

Strategic Planning: Developing a Model for Senior High Schools

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Abstract---Since the implementation of the School Based Management (SBM) in the early 2000s, strategic planning has become a mandatory program for all the school in the country. However, the implementation of strategic planning in the schools in Ende District, Indonesia shows variation of models, analysis tools, elements, and process. Without standardized model, the school cannot develop competitive strategies to improve its quality. This study employs research and development methods aiming to develop a model of strategic planning for the senior high schools in the district. Based on the evaluation of the factual models, the researcher develops an issue-based planning designed with SWOT analysis and objectives analysis as tools. SWOT analysis is integrated with the eight national education standard grid and the PEST grid, and involves the participation of all school stakeholders. The development of this model is a contribution for schools in Ende district and for further studies.

Keywords: SWOT, objectives analysis, strategic planning

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid social changes and increasing competition for excellence have urged institutions including education to implement strategic planning which believed could bring change. Some studies confirm that strategic planning in higher education has a positive impact to provide better system and efficiency as well as to increase feeling of independence and better communication within a diversity of types of plan and planning process,[1] to bring positive attitude toward strategic planning as a management tool and regard it as important, and to reinforce participation of staff,[2], [3] to maximize the principals' roles in running the school strategies and being able to overcome complex school problems,[4] to spur rapid changes in university development,[5] and to guide both budgeting and financing planning.[6]

The negative impact of strategic planning actually lies not in the planning itself but in its implementation that encounters various obstacles such as limited financial resources and time constraints, lack of managers' commitment to implement it, [7] power distance of the staff based on cultural barriers that affect corporate culture and instill a number of tension and conflict, [8] cultural

crises and lack of university strategic flexibility, [9] different process of approach and lack of understanding of education stakeholders about strategic planning, [10] and lack of knowledge and skills of school leaders in strategic planning.[11]

Since the early 2000s, after being hit by a regional economic crisis, Indonesian Government officially adopted strategic planning into the public sector. Decentralization policies including in the education sector that apply School-Based Management (SBM) and strategic management were expected to trigger quality improvement.[12] To implement the policies, since 2004 in cooperation with the Australian government, the local government of East Nusa Tenggara Province has seriously implemented both SBM and strategic planning. However, after more than a decade, the quality of education in the province has not improved significantly. The average of final examination results of the senior high schools in the province over the past few years are below the national average. As an instance, the average final exam result in 2017 is 39.5, below the national average of 61.74. The teacher competency test results is 50.34, lower than the national standard 56.69.[13]

Preliminary study conducted at 11 senior high schools in the district shows various implementation of strategic planning models and tools. Two schools do not have strategic plan yet, and the nine schools already have the strategic plans with various processes, models, analysis techniques, and elements. Seven schools (77.78%) has strategic plans designed by the principal and small teams, and only two schools (22.22%) have strategic plans designed by the whole stakeholders. The seven schools applied internal environmental analysis using gap analysis technique and only the two (32.22%) used both internal and external factor evaluations exploiting complete strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) tool. In term of model, all schools adopted the basic model and modified it with an issue-based model.

The strategic plan as a product of business world offers a number of models and tools. McNamara [14] categorizes strategic planning into five models: organic model, basic model, issue-based (goal based) model, alignment model, and scenario

model. These models then apply a number of tools of analysis. David & David [15] propose nine analytical matrices as a set of tools that must be used in formulating strategic decisions. The nine matrices are internal factor evaluation (IFE), external factor evaluation (EFE), competitive profile matrix (CPM), SWOT, strategic position and action evaluation (SPACE), Boston consulting group (BCG), internal-external (IE) matrix, grand strategy matrix, and quantitative strategic planning matrix. Whereas, Webster, Reif, & Bracker [16] present 30 tools as framework for managers in preparing strategic planning. From the various number of models and tools that mostly originated from business, the school should select an appropriate one for the educational needs.

Based on aforementioned background, this study develops three research questions: 1) What kind of strategic planning model is currently being implemented by Senior High Schools in Ende District? 2) What strategic planning design should be developed that is suitable for the schools' need? 3) How practical and effective is the final model of strategic planning being developed?

II. METHODS

This study employees research and development (R & D) model by Borg & Gall. [17] Ten steps offered by Borg and Gall are categorized into three main stages as follow:

- 2.1 Preliminary study: The researcher collected data on theories and factual models being used by the senior high schools in the district. The documentary study explored various theories and provided an overview of the diverse strategic planning models and tools; while a preliminary qualitative field research at 11 schools provided factual models practiced in the senior high schools in the district. Two private schools were chosen as the subjects for field testing with criteria on life time and quality; the first is an oldest and excellent school and the second is fresh and effective school.
- 2.2 Developing a model: Based on analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the factual model, the researcher developed a conceptual model.
- 2.3 Model validation: A group of experts and practitioners appraised the conceptual model in a focus group discussion. Then, a field testing will be conducted in a limited group at two selected schools. The limited field testing will determine the level of practitioners' ability to apply the hypothetical model as well as to evaluate how effective the model is. Due to several considerations, this research will not be able to conduct operational field testing. This paper presents a hypothetical model based on experts and practitioners' focus group discussion. The final model will be developed after field testing.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The two high schools in Ende, East Nusa Tenggara Province showed variations in processes, models, analysis techniques, and elements of strategic plan. The first school implemented strategic planning prepared by a team and then discussed in a meeting with all the teachers to get input and further elaboration into annual action plan. At the second school, the principal and the teachers formulated the vision and mission of the school together in a meeting. Based on formulated mission and vision, the team then elaborated objectives, analyzed the internal environment, and decided the strategies.

As commonly used in the country, both schools adopted basic model. The model begins with formulating a vision and mission, determining the objectives, setting a strategy to achieve each goal, and identifying action plans to implement each strategy. In addition to the model, the two schools employed gap analysis technique. The analysis process compared the school performance with criteria for performance excellence that commonly adopted as the eight national educational standards. The negative aspects that the school could not meet were assumed as problem and should be responded by a series of action plan. Gap analysis, in nature, only examines the internal environment within the schools and ignores the nature of strategic planning where the first and important step is to scan external environment.

Both schools produced strategic plan that contains fairly complete elements. The first formulated the vision, mission, objectives, programs, and activities. The second school developed more elements with some additional: goals, key strategy area, programs, output indicators, and activities. However, judging from its process, the objectives analysis process is not in line with the action plan because the action plans were generated from the gap analysis process at early and the objectives were formulated incoherently through brainstorming at the end of the process. Without special tool to connect the process, as if the objectives formulation simply was attached to the process and did not correlate to the strategies selection.

The strategic planning of the two schools have a number of weaknesses and would give difficulties in implementing it. This developing model attempts to complement the weaknesses and make the model more reliable aid for decision making. Model development considers as a clear and practical model, with elements of strategic plans that are essential for the school development framework, and analytical tools that cover the external factors analysis as well as bridge the problem analysis and objectives analysis.

In order to simplify the strategic planning and to help the managers, some previous researchers proposed a number of tools such as futurology, [18] integration of three main tools of SWOT, balanced scorecard, and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality

Award (MBNQA), [19] using the help of external resources in conducting environmental analysis such as scanning committee or assigning an institutional research or implementing collaborative planning processes to enrich information in environmental scanning, [20] action planning software tools (TAPS) that help managers to structure and analyze problem situation in determining action plan, [21] open strategic planning (OSP) as collaborative strategic planning based on crowdsourcing model, [22], and meta SWOT analysis that derived from resource based view (RBV). [23]

This developing model applies the issue-based model as the most comprehensive and widely accepted model to deliver value to organizations. The steps of the issue-based model are the analysis of internal and external environments, the formulation of strategies (mission, vision, goals, strategies, and policies), and implementation strategies (programs and budgets). [24] The analytical tool used in this model is SWOT. Although SWOT is criticized as merely based on subjective intuitions, unsystematic, lacking predictive power, [25] being ineffective when faced with a lack of internal and external data, and can be misused by non-experts [26], it has become the most familiar tool in education sector in Indonesia. [27] [28] To complement the weaknesses of the SWOT analysis, this model adopts several techniques such as using stakeholders as external resources in analyzing the environment, applying eight national education standard grid as an internal analysis tool, a PEST template grid as an external environment tool, and an objectives analysis tool. The strategic planning process modifies the 10 steps of Bryson [29] and the five steps of Allison & Kaye [30]. The steps of the hypothetical model are as follows:

3.1 Preparation: forming a steering committee to compile guidelines and gather supporting data such as school self-evaluation data, number of enrollments over the past 5-10 years, number of graduations, and external data such as demographics, social, politics, and technology that directly or indirectly affect the schools.

3.2 Establishing commitment agreements from all school stakeholders: The purpose of this step is to raise responsibility of all parties in formulating school direction as well as in delivering common goal. The commitment building process is carried out through a process of formulating mission, values, and output or core competencies. The mission formulation departs from the formal mandate for the establishment of the school and covers three main areas namely academic, governance, and networking. Value is something that is considered important and becomes the soul in carrying out activities and shaping the school climate. The output formulation illustrates the core competencies and supporting competencies that each graduate must have.

3.3 Conducting problem analysis using SWOT tool.

To simplify the process, the SWOT is sorted into IFE and EFE matrix templates. The IFE matrix adopts the results of the gap analysis from the school self-evaluation and the EFE matrix uses the PEST grid template.

3.4 Identifying the strategic issues facing the school.

The issues are critical challenges that affect school's objectives and output. The formulation of the issue uses a direct approach based on the mandate, mission, and SWOT analysis [31]. With brainstorming techniques, participants determine strategic issues that emerge from the main weaknesses or threats that hinder the school in realizing goals and output. The number of strategic issues should be limited to 5 to 7.

3.5 Formulating strategies and plan to manage the issues.

SWOT analysis in the four quadrant identifies appropriate strategies and determines the most means to attain the objectives.

3.6 Formulating objectives (vision, goals, and objectives).

The defined strategies must be elaborated in the implementation process to facilitate the control process. The formulation of these objectives illustrates efforts to address the strategic issues above. Vision is a dream formula that will be realized in a period of 4-5 years; goals as an end result, and objectives are translations of the results of goals that can be measured and timed to support the achievement of goals.

3.7 Developing an effective implementation process.

A good strategy must be integrated into the system to become a reality. Therefore, strategic planning must design the implementation process in the form of policies, action plans, schedules, and resource allocation. In practice so far, schools in the country usually prepare operational plans in the form of annual school activities and budget plans.

3.8 Monitoring and evaluation plan.

Monitoring is carried out in three forms of supervision namely academic supervision, managerial supervision, and clinical supervision. While the evaluation plan is spelled out, performance indicators are measured at the end of each semester in a work evaluation meeting. The results of monitoring and evaluation will be responded through feedback for improvement or readjustment of the strategies to achieve the desired output.

The development of this model is based on several considerations: first, the quality of schools in the districts measured by the results of the national exams is very low compared to achievements in other regions. Second, many schools in the district have a strategic plan as a formality of administrative demands and do not have definitive guidance. The development of this model is expected to be able to formulate change in strategies and in turn improve quality.

Model development also intends to guarantees the participation of all schools' stakeholders to deliver common goals. More number of participants from school stakeholders' representatives are expected to contribute more information and perspectives on analysis as well as to build shared knowledge and to make the strategic plan an agreement that must be carried out by the institution. Considering more participations of the stakeholders, the model should be practical sound, easy tools that use available data, logical and smooth process, and contains elements that are essential for implementation. The model should produce optimal results in the form of a strategic plan that can be applied together for the sake of changing the school. The following figure-1 depicts the procedure of the model:

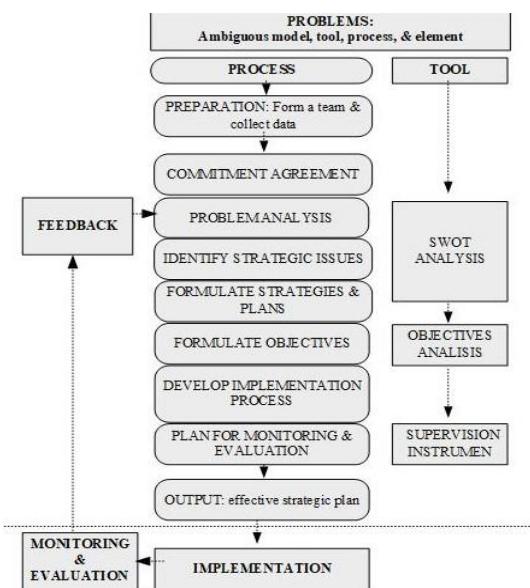


Figure 1. Hypothetical Model

There are a lot of previous studies on strategic planning that mostly took place at corporations and higher educations but rarely at elementary school and high school. The studies focus on strategic planning process, its implementation and impacts, and description of both models and tools. The difference of this study from the previous studies is it develops a model. By developing a model, this study may be benefit the school stakeholders in the district who intend to use it and may contribute to further studies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

There are various models and instruments of strategic planning which can be adopted in accordance to the education needs. Based on existing models and the particular local condition, this study develops an issue-based model and applies two integrated tools: SWOT techniques and objectives analysis. However, as an hypothetical model, this model needs to be tested in both limited groups and broader groups to determine its level of effectiveness.

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