic staff			
x.	To mainstream quality assurance practices in the University College			
xi.	To improve the environmental conditions, security and safety on the two campuses of the University College			
xii.	To enhance the image of the institution locally and internationally to attract students and scholars			

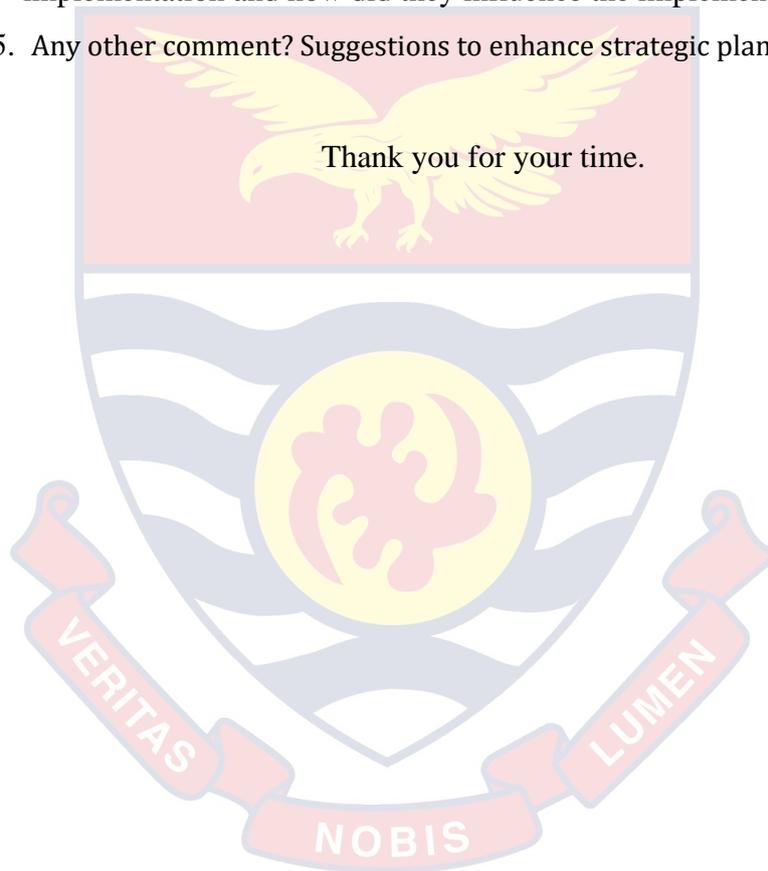
SECTION C: FACTORS THAT PROMOTE IMPLEMENTATION

23. What were the major factors that contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the plan?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING IMPLEMENTATION

24. What kinds of challenges or problems emerged during the strategy implementation and how did they influence the implementation process?

25. Any other comment? Suggestions to enhance strategic plan implementation:



Thank you for your time.

**APPENDIX E: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAPE COAST AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

UCC Key Thrusts	CSUC Strategic Objective
i. Create an environment that seeks to improve student life, foster student-focused learning and student with strong ethics and commitment to society.	i. To strengthen the Chaplaincy towards spiritual growth of staff and students
ii. To create a conducive working environment which recognizes equal opportunities for faculty, staff and students.	ii. To establish well-resourced faculties with NAB accredited programmes and obtain Presidential Charter
iii. Recruit, develop and retain high caliber and motivated faculty and administrative staff.	iii. To diversify the sources of funding to ensure financial sustainability of the institution
iv. Create a learning organization culture that enhances teamwork, efficiency, discipline and commitment.	iv. To expand the administrative structure of the institution and appoint three new key officers
v. Promote active and reflective teaching and learning, research and outreach that strongly position University of Cape Coast as a center of excellence.	v. To recruit, develop and retain academically and professionally qualified and committed Christians
vi. Develop new and relevant programmes, periodically revise existing ones and vigorously pursue distance and sandwich education.	vi. To increase student population
vii. Develop and strengthen integrated ICT infrastructure and support services that enhance teaching and learning, research and outreach.	vii. To expand and maintain infrastructure and facilities
viii. Improve upon physical infrastructure and support services that enhance teaching and learning, research and outreach.	viii. To expand ICT facilities and institutionalize its application for teaching and administration
ix. Aggressively develop linkages with local and foreign institutions and partnership with industries.	ix. To source for research funding and develop research culture among academic staff
x. Improve upon management capacity and institutional governance system.	x. To mainstream quality assurance practices in the University College
xi. Vigorously work to improve revenue generation and enforce fiscal discipline.	xi. To improve the environmental conditions, security and safety on the two campuses of the University College
	xii. To enhance the image of the institution locally and internationally to attract students and scholars.

Source: Field survey, Keney (2018)

APPENDIX F: MEAN RATE OF STRATEGIC PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION DECISION RULE

Rating	Definition
0	Where there is no evidence of implementation
1	Some amount of evidence of implementation but objective was not fully achieved
2	Sufficient amount of evidence exists on implementation

Ranking	Definition
0 - 7	Low Rate of Implementation (0.0% - 38.0%)
8 - 14	Medium Rate of Implementation (38.1% - 70%)
15 - 21	High Rate of Implementation (71.0% - 100.0%)

Source: Field survey, 2018

