

Islamic Azad University Function Analysis with Using the SWOT Model in Order to Provide Strategic Guidelines (Case Study: Faculty of Humanities)

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ABSTRACT

Higher education represents an investment in human resources that can provide the promotion of the organization 'staff knowledge, skills and attitudes requirements including technical, professional and managerial provide. If managers want to take appropriate purposes, it is necessary necessary to carry out strategic planning in higher education is in order to resolve problems and issues. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the existing situation of the humanities through the analysis of internal and external environment of the education year in 1390.

In this study were used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Members of society in this study, including professionals, students and faculty of Humanities University (35) were considered as samples. The tools used in this study are two types of questionnaire. In order to analysis the information, it was used the descriptive statistics and SWOT analysis.

Results showed that Faculty of Humanities in internal and external analysis has more strengths opportunities than weaknesses and threats. And the most important strengths can refer to, and young masters are young, motivated and skilled professors in their field and in the weakness the poor, the fading of the group working of faculty and staff members and in the opportunities can refer to accept the experienced by teachers and related academic fields and tendency and the most important threats are the lack of knowing of community college courses and ambiguous status of graduates.

Results of this internal and external analysis showed that, Faculty of Humanities are a good place to grow and improve. Of course it has many problems in the fields of cultural, research and economic that with predicting the future and strategic planning can be overcomes the weaknesses and threats.

KEYWORDS: Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT), Strategic planning, Faculty of Humanities.

1- INTRODUCTION

Higher education represents an investment in human resources that can promote the higher education introduces a king of investment in human resources enhance the technical and managerial that it can the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by organizations.(Iranmanesh and Kamrani, 2005). Thus, community development has undeniable dependence on the level of education and Qualitative and quantitative expansion of education system, especially higher education system. Hence, whatever the forms of higher education in public and private can be broader and deeper in the public and private levels of the society, the scope of its impact on society will be significant more. (Akhavan Kazemi, 2005) Among the various courses of higher education, higher supplementary education has an important role and dignity, because the task of training human resources specialist under goes in charge in the field of education, research and service. In recent years, the quantities grow of complementary education in Iran, had increase everyday and now the quality dimension of it attracts the policy makers and Decision-maker's higher education system (Nili et al, 2005).so, pay attention to quality of higher education is necessary in order to don't waste human capital, financial and material resources needed And coordinate the development of educational systems and its performance is essential (Nava Ebrahimi &Karimi, 2006).

Institutions of higher education during the past decade, were evidence of the numerous changes such as loss of financial support, rapid technological advances, demographic changes and training programs in internal and external environments have been (Lerner.A, 1999). The reasons for these changes and reshaping the role of universities in the world today, Globalization, the Internet, learning technology, particularly learning through information

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networks, improved information and knowledge, and access to government funds are the flexibility and lifelong learning. The result of this change forces caused to create some problems, including: educational quality reduction, increasing costs, the changing role of teacher - student at the University (Mason.R.2003). This task is relating to environmental the analysts for identifying opportunities and threats to examine the effects of environmental variables on all parts and organs of the organization's inputs and output. In other words, through environmental analysis identified the environmental opportunities and threats and on that basis and the identification should be obtained of its strengths and weaknesses within the organization, set the goals and defines corporate policy and procedures (Amani.A, 1389). As a result, these issues are necessary to conduct strategic planning in higher education in order to resolve problems (Lerner.A, 1999). Many of strategic management experts believe that Strategic positioning is the most important thing for strategic planning and organizational strategic development. (Kalafatis et al., 2000).

2 - Strategic Planning in Higher Education Institutions

The main features of current world is included Rapid changes, information flow and every day's competition by removing trade borders and barriers, higher education institutions in the world, change into Institutions more competitive with the market drivers and business requirements and business conduct are becoming have taken away from the identity of their state (Clarke, 1997). Therefore, the desire to survive in this competitive environment because they are turning to management and strategic planning for increased compatibility with today's changing environment and ability to meet customer satisfaction (Mehrgan.M et al, 1388).

Norris (1998) knows the strategic planning as a process that it designs, the purpose of future institution and in this process, are reflected internal and external pressures that forced the company to change. The purpose of strategic planning in educational institutions is, as follows:

1. Accountable institutions.
2. Development goals of educational institutions.
3. Ensure the priorities of educational institutions.
4. Provide a framework for decision making.
5. Provide a basis for performance measurement.
6. Investment for the future of educational institutions (Mehrgan.M et al, 1388).

Strategic planning in an organization or institution during this stage is:

1. Assessment of current environment.
2. Defining the mission.
3. The organization or institution to decide what the next few years are going to do it (the vision).
4. Cognitive abilities, weaknesses, opportunities, threats to the organization.
5. Planning to move from the current situation as well (Plikhsro.2000).

3- MATERIALS AND METHODS

3-1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis was addressed for the first time in 1950 by two Harvard Business School graduate named George Albert Smith and Roland was Krystnsn. At that time, the analysis was recognized for growing success as a business management tool. But perhaps the greatest success achieved when the analysis was done by Jack Welch in General Electric in 1980, in order to use it for studying the GE strategies and increasing the productivity of your organization (Carolina Duarte.et al, 2006). SWOT is a term for strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. The first step in the process of strategic planning, is the mission, goals and mission of the organization, and then through a SWOT analysis that is one of the tools, for editing the strategy it designs for strategy of organization that is tailored to its environment. From using this analysis it is possible that: first to analyze the internal and external environments and Second, strategic decisions be taken for harmonizing the organization's strengths with the opportunities of environment (Amani.A, 1389). This word means the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats and it means that in the process such as identifying and evaluating the effectiveness and potential civil and environmental variables that is called SWOT analysis.in SWOT analysis, effective factors that affect the company or organization, or institution derived in two categories: external factors or internal or external and internal factors are divided:

A) External Factors

These factors are outside the organization and they impact on the organization's activities. But it is not in authority of organization and the organization does not have any effect on them. The purpose of reviewing the

external environment is providing finite list of opportunities that can have a profit or threats that should be avoided. External factors to the two species are:

- **Opportunities**

Opportunities are a major position in the organization. That is what the Institute will assist in achieving its goals and as the engine is accelerating the move to institute several times. Three main opportunities and threats are: 1- Pressure and trends (political, economic, social and technological). 2- Clients, customers and taxpayers. 3- Competitors and partners. So The opportunities, are favorite for company and should strive to maximize their efficiency, and use them effectively

- **Threats**

Undesirable situation is a major threat to the environment agency and as an obstacle to the Institute and it is back from achieving its goals. About the opportunities and threats can be said for what is considered as a threat to the institution May be an opportunity for another institution. So opportunities or threats are a relative factor. An Institution is where threat can be limiting and it can change in to bring them to the advantage of the opportunity. Understanding of environmental opportunities and threats facing the organization to help manager's corporate strategy with insight and intelligence to make better and more effectively determine the direction of the organization. National and metropolitan countries can also be said that such factors have been considered and should be considered in national planning.

B) Internal Factors

These internal factors are part of the company and it is in the authority of company. So while the impact of their activities, the organization also has an impact on them. The internal environment of the organization to obtain a list of strengths that should profit from their exploitation. Or weaknesses that prevent or reduce loss of profit, it should be avoid. As well as internal factors, external factors are the two categories that include:

- **Strengths**

The strength is skill source or, is another advantage to competitors and market requirement of the institution that they work in it. Strength is a distinctive competence that is the comparative advantage in the market. Strength, the dependence point of organization that it will use to reach their goals "Based on these strengths, the executive branch can be a powerful engine for growth, innovation and service changes made." Each organization's strengths should be fulfilled the mission with a maximum speed and use them as a competitive advantage against competitors.

- **Weaknesses**

Weakness is a lack or constraints of skills and abilities' resources, and abilities that can be effectively separated from the function. Weakness is an internal function that disturbs the organization's activities it damages in achieving its goals. The agency is required to minimize these factors as possible as and or to exploit them in order to achieve its goals. Weaknesses are factors that have every organization which exists and it can not avoid them, but they must be control by correct understanding. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses help to the organization to with the use of the strengths and minimize weaknesses and goals are more effective and prevent waste of resources. In National and metropolitan levels, these points should be identified and properly utilizes the strengths and avoiding weaknesses it can edit an appropriate strategy than.

3-2 Characteristics of the SWOT Model

One of the important tools of SWOT is a strategic management model, to be used the environmental and internal analysis process and the appropriate environmental conditions and internal strategies. The common application of this model is essentially related to the strategic planning of production and services, But its unique characteristics, this provides a possibility to analyze different levels of the cross organization. These features include:

1. Exhaustively: this model considered environmental and internal factors and compare them with strategies to help people with it, has a comprehensive, the other strategic management tools are lacking.
2. Flexibility: This model is used in the manufacturing companies, service companies, nonprofit organizations and government, and a macro analysis of issues and topics the analysis.
3. SWOT as a basic model that, help in selecting the Strategy. The main purpose of the strategy under this model, using a strong position to overcome a poor location (Pearce and Robinson, 1376).

3-3 Rules of Governing the SWOT Matrix Analysis

SWOT analysis as it was said, is the factors (internal and external) to identify and exploit the best of them. (Modir Sara, 1389). It can be said that the SO strategy is to rely on the internal strengths and environmental opportunities and exploit of it. WO strategies aim is the exploit these opportunities, and reduce inner weaknesses.

ST is working on strategies in order to use the internal strengths, the effects of threats in the environment. Aimed at reducing internal weaknesses and avoid threats from the external environment (Feiz.D.1388). The summary can be stated as follow:

- How to take advantage of the strengths to do the maximum advantage of opportunities (SO).
-
- How can eliminate or reduced the strengths of the threats (ST).
- How can we take advantage of opportunities to turn weaknesses into strengths or decrease weaknesses of the intensity? (WO)
- How to reduce the impact of weaknesses and threats in order to reduce or eliminate the impact. (WT)

On this basis, within the matrix, SWOT analysis can be summarized in Table 1.

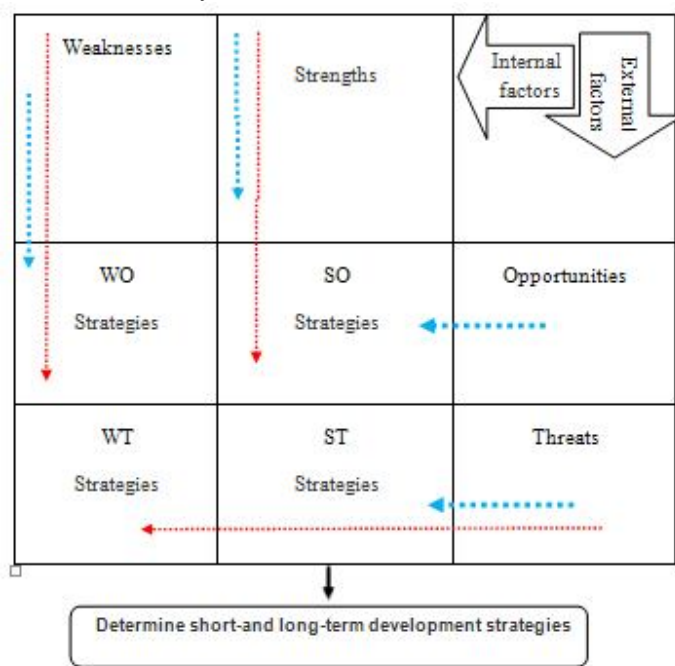


figure1 :SWOT Matrix analytical framework (Movahed and Kahzadi ,1389, p92)

Unlike the external environment, internal environment are largely in control of management (David, translated by ArabParsayyan 1381). If properly done the control of check the internal environment of educational institutions, need to change in some areas of the potential and possibilities for new services and programs.

Internal environment of an institution that should be analyzed include:

1. Faculty and staff, 2. Classrooms, laboratories (learning environment), 3. Current students, 4. Available funds, 5.multiple Association 6. Research program. (Mehrgan.M et al, 1388).

External environment or a foreign institution as follows:

Perceptions of employers of graduates, parents and families' Students, Partnership Schools, the high schools, demographic characteristics, financing institutions(Mehrgan.M et al,1388).

4 - Objectives and Research Questions

Based on the SWOT model, research goals are:

- Identify strengths, based on internal factors in Islamic Azad University, Rasht.
- Identify the of weaknesses of the domestic factors of Islamic Azad University, Rasht.
- Identify opportunities based on external factors in Islamic Azad University, Rasht.
- Identify threats based on external factors in Islamic Azad University, Rasht.

The research questions are:

1. What are the Strengths and weaknesses of the Islamic Azad University, Rasht?
2. What are the opportunities and threats facing the Islamic Azad University, Rasht?
3. What are the main strategies in order to create balance between your inner and outer environment in Islamic Azad University, Rasht?

5 – Methods

Considering the present study aimed to assess the present status of the Islamic Azad University of Rasht, The application is used describes and analyzes the current state of Islamic Azad University, Rasht, in order to promote the development and improvement of university activities and in the process of analyzing internal and external environment in order to better understand, the way you approach both quantitative and qualitative interviews as a research method. This study was conducted in a university and the number of individuals was limited, so sampling was not performed and all people were considered as sample, and information collected of various groups, including experts, Faculty and Staff, a limited number of graduate students of the humanities, that all of them are 35. In the first questionnaire, participants were asked to list the strengths, Areas of improvement, opportunities and threats of college it is facing. After the data obtained were classified priority and Participants were asked to survey the options in terms of impact on the environment has to score. Finally, the second questionnaire for the assessment of internal and external factors of college was set as following manner:

1. After studying the internal factors, the most important factors were listed.
2. Weight was given to these factors, (not significant from zero to one is important). To each of these factors was given a score of 1 to 4. Score of 1 indicates a fundamental weakness. Score 2, weakness, low score of 3, indicating strength. And grade 4, indicating a very high strength factor was discussed.
3. Determine the final score for each factor, the coefficient of each factor score was multiplied;
4. Total score of each factor was calculated and finally the final score of the environmental factors were identified. (David FR.2000).

6 – RESULTS

According to Table (1) the internal environment analysis matrix, showed that Azad University of Rasht in its internal environment in which different aspects of education, research, cultural and administrative - Financial has more strengths than weaknesses in all aspects have been considered. Among the strengths of the can pointed to the appropriate physical environment, the attitude of the management system, faculty members access to the Internet, Managers being aware of the law, teachers are young, motivated and skilled in their field and weaknesses can be refer to lack of faculty with desirable course of special assistant to the top, fading out in the working group of faculty members and staff, Relatively high absorption in units of unskilled labor, the old and traditional chart of human resources.

Table 1: Weighting strengths and weaknesses

Row	Internal Factors		Coefficient	Grade	Final grade
	Strengths				
	- Appropriate physical environment-		0/1	2	0/2
	-Attitude of the management system		0/05	2	0/1
1	-Faculty members access to the Internet		0/05	2	0/1
2	-A reference library and reading room		0/05	1	0/05
3	-the value to student Association		0/05	1	0/05
4	-Managers to be aware of laws		0/1	2	0/2
5	-Teachers are young, motivated and skilled in their field.		0/15	3	0/45
6					
7	Weaknesses		0/05	1	0/05
	-Special Assistant to the shortage of faculty with areas of high		0/05	2	0/1
1	-Lack of labor		0/15	3	0/45
2	-Fading of the working group among faculty members and staff.		0/1	3	0/3
3	-Relatively high absorption in units of unskilled labor.		0/1	2	0/2
4	-Chart of the old and the old traditional staffing.		1		2/25
5	Total				

In regard to results of Table 2, Matrix analysis of external environment showed that Islamic Azad University, Rasht, in its external environment faces to opportunities and threats in various dimensions, including Social, cultural, technological experience, which can be expressed, the final score is lower than the average. The results of the table, can be expressed more strengths than weaknesses in the college. From the most important opportunities can refer to young and talented students, and experienced teacher acceptance and trends related to education, the need to management science and its application in society and threats to this college, because of the lack of necessary facilities for the study of humanities professors at universities, Lack of understanding of community college students, graduates ambiguous position, drastic changes in the level of management and organizations

Table 2: Weighting the opportunities and threats

	External Factors	Coefficient	Grade	Final grade
Row	Opportunities	0/2	3	0/6
	- Acceptance Talented and youth students	0/2	3	0/6
	- Acceptance experienced by teachers and related educational	0/05	1	0/05
		0/1	2	0/2
1	-The ministry stressed the establishment of new undergraduate majors and set			
2	higher.	0/05	1	
	- Science and its application to management at the community level.	0/05	1	0/05
3	- Professional orientation in the entire country and require strong managerial			0/05
4	techniques and information.			
5	Positive attitude students and community towards university -	0/1	1	
		0/05	2	0/1
6	Threats			0/1
	-Lack of necessary facilities at universities, liberal arts education for teachers	0/05	1	
1	-Lack of understanding of community college students and graduates	0/1	2	0/05
2	ambiguous position	0/05	2	0/2
	- The economic fluctuations that affected the university's budget.	1		0/1
3	- Drastic changes in the level of management and organizations.			2/1
4	-The faculty and staff overtime.			
5	Total			

7 – Conclusion

The strategy determines the ability of the organization and ways of achieving of the best exist state. Strategies, in fact, will determine what, why and how their essential actions. And that are completely surrounded the intellectual climate, work and decision-making and decision making processes. And strategic management in higher education institutions that are leading science and technology, are of great importance. The concept of strategic management and planning include major changes that are necessary to improve organizational performance. To identify, design and suggest possible strategies, is used the SWOT matrix. SWOT analysis is an important component of the strategy formation process. Analysis of external opportunities and threats are used primarily to assess this, we examine whether the organization or institution can use the opportunities and minimize threats And weaknesses of this analysis is to examine the inner workings of institutions of higher importance .One of the factors that contribute to the successful functioning of an educational system will have sufficient financial resources that attended to help the University in order to be able to mobilize resources and to attract skilled manpower and efficient.

8- Suggestions and Strategies

Organizations, whether commercial, educational, industrial and service are formed in order to meet the needs of environmental and those organizations are successful that against rapid changes, it is able to meet the needs of the environment. And it is not possible unless it uses and applies the strategic management techniques. The goals of this research and the results, suggest that School of Humanities will need to design their strategic plan. Also, in order to achieve greater recognition, assessment and analysis of environmental models with models such as strategic planning and crisis action and the results compared to Porter's model. . The analysis was performed and determined according to the University's position, strategies to address the strengths and weaknesses, and neutralize the threat as follows: Development of physical space in order to create welfare for students, staff, etc., Use of technological tools and technologies to improve efficiency in the production of education, establish an integrated system, In order to better coordination and more effective, Better and more comprehensive information about the best activities in and outside the University.

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