

Sustainable Strategic Directions in Higher Education Administration

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ABSTRACT

The complex working environment that we currently leave, create a need for a strategic direction in order to create sustainability. The scope of this assignment is to analysis and evaluates theories in order to be used in the current business environment. This assignment examines the concept of sustainability in practice, and present sustainable decisions for an organization in the market of Cyprus. The organisation that has been examined on this assignment operates in Higher Education sector of the Republic of Cyprus.

Keywords: Strategic Directions, Sustainability, Organisational Development, Organisational Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The meaning of sustainability as it is presented by scientists around the world is close related to a successful organization. Today's competitive, demanding and complex influences create the need for strategic directions and plans seriously designed, based on each country's characteristics, to be applied in the market to develop sustainable products and services, and create good relationships between partners (Serge, 2010). The economic, political and social environment that an organization is operating has a very serious role in the overall results of the organization. The term sustainability has also defined by Serge (2010) as "widely used to express the need to live in the present in ways that do not put in danger the future". Developing good relationships between partners in a society could create a profitable current position, and a sustainable future for an organisation.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of Study

According to Lamberg (2008) the term sustainability “refers to the longevity of an organization by including interlocking goals such as environmental, political, economic, and social human responsibility in order to achieve what is called sustainability”. Operating an organization in a healthy environment will have a positive direction and continuing developed future. Organization operating in a healthy environment could act and make saver decisions than others which are operating, for example, in a country with economic problems, political tensions and feared societies. “The processes that organisations use in order to create sustainability must be taken very seriously in order to avoid negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved”. Adams (2006) believes that “the use of sustainability in practice can be split in two criteria: Traditional Criteria and Sustainability Criteria”. The Traditional Criteria refers to Performance Quality and Cost, and Sustainable Criteria is related to Resource depletion, Environmental degradation and Healthy environment.

In 1999, a local college in Cyprus was operating based different business environment as the island was not a European Union member. In 2004, after the entrance of the Republic of Cyprus into the European Union the college started looking for new strategic directions in order to operate more competitive in a new business environment. The decision of a government, a few years later, to create private universities encourages that local college to upgrade the quality of its programmes into a university level, by changing the name of the academic institute to operate more competitive in the global educational environment and attract more foreign students but also support the education of the local community.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

“All organizations are operating in macroenvironmental influences arising from general economic conditions, population demographics, societal values and lifestyles, legislation and regulations, and technology” (Wheelen and Hunger, 2008). Leaders of an

organization seek to minimize conflicts between employees and maximize profitability. If leadership is successful then organisations keep a sustainable and successful working environment. This article presents a case study of the strategic sustainable plan that has been created by the new university in the Higher Education sector of Cyprus.

2.2 Research Design

Cypriot students are worrying about their future as the Brexit could affect their desire to study in the United Kingdom. Local University should act quickly in order to fill this gap and ‘opportunity’ in order to attract more students. Local College and University have agreed with British Universities to offer their programmes, in addition to their existing programmes, in order to keep students into the island. Will future students be affected from the need for a student visa? Are they going to pay more tuition fees in Cyprus? Can the total cost of studies affect the decision of students? How the Brexit can affect local Higher Education institutions’ organisational future directions? How the quality of local academic institutions can be affected for the new global challenges?

2.3 Data Collection

“Leaders, and employees in more general, must be able to see how their involvement could create value, and their rewards for an active participation in the overall organisation’s strategic plan to keep control, develop a sustainable healthy environment, and viable business in the present and create innovation for the future” (Stacey, 2011). Creswell (2009) emphasized that research question guide as “a study to reveal possible themes through diversification of opinions and insight of the participants”. Organizational change is the theory, practice, and phenomena of change within organizations and its impact on those experiencing the change (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2012). In order to create a competitive organisation in the current complicated economic environment, organizational change is an ongoing process of planned change and the alignment of external and internal conditions (Westover, 2010). This change can be communicated effectively by the leadership of an organisation, after strategic directions,

values, and norms. Leaders at all levels may gain further insight into when and how to implement right methods of strategic communication for each case in their everyday use for effective change and improvement of staff. The increasing levels of employee satisfaction with the support of leadership communication can satisfy the final results of the customers and the services or products of the organisation. Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) indicated past studies focused on the person. Leaders can influence the internal and external business environment something that past and present researchers have explored for relationship which influence others to a shared direction. Kathuria et al. (2010) specified effective leaders to share visions and empower influence, and engage followers to become creative and active in their organisation. A practical sample of quantitative data source could be a composite view on mobile devices in educational environments. The source investigates the relationship between the usability of the tool, student participation, and the improvement in academic performance (Pereira et al., 2014). Technological tools that has been used, found a cellular framework of lectures who increased the desire to learn and the cooperation of students, which leads to a significant improvement in their academic results. In recent years, instructors have had an increasing interest in integrating cloud-based education platform into their classroom as part of the learning environment, especially in China's vocational education (Wu et al., 2014). The source shows that the mean of treatment group is 74.03 and the mean of control group is 65.86, which means that it leads to a significant improvement in their academic results. These numbers are showing that innovative teaching methods and integration tools of technology such as mobile devices can increase academic achievements substantially and significantly, and translate the inter-organisational policy and strategy that has been developed as successful.

3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The driving forces in an industry like education are the major underlying causes of changing industry as they have the biggest influence on how the industry landscape will be altered, in order to develop market demands, create competition, and lead to the industry's profitability. The creation of a strategic integrated and sustainable plan is "a set

of interconnected spheres where economy is not in the centre, and environment has a limit factor” (Serge, 2010). The connection between the economic and the environment criterias as a result, build high quality of human capital within the organization (Kupperschmidt, 2008). The overall evaluation of the above theories can take to the result for necessity of successful decisions by leaders who must act with social or human responsibility. Hargreaves et al (2003) argues that “Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility between human and financial resources that cares an organization and avoids exerting damage on the surrounding educational and community environment”.

Local Colleges and Universities have started developing new programmes of study like Learning Technologies and Communication, and International Business Law. Also they added new specializations on existing programmes like MBA in Oil and Gas Management, or Casino Management to attractive new students. A list of some new innovating programmes might include Bachelors in Dentistry and Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Speech therapy and Nutrition, as well as Master degrees on Occupational Health and Safety, Oil and Gas Management, Digital Technologies in Education, and Doctorate degrees. The creation of new ideas and plans should be transmitted as innovative news to the market by the managers through certain communication channels to create brand equity and product positioning Effective managers and leaders during their professional life are trying to find innovative solutions to support their organisations (Morgan, 1997).. The implementation of such actions over a period of time has been even more complex in a social system that is always changing fast. Peter Drucker defines innovation as “an exploiting organisational change opportunity” (Drucker, 1998), which is a must in a rapidly changing business environment. Drucker also mentions about efficiency which is “doing things right” to reduce costs, and effectiveness which is “doing the right things” to create innovation (Drucker, 1998).

The Political, Environmental, Social, Technological, Economic, Legal system is under pressure. The local academic institutes have to create a sustainable business solution and develop a new business plan based on the new situation. The high quality of education

should be an additional tool to support students with scholarships and internships in order to provide working experiences.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Epstein and Buhovac (2014) argue that “the right implementation of a plan for future directions will have important impact on the success of an organisation. The elements of a sustainable plan must include the objectives, key issues and team motivation, as well as complex adaptive systems”. “The sustainability of an organization needs good internal operations, good relationships with stakeholders and high quality of technology”. “Complex adaptive systems often defined as a macroscopic collection of relatively similarities to partially connect agents in order to change environment” (Carlisle et al, 2006). In order to understand the meaning of a complex adaptive system, Carlisle (2006) uses a practical nature example. He presents the example of a flock of birds which might be in a complex adaptive system because birds are following ‘the wave’. They just follow each other to achieve their goals and find food. But in the case of students might return to education only when life is slowly return back to normal after returning from shock. According to Greiner (1972), “Much of the modern field of the education market appears from the concept of the industry life cycle, in which organizations progressing through several stages: emergence (with the introduction of the first relevant product or service), growth (during which the industry experiences a wave of entry and sharply increasing demand), maturity (characterized by more stable demand and a wave of net exit), and decline (characterized by stagnant or declining demand and a stable set of firms)”. Local colleges and universities should return back to sustainability, after the chaotic situation of pandemic to create a new economic and competitive business environment.

This article has presented current theories related to sustainability, and critically analysed past and future situations of a real life business local and global environment. It has also explored around theoretical and practical foundation contents, and examined past and current research findings. It also investigated the relationship of innovative sustainable situations and analysed how academic institutes are operating in the local community of

Cyprus. The designing of a strategic sustainable plan is a very complicated situation, and any strategic decisions need good team spirit and a mixing of ideas to be implemented and succeed.

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