



Strategic Management Practices, Challenges, and Strategies: A Case of a State University

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Strategic management in the state university is characterized by inclusive strategy formulation, involving consultations and stakeholder participation.
- ❖ Major challenges include budgetary constraints, limited resources, and bureaucratic processes, which affect strategic implementation.
- ❖ The university employs adaptive and collaborative strategies to address institutional and environmental challenges.

ABSTRACT

This study unearthed current practices, challenges and strategies in strategic management, a case of a State University. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (a) What are the current practices of strategic management in a state university? (b) What challenges do the participants encounter in strategic management; and (c) What are the strategies employed by the participants to overcome these challenges? This exploration utilized the qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the phenomenological methodology. A total of 7 participants accepted the invitation, providing the researcher a consent to conduct and record the interviews. Major results are as follows: A state university's present strategic management procedures demonstrate a thorough approach to developing, putting into practice, and assessing strategies. Qualitative responses from middle and upper management emphasize the significance of creating vision and mission statements, performing internal and external audits, and including stakeholders in the planning process when formulating a strategy.



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INTRODUCTION

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) operate in an increasingly volatile environment characterized by decreased public funding and rapid technological disruptions. The earliest model of strategic management suggests that it should be a more corporate tool. However, the modern structure of strategic management focuses on HEIs' multi-level approach that balances academic freedom with administrative accountability.

This study is anchored with David's (2011) theory, which defines strategic management as the art and science of development, execution, and evaluation of a variety of decisions that permit an organization to achieve its vision and mission. Strategic management capitalizes on the innovations generated to embark on a new direction. While the traditional theories focus on competitive advantage, this paper bridges the Resource-Based View and Institutional Theory to explain how a state university can maintain excellence despite severe resource constraints.

Misankova & Kocisova (2013), a dynamic and fast-changing world necessitates strategic management for businesses among Higher Education Institutions. It consists of three different processes that are interrelated in a positive way. The three processes are: strategic planning, strategic execution, and strategic control. Strategic implementation, according to company studies, is the most essential and most undervalued element of the process. The strategic implementation is one of the components of strategic management, and the success is unknown to the administrators and staff of the organization, and might result in the change of the company's culture. The primary objective of strategy implementation is to encapsulate the strategy into the organization's daily decision-making process.

Polytechnic University of the Philippines, as one of the largest state universities in the Philippines, undertakes strategic management in response to the higher ordeal and dynamic environment of public higher institutions. State universities and Colleges face completely different and greater adversities and issues as they navigate a new direction. PUP is continually facing financial hurdles in the execution of programs, projects, and activities, as the government has suddenly become particular about SUC's budget. For instance, the deduction on the actual budget request for the maintenance, operating expenses, and even capital outlay for the facilities of the university has been putting more pressure and requirement for a higher standard as reflected in normative financial metrics.

Strategic management allows SUCs to chart their course and focus on their future. Strategic formulation creates a broad decision-making group by involving stakeholders both at the middle and operational levels of management. By democratizing and pushing decision-making down, a system for strategic implementation can help the universities maintain a core purpose of propelling the academe's vision. The continuous integration of environmental analysis before formulating a strategic plan provides a comprehensive step to overcome challenges in the performance of both internal and external audits, and results in much precise and doable long-term objectives. As the funding formula becomes rigid, the government is bent on consolidating public higher education institutions towards the direction of a national polytechnic university, thereby putting much pressure and challenge on the SUCs administration and governance. The greater challenge is for the university to expand its resource base, on strategic implementation and evaluation of the efficient and effective use of resources and strategies that can assure its long-term resource sustainability. SUCs need to provide vivid nation-building through pertinent and excellent academic services, innovative leading research initiatives, and greater public engagement through extension and outreach programs (Tafalla, 2022).

Cahayon's (2021) investigation into strategic management at a state university uncovered several notable findings. The study revealed that active engagement of all stakeholders in the formulation of the University's Vision and Mission is lacking. Additionally, there is an observed inadequacy in executing environmental analyses before the development of a strategic plan. There was also an insufficient emphasis

on creating and implementing surveys to evaluate crucial internal factors such as employee morale and productivity. This underemphasis in strategic management practices warrants the University's attention for improvement. Moreover, the study highlighted that the assessment of significant internal factors, including employee morale and productivity, was not sufficiently conducted, prompting the need for the University to enhance its strategic management practices. Lastly, the study indicated a perceived low achievability of the University's long-term objectives, plans, and programs for the next three to five years, emphasizing the necessity for the University's management to reevaluate its strategic planning approach. Hunger and Wheelen (2012) in their study noted that educational institutions were putting more of an emphasis on using the ideas of strategic management, especially by examining how they may be applied in learning environments. The corporate world's demonstrated success with strategic management has stoked enthusiasm in implementing it as an interactive approach in education. This technique is appealing to educators because it offers a methodical, structured approach to strategy formulation and performance evaluation.

David's (2005) theory, which emphasizes that gaining and maintaining competitive advantage is central to strategic management, serves as the foundation for this investigation. The attainment and sustenance of a competitive edge are vital to the sustained prosperity of any given enterprise. This theory is even more applicable to the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in light of the issues the school encounters and the need for specialized strategic approaches.

Based on the premises discussed in the previous paragraph, there is a clear deficiency in the body of research on customized strategic management approaches, which are essential for postsecondary educational establishments such as PUP. Because of their unique mix of administrative, academic, and community-focused objectives, polytechnic universities need unique approaches to ensure sustained success. David's (2005) theory offers a conceptual framework for examining and comprehending how these objectives might be met and maintained by skillful strategic management.

The study also discusses how important stakeholders, faculty, alumni, students, and the surrounding community have shaped PUP's strategic orientation. Comprehensive insights into the ways in which these varied stakeholders contribute to strategic decision-making processes are lacking in the current body of research. David's emphasis on competitive advantage highlights how important it is to comprehend stakeholder expectations and how they affect institutional strategies to match the university's objectives with the ambitions of the larger society.

This study also addresses a crucial research gap, which is how PUP strikes a balance between its pursuit of academic excellence and resource restrictions. The framework for strategic management provided by David's theory is especially helpful in investigating novel strategies that PUP might utilize to uphold excellent academic standards in spite of budgetary constraints. Furthermore, another area that needs investigation is the influence that technological advancements have played in education—a field that has undergone substantial development. David's theories on strategic management can be used to analyze how PUP uses digital resources, e-learning, and other technology methods to offer instruction. Through gap analysis and comparison with effective models, the study seeks to offer insights that will help PUP and related organizations improve their technological adoption.

In essence, this study aims to bridge these identified research gaps, offering a clearer understanding of the strategic management practices at PUP. By demystifying these areas, the research seeks to contribute tailored insights that can inform strategic decisions, foster academic excellence, and align PUP's mission and vision with the evolving landscape of higher education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To capture and describe the common essence of lived experiences within a particular group, the research utilized a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2013). This method works well when the study problem necessitates a thorough examination of experiences that are typical of a specific group of people (Creswell, 1998). The researcher thought that because phenomenology was relevant to comprehending lived experiences associated with strategic management practices, difficulties, and strategies in a public university system, it was selected as the best approach for this study. To describe the phenomenon related to the research questions of this study, patterns across the datasets are extracted. Thematic analysis is still a flexible method that emphasizes the importance of identifying, examining, and extrapolating patterns within the data to provide rich, detailed, and complex information from the participant accounts.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The following qualifications for Inclusion were considered: (a) Administrative Position: Participants must be in or have had a high administrative position at the university that involves making strategic decisions, such as Vice Presidents, department heads, deans, or directors; (b) Experience in Strategic Management: In a university context, participants should have a minimum of three years' experience in strategic management. Those who have made a direct contribution to the creation, implementation, or assessment of the university's strategic plans are considered involved in university strategic planning; (c) Participants must be either actively employed at the particular state university that is the subject of the study or have recently retired or resigned from it; (d) Willingness to Participate: People must give their permission to be interviewed and to talk about their personal experiences using strategic management techniques.

On the other hand, the following exclusion criteria are as follows: (a) Absence of Direct Involvement: Individuals who have not participated in strategic management, such as academic staff members with no administrative duties, will be disqualified; (b) Restricted Tenure: No consideration will be given to administrators who haven't worked in the university's strategic management processes for three years or less; (c) External Personnel: Those who do not work for the institution or who have had outside engagement in strategic management (such as consultants) will not be allowed to participate; and (d) Non-Consent: Participants in the study will not be allowed to continue if they do not consent.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research tool that combines a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (Barclay, 2018). Barclay's guidelines in conducting a semi-structured interview are as follows: (a) The interviewer develops and uses an interview guide consisting of a list of open-ended questions and topics to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order; (b) The open-ended nature of the questions (which often include prompts to help the interviewee to answer) defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail; Semi-structured interviews are a type of qualitative research instrument where the interviewer can go further into specific themes or replies while still posing a pre-planned set of open-ended questions (Barclay, 2018).

Data Collection

Interviews were performed according to the guidelines set in the previous section. The researcher then converted the unprocessed data into codes that could be read and examined after the interviews.

During the data analysis process, the researchers then disassociated themselves from any preexisting prejudices to examine and evaluate the data with a fresh perspective and objectivity.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, according to Braun & Clarke (2006), is a technique for finding, examining, and summarizing patterns or themes in data. With the use of this method, datasets can be systematically arranged and thoroughly described, making it possible for researchers to identify significant patterns that recur in text, focus groups, and interviews. In qualitative research, it is a flexible instrument that facilitates the discovery of more profound patterns in the data. There are six identified steps by Braun and Clarke in processing the data using thematic analysis: Step 1: Become familiar with the data, Step 2: Generate initial codes, Step 3: Search for themes, Step 4: Review themes, Step 5: Define themes, and lastly, Step 6: Write-up. Figure 2 shows the phases of thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) following the identified steps in conducting a thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents questions, which are answered in light of findings that explore the strategic practices, challenges, and strategies of a State University.

Current Practices of Strategic Management in a State University in terms of Strategy Formulation

Table 1. Current Practices of Strategic Management in a State University in terms of Strategic Formulation

Participant	Responses	Coding	Themes
1	<i>"Different summits were conducted to determine PUP's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats."</i>	Conducting summits SWOT analysis	Conducting External Audits
2	<i>"In our sector, Research and Extension and Planning, Budgeting and Quality Management Summits were conducted."</i>	Sectoral summits Specialized focus groups	Performing Internal Audit:
3	<i>"Representatives of each group of stakeholders are invited to participate in the development process."</i>	Stakeholder participation	Developing Vision and Mission Statement
4	<i>"We communicate the statement to stakeholders and solicit feedback based on their needs."</i>	Stakeholder communication Feedback solicitation	Developing Vision and Mission Statement
5	<i>"Being the heads of office, all stakeholders were consulted and included in the planning process."</i>	Consultation with heads Stakeholder involvement	Involvement of Stakeholders
6	<i>"We conduct stakeholder analysis".</i>	Stakeholder analysis - Needs	Performing External Audit

7	<i>"I think consultation is key".</i>	assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of consultation - Emphasis on inclusivity 	Involvement of Stakeholders
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A thorough approach to strategic management is evident in the qualitative responses of middle- and top-level managers at a public institution, especially regarding strategic formulation. The matrix highlights various issues, including conducting external audits, executing internal audits, developing vision and mission statements, and involving stakeholders. Participant comments that show a systematic and inclusive approach to strategy planning are used to support each theme.

The emphasis on holding multiple summits and consultations to evaluate both internal and external environments is an important topic that emerges from the responses. As an illustration of the university's dedication to external audits using SWOT analysis, Participant 1 stated, "Different summits were conducted to determine PUP's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats." This strategy emphasizes a proactive approach in recognizing and addressing potential obstacles and opportunities, as well as facilitating a methodical examination of the university's place in the educational landscape.

Another important element is the participation of different stakeholders in the strategic planning process. "Representatives of each group of stakeholders are invited to participate in the development process," said participant number three, demonstrating an inclusive approach to the formulation of strategies. The integration of diverse perspectives from stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, enriches the development of the university's vision and mission statement, ensuring that these elements resonate with the aspirations and needs of the broader community. Participant 5 further echoes this inclusivity when she states, "Being the heads of office, all stakeholders were consulted and included in the planning process." Additionally, the focus on communication expressed by Participant 4 ("We communicate the statement to stakeholders and solicit feedback based on their needs") underscores the importance of discussion in advancing strategic objectives and coordinating strategies.

Furthermore, as stated by Participant 2 ("In our sector, Research and Extension and Planning, Budgeting and Quality Management Summits were conducted"), the practice of holding specialist sectoral summits illustrates a customized approach to strategic management. This strategy fosters greater awareness of the opportunities and challenges unique to the sector by enabling targeted discussions of specific aspects of the university's operations.

The significance of stakeholder analysis in strategic planning is evident in the responses. The statement made by participant number six, "We conduct stakeholder analysis," demonstrates an understanding of the need to evaluate the requirements and expectations of diverse groups. This study enables the institution to align its strategic efforts with the actual needs of its stakeholders, which is essential for conducting efficient internal audits.

Finally, Participant 7's statement that "consultation is key" sums up the prevailing view on stakeholder participation in strategic management. Prioritizing consultation with stakeholders not only promotes inclusivity but also instills a sense of ownership, which, in turn, results in a stronger, more resilient strategy framework.

This state university's current strategic management procedures have several effects on the institution's continued growth and future course. First off, the university is positioned as an adaptable organization that can respond to a changing educational environment through its dedication to holding summits and

conducting SWOT analyses. This flexibility is crucial for overcoming the obstacles posed by rapid technological, higher education, and societal changes.

Furthermore, the inclusive approach to stakeholder participation points to a democratic culture within the university's governing framework. The university increases the community's commitment to accomplishing these goals and makes its strategic objectives more relevant by actively incorporating stakeholders in the creation of its vision and mission statements. Since all parties involved believe their opinions are appreciated and heard, there's a good chance that this collective buy-in will enhance the execution of strategic objectives.

The sector-specific summits advocate specialized discussions that can yield more effective solutions by acknowledging the complexity of university operations. This strategy fosters a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, keeping academic brilliance and institutional relevance alive.

Lastly, the emphasis on stakeholder analysis and consultation underscores the notion that comprehending and meeting the requirements of the university community is a prerequisite for effective strategic management. The institution is well-positioned to foster a collaborative atmosphere that drives positive transformation and long-term growth by prioritizing stakeholder engagement. This active participation enhances the university's ability to carry out its mission in a constantly changing environment and contributes to strategic clarity.

The public institution's medium- and top-level managers provided qualitative responses that highlighted a thorough approach to strategic management, particularly in strategy formulation. The generated cores —conducting external audits, executing internal audits, generating vision and mission statements, and involving stakeholders — highlight crucial elements of the strategic planning process, such as the necessity of conducting internal and external audits, developing vision and mission statements, and actively involving stakeholders. The participant comments, which demonstrate a methodical approach and underscore the need for comprehensive evaluations, inclusive practices, and cooperative decision making, bolster each theme.

In addition to improving the caliber and applicability of the university's strategic initiatives, this methodical, inclusive approach to strategy formulation also promotes a culture of accountability and stakeholder involvement. The institution is better prepared to navigate the intricacies of the higher education ecosystem and effectively address new challenges by prioritizing both external and internal assessments. By placing strong emphasis on stakeholder involvement, strategic decisions are informed by a diversity of perspectives, ultimately helping the institution connect its objectives with the needs and ambitions of its community. As a result, the replies show that the institution is prepared to adapt to and prosper in a changing learning environment in addition to its commitment to sound strategic management techniques.

Table 2. Current Practices of Strategic Management in a State University in terms of Strategy Implementation (Implementing Strategies)

Participant	Responses	Coding	Themes
1	<i>"We translate our strategic plans into actionable steps with clearly defined responsibilities and timelines."</i>	Actionable steps, Responsibilities	Operationalization of Strategies

2	<i>"Implementation involves regular monitoring and evaluation meetings to track progress against goals."</i>	Monitoring and evaluation	Progress Tracking
3	<i>"We use a project management tool to oversee the execution of strategies and ensure alignment with objectives."</i>	Project management tool	Alignment with Objectives
4	<i>"Department heads are tasked with executing parts of the strategy and are held accountable for results."</i>	Accountability	Responsibility Distribution
5	<i>"We provide training and resources to staff to support the implementation of strategic initiatives."</i>	Training and resources	Support for Implementation
6	<i>"We translate our strategic plans into actionable steps with clearly defined responsibilities and timelines."</i>	Actionable steps, Responsibilities	Operationalization of Strategies
7	<i>"Implementation involves regular monitoring and evaluation meetings to track progress against goals."</i>	Monitoring and evaluation	Progress Tracking

The state university participants' qualitative responses show a methodical approach to planning execution that emphasizes responsibility, transparency, and support systems. The identified themes on the current practices of strategic management in a state university, in terms of strategy implementation (implementing strategies), are as follows: operationalization of strategies, progress tracking, alignment with objectives, responsibility distribution, and support for implementation.

The importance of breaking down strategic initiatives into manageable tasks, which not only clarifies expectations but also makes it easier to track progress, is reflected in Participant 1's statement, "We translate our strategic plans into actionable steps with clearly defined responsibilities and timelines." This statement highlights one of the key themes, operationalization of strategies. Participant 6's repetition of this theme underscores its importance to the university's strategic plan. Participant 6's repetition of this theme underscores its importance to the university's strategic plan. The university improves staff accountability by setting clear expectations and deadlines. This helps determine accountability for specific tasks and ensures that everyone is working toward the same overarching strategic objectives.

Participants 2 and 7 have emphasized the theme of progress tracking in their comments, emphasizing the importance of holding regular monitoring and evaluation meetings. According to Participant 2, "Implementation involves regular monitoring and evaluation meetings to track progress against goals." These meetings are essential for maintaining the momentum of strategy implementation, as they enable comparison of current performance with predetermined standards. In addition to facilitating prompt strategy modifications, this continuous assessment promotes an open and responsive culture. The institution can detect roadblocks early and modify plans accordingly thanks to its methodical approach to progress tracking, which promotes a dynamic, adaptable implementation environment.

Alignment with objectives is another important theme, as demonstrated by Participant 3's comment, "We use a project management tool to oversee the execution of strategies and ensure alignment with objectives." The university's use of project management tools demonstrates its commitment to structured

execution, enabling it to coordinate efforts across departments and guarantee that all initiatives are focused on shared objectives. In a complex organizational structure, this alignment is essential because it minimizes the risk of misunderstandings and inefficient resource use, thereby boosting the impact of strategic initiatives.

Participant 4's statement, "Department heads are tasked with executing parts of the strategy and are held accountable for results," exemplifies the theme of responsibility distribution. The university promotes a sense of ownership and accountability at various organizational levels by assigning department heads specific responsibilities. In addition to giving leaders the freedom to take the initiative, this delegation makes sure that people closest to the pertinent operational areas are in charge of managing strategic execution. Employee motivation and engagement are likely to increase under such an approach since they believe their work is essential to the university's performance as a whole.

Last but not least, Participant 5's response emphasizes support for implementation: "We provide training and resources to staff to support the implementation of strategic initiatives." This dedication to staff development is crucial for successful strategy execution because it gives workers the know-how and abilities they need to carry out their duties. The university shows that it recognizes the human capital required for successful implementation by investing in training and resources, which eventually results in a staff that is more capable and self-assured.

The responses provide valuable insights into the state university's strategy implementation approach, which is based on best practices in strategic management and is well structured. Strategies are operationalized to guarantee that high-level objectives are translated into doable tasks, and progress monitoring systems encourage responsibility and adaptability to new problems. The focus on goal alignment highlights how crucial departmental coherence is to ensuring that all activities support the university's mission.

In addition, the well-defined delegation of duties promotes leadership across the organization, raising employee engagement and inspiring them to actively support the university's strategic objectives. The expenditure on resources and training also shows an appreciation of the importance of human capital to the accomplishment of strategic goals. This comprehensive strategy fosters a culture of cooperation, openness, and ongoing development inside the university, in addition to raising the probability of accomplishing strategic goals. In the end, these actions help the university project an image of being a progressive organization that can change with the times and still successfully serve its constituents.

The state university participants' qualitative responses show a thorough and methodical approach to strategy implementation, highlighting the identified generated themes on the current practices of strategic management in a state university in terms of strategy implementation(implementing strategies) enumerated follows: operationalization of strategies, progress tracking, alignment with objectives, responsibility distribution, support for implementation, operationalization of strategies, and progress tracking. The process of turning vague intentions into concrete, doable procedures is known as operationalization of strategies, which guarantees executive clarity. Progress tracking emphasizes the value of ongoing observation and assessment, which encourages responsibility and makes it easier to make strategic changes on time. Objective alignment emphasizes the necessity of departmental cooperation in order to make sure that all activities are focused on the overall goal of the university. The division of responsibilities shows that duties have been assigned clearly, enabling department leaders to assume accountability for particular plan elements. Last but not least, the topic of support for implementation highlights the university's dedication to giving staff members the tools and training they need, creating an

atmosphere that supports efficient execution. All together, these themes demonstrate the university's commitment to developing a methodical, cooperative framework for strategic management that can adapt to challenges from the inside as well as the outside.

Table 3. Current Practices of Strategic Management in a State University in terms of Strategy Evaluation

Participant	Responses	Coding	Themes
1	<i>"We conduct annual performance reviews to assess how well we are meeting our strategic objectives."</i>	Annual performance reviews	Performance Measurement
2	<i>"We use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and effectiveness of our strategies."</i>	Key performance indicators	Performance Measurement
3	<i>"Performance is evaluated through a combination of quantitative data and qualitative feedback from stakeholders."</i>	Quantitative and qualitative feedback	Feedback Mechanism
4	<i>"We hold quarterly strategy review meetings to discuss progress and make adjustments as needed."</i>	Quarterly strategy review meetings	Adaptability and Flexibility
5	<i>"Internal audits and external assessments are used to ensure compliance and performance against benchmarks."</i>	Internal audits and external assessments	Internal and External Analysis
6	<i>"We maintain metrics."</i>	Performance metrics	Performance Measurement
7	<i>No response.</i>	n/a	n/a

Matrix 3 shows the current practices of strategic management in a state university in terms of strategy evaluation. The state university has a strong framework for evaluating strategies, as evidenced by the qualitative replies from the participants. This framework is defined by systematic performance assessment, feedback systems, adaptability, and thorough internal and external analysis. The generated themes are as follows: performance measurement, feedback mechanism, adaptability and flexibility, internal and external analysis,

Through yearly evaluations and the application of key performance indicators (KPIs), the university highlights the significance of performance measurement. As mentioned in the response from Participant 1, "We conduct annual performance reviews to assess how well we are meeting our strategic objectives," this procedure guarantees a consistent evaluation of the efficacy and alignment of strategy. "We use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and effectiveness of our strategies," says Participant 2, emphasizing the dedication to putting strategic goals and success metrics into practice. As Participant 6 pointed out, maintaining metrics emphasizes the ongoing observation required for strategic management.

When taken as a whole, these answers show an organized method of performance evaluation that helps the university successfully match its goals with its operations.

Participant 3's description of the integration of quantitative data and qualitative stakeholder feedback points to a comprehensive approach to performance evaluation. Participant's statement, "Performance is evaluated through a combination of quantitative data and qualitative feedback from stakeholders," highlights the significance of stakeholder viewpoints in determining the efficacy of planning. This evaluation dichotomy highlights the need of inclusivity and teamwork within the strategic evaluation process while also promoting a thorough understanding of performance. By gaining a variety of perspectives, the university can modify its plans to better serve the interests of its constituents, increasing the efficacy of the institution as a whole.

The conclusions drawn from these qualitative answers point to various ramifications for the strategic management procedures used by the state university. First off, the organized review procedures improve accountability and openness, which builds confidence among interested parties. Second, a complex picture of institutional performance is suggested by the mix of quantitative and qualitative evaluation procedures, facilitating well-informed decision-making. Last but not least, the university's emphasis on flexibility and ongoing assessment enables it to maintain its agility in a continually evolving field of education. This proactive approach guarantees that the university can accomplish its long-term objectives while attending to the changing requirements of its community. It also enhances institutional resilience and is consistent with best practices in strategic management.

Overall, the strategic evaluation practices articulated by participants: performance measurement, feedback mechanism, adaptability and flexibility, internal and external analysis illustrate a comprehensive framework that effectively aligns the university's operational strategies with its broader institutional mission, fostering an environment conducive to sustained growth and improvement.

Challenges Participants' Encounter in Strategic Management as to Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, And Strategy Evaluation

Table 4. Challenges' Participants Encounter in Strategic Management as to Strategy Formulation

Participant	Responses	Coding	Themes
1	<i>"Balancing the broader vision of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) with national priorities is tough. There's also the need to align it with what is acceptable to the local community."</i>	Conflicting Priorities	Developing the Mission and Vision of the University
2	<i>"We face significant limitations in terms of budget from the national government. It's difficult to work on a long-term vision without adequate funding."</i>	Budget Limitations	Establishing long-term objectives
3	<i>"There are varying opinions on where PUP should be heading. It leads to long discussions and delays in decision-making, as different</i>	Divergent Stakeholder Views	Generating, Evaluating, and Selecting

			Strategies
4	<i>"Conducting an external audit is difficult due to the vastness of PUP's operations and the number of campuses. Collecting data from all stakeholders takes a lot of time."</i>	Data Collection Challenges	Performing External Audit
5	<i>"We struggle to differentiate between what constitutes an opportunity or a threat, especially when external factors are always changing, like the economy."</i>	Uncertainty in Environment	Environmental Assessment
6	<i>"Internal audits suffer from a lack of formal surveys and tools to consistently measure employee satisfaction. This makes it harder to get a clear picture of internal issues."</i>	Inconsistent Internal Audits	Performing Internal Audit
7	<i>"Setting long-term objectives is complicated by unforeseen events that can derail our plans. There's also resistance from employees when trying to implement new strategies."</i>	Resistance to Change	Establishing long-term objectives

The matrix uncovers many difficulties that individuals face in the strategic management procedures of a major educational establishment such as the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). These obstacles are grouped into main topics like establishing mission and vision, setting long-term goals, conducting external and internal reviews, and assessing the environment.

Participant 1 shares, "Achieving harmony between PUP's overarching goals and national objectives is challenging. Aligning it with the local community's standards is also necessary". The individual is struggling to balance the university's future objectives with the nation's goals, all while taking into account the needs of the local community. A clash exists between the institution's overarching, ambitious goals and the immediate, practical issues faced by local stakeholders. This may result in strategic conflict, as some objectives could be overly general or disconnected from community conditions. The organization needs to find a way to balance these competing priorities through a planning process that encompasses both national and local viewpoints. It indicates that PUP should involve local stakeholders more extensively and synchronize its mission with both national policy and community needs in order to achieve strategic coherence.

Participant 2 claims, "We encounter major constraints in budget allocation from the federal government. Working on a long-term vision without sufficient funding is challenging." The institution's capacity to establish and accomplish long-term goals is greatly limited by the insufficient financial support from the national government. Strategic planning without sufficient financial support results in unfinished or unsuccessful projects. Budget limitations might result in postponements of vital projects, impeding institutional development and advancement. The institution needs to push for more financial support or look into other ways to generate revenue. The strategic plans need to be practical as well, concentrating on attainable objectives given the present financial constraints. Prioritizing important projects is crucial to ensure optimal utilization of resources.

Participant 3 says, "There are varying opinions on where PUP should be heading. It leads to long discussions and delays in decision-making, as different stakeholders have different priorities." This response highlights the challenge of managing multiple, often conflicting stakeholder interests. The delays in decision-making arise from the diverse priorities and opinions about the university's direction. Consensus-building in a large institution with numerous stakeholders can be time-consuming and may result in a lack of decisive action. The University could benefit from implementing structured stakeholder engagement strategies, ensuring that all voices are heard without causing undue delays. Developing a more centralized decision-making framework may also help reduce prolonged discussions, leading to more efficient strategy formulation.

Participant 4 shares, "Conducting an external audit is difficult due to the vastness of PUP's operations and the number of campuses. Collecting data from all stakeholders takes a lot of time." The challenge of performing external audits stems from the sheer size of the University, with multiple campuses and a large stakeholder base. Collecting and analyzing data across such a broad scope introduces delays and operational inefficiencies, which hinders the institution's ability to assess external risks and opportunities in a timely manner. PUP may need to invest in better data collection and management systems, perhaps through digital tools, to streamline the audit process. Establishing more localized or decentralized auditing systems might also speed up data gathering, reducing the overall time required to perform external audits.

Participant 5 discloses, "We struggle to differentiate between what constitutes an opportunity or a threat, especially when external factors are always changing, like the economy." This participant underscores the difficulty in conducting environmental assessments due to external volatility. In a constantly shifting economic and political landscape, strategic management becomes harder, as defining opportunities versus threats becomes unclear. This reflects the challenge of maintaining strategic agility in unpredictable environments. The institution needs to develop more adaptive and flexible strategies that can quickly respond to changes in external conditions. Scenario planning and risk assessments could be useful tools to better navigate uncertain environments and prepare for both opportunities and threats.

Participant 6 says, "Internal audits lack proper surveys and tools to regularly gauge employee satisfaction. This complicates the ability to understand internal problems. Without established internal audit processes like routine employee satisfaction surveys, assessing the institution's internal well-being becomes challenging. Lack of regular feedback makes it difficult to tackle underlying workforce issues, potentially affecting organizational performance. Introducing organized internal audit procedures, such as frequent staff surveys and feedback mechanisms, may offer the organization a better grasp of its internal obstacles. This would also aid in improving internal decision-making and promoting a positive organizational culture. Lastly, Participant 7 surmises, "Establishing future goals is made challenging by unexpected circumstances that may disrupt our strategies." Employees also push back when attempting to introduce new strategies. The individual emphasizes two main obstacles: unexpected external circumstances and reluctance towards change from within. Unforeseeable occurrences, like changes in politics or economy, may interfere with long-term goals, while resistance from staff members poses challenges in executing fresh tactics. Delays and complications in the strategic planning process are caused by both factors. To address resistance to change, the organization needs to improve communication and change management tactics, involving employees from the beginning of the planning stage. Moreover, the organization needs to implement strategies for contingency planning to effectively address unexpected situations, thereby maintaining the achievability of long-term goals in spite of external disturbances. The

themes on the challenges' participants encounter in strategic management as to strategy formulation Top of Form

- **Developing the Mission and Vision of the University**

A significant challenge in formulating the mission and vision of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) lies in the necessity to reconcile broader institutional objectives with national priorities, while simultaneously ensuring that these align with the values of the local community. The university faces conflicting priorities as it strives to incorporate a progressive vision focused on internationalization, which may not always resonate with local acceptability. This situation generates a tension between long-term, expansive goals and immediate, community-oriented issues. Consequently, it is essential for strategic management in higher education to adopt a more inclusive and participatory approach. Involving the local community in conversations regarding the university's vision could help alleviate conflicts and foster a mutual understanding of both local and national aspirations.

- **Establishing Long-Term Objectives - Budget Limitations**

Participants emphasized the challenges associated with setting long-term goals due to financial limitations imposed by the national government. The insufficiency of funding represents a considerable obstacle to the realization of strategic objectives and long-term initiatives. In the absence of adequate financial support, the pursuit of sustainable development and educational excellence becomes increasingly difficult. The ramifications of this situation are significant, as constrained funding limits the range of programs and innovations that the university can explore. For institutions such as PUP, it may be essential for strategic planners to focus on resource mobilization strategies, including the establishment of partnerships with the private sector, and to advocate for enhanced government funding to secure the long-term viability of the institution's strategic aims.

- ❖ **Generating, Evaluating, and Selecting Strategies - Divergent Stakeholder Views**

A common challenge in strategic management is the differing views among stakeholders regarding the direction of the institution. In the case of PUP, participants noted that these varying opinions lead to lengthy discussions and delays in decision-making. Divergent perspectives, especially among senior leaders, faculty, and external stakeholders, can cause significant challenges in generating, evaluating, and selecting effective strategies. The implication is that without clear consensus or a unified vision, the decision-making process can become protracted and ineffective. This points to the importance of fostering collaboration and open communication among all stakeholders in the strategic planning process. Regular consultations and feedback mechanisms may help to reconcile differences and expedite the decision-making process.

- **Performing External Audit - Data Collection Challenges**

Because there are so many campuses and stakeholders involved, conducting an external audit of PUP's operations is a difficult undertaking. Data collection from this large and diverse group requires a lot of work and time. The difficulty of conducting external audits for organizations with a broad global reach is reflected in this challenge. It follows that organizations such as PUP must create procedures for gathering and analyzing data that are more effective, maybe by utilizing technology to make the process run more smoothly. Furthermore, timely and thorough audits are essential for accurate external assessments, which provide valuable information for important strategic decisions.

- **Environmental Assessment - Uncertainty in Environment**

Participants in environmental evaluations frequently have challenges in differentiating between opportunities and risks due to the constantly shifting nature of external factors such as the economy. The external environment is changing rapidly, creating uncertainty and making it difficult for the organization to plan ahead and take advantage of opportunities. This highlights the need for a more dynamic and flexible approach to environmental assessment so that plans can be quickly adjusted in response to changing conditions. It follows that the company may need to invest in scenario planning and contingencies in order to manage unexpected conditions more adeptly.

- **Performing Internal Audit - Inconsistent Internal Audits**

One major problem for internal audits has been recognized as the inconsistent methods of monitoring employee satisfaction through official surveys. It gets harder for the university to assess internal problems like staff engagement or institutional flaws without consistent and trustworthy data. This discrepancy may result in a disjointed comprehension of internal functions, impeding the efficacy of strategic decision-making. This suggests that in order to make sure that internal issues are appropriately recognized and dealt with, the university has to set up a more organized and consistent internal audit system that includes frequent surveys and assessments.

- **Establishing Long-Term Objectives - Resistance to Change**

Establishing long-term goals is made more difficult by unanticipated circumstances that could throw plans into a loop and by employee aversion to trying new things. One of the most frequent organizational problems is resistance to change, particularly in big organizations like PUP. Because of unfamiliarity with the new policies or tactics, job security worries, schedule adjustments, or a lack of knowledge, employees may be reluctant to embrace them. It follows that in order to properly execute long-term goals, PUP needs to concentrate on change management techniques, such as offering incentives, training, and clear communication, in order to lessen resistance and facilitate a more seamless transition toward new strategic goals.

Table 5. Challenges' Participants Encounter in Strategic Management as to Strategy Evaluation

Participant	Responses	Initial Codes	Themes
1	<i>"We often struggle with incomplete data, which makes it hard to evaluate the strategy effectively."</i>	Data Issues	Data and Information
2	<i>"Our metrics are not standardized, so it's difficult to measure success consistently across projects."</i>	Metrics	Measurement Metrics
3	<i>"Limited budget means we can't always afford comprehensive evaluations."</i>	Resource Constraints	Limited Funding
4	<i>"The strategies we implement are so complex that evaluating their impact becomes overwhelming."</i>	Complexity	Complexity of Strategy

5	<i>"There's a lot of pushback when the evaluation results suggest major changes in strategy."</i>	Resistance	Resistance to Change
6	<i>"Our team lacks the expertise needed to conduct thorough evaluations of strategic plans."</i>	Skill Gaps	Skill Gaps
7	<i>"Evaluation results are often misinterpreted because communication with stakeholders isn't clear."</i>	Communication Issues	Communication Issues

The text outlines several challenges that participants face in strategic management when evaluating strategies. These challenges have distinct implications for the evaluation process.

Participant 1 highlights the issue of incomplete data, which falls under the theme of Data and Information. Incomplete data significantly hinders the ability to accurately assess the effectiveness of strategies. This implies that decision-making could be based on partial or inaccurate information, potentially leading to flawed strategies and outcomes. Addressing this challenge requires enhanced data collection methods and comprehensive data management systems to ensure evaluations are based on complete and reliable information.

Participant 2 points to the problem of non-standardized metrics, categorized under Measurement Metrics. The lack of standardized metrics makes it difficult to consistently measure and compare success across different projects. This inconsistency can result in subjective evaluations and hinder effective benchmarking of performance. Implementing standardized metrics and benchmarks can provide a clearer, more objective framework for assessing strategy performance and ensure consistency across various projects.

Participant 3 mentions resource constraints, which is captured under Limited Funding. The limited budget restricts the capacity to conduct comprehensive evaluations, affecting the depth and quality of the assessment process. This constraint suggests a need for prioritization and more efficient allocation of resources. Organizations may need to explore cost-effective evaluation methods or reallocate budgets to ensure that evaluations are adequately funded and conducted.

Participant 4 describes the complexity of strategies as overwhelming, a challenge categorized as Complexity of Strategy. The intricate nature of some strategies complicates the evaluation process, making it difficult to assess their impact effectively. This complexity can obscure the effectiveness of strategies and complicate decision-making. Simplifying strategies or breaking them down into more manageable components could help make evaluations more feasible and less daunting.

Participant 5 identifies resistance to change when evaluation results suggest major adjustments, which falls under Resistance to Change. This resistance can impede the implementation of necessary changes based on evaluation findings. It implies that stakeholders may be reluctant to adapt or accept new directions, which can hinder strategic progress. To overcome this, engaging stakeholders early, addressing their concerns, and clearly communicating the benefits of changes can help mitigate resistance and facilitate smoother implementation.

Participant 6 points out skill gaps within the team, categorized as Skill Gaps. A lack of expertise in conducting thorough evaluations compromises the quality and reliability of the evaluation process. This gap

suggests a need for targeted training and development to enhance the team's evaluation capabilities. Investing in skill development or hiring experts can improve the effectiveness of strategy evaluations and ensure more accurate assessments.

Participant 7 raises concerns about miscommunication, captured under Communication Issues. Poor communication with stakeholders can lead to misinterpretation of evaluation results, affecting how findings are perceived and acted upon. Effective communication is crucial for ensuring that evaluation results are clearly understood and used appropriately. Improving communication strategies, such as providing clear and regular updates, can help enhance the impact and utility of evaluation findings.

In summary, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving data management, standardizing metrics, optimizing resource allocation, simplifying strategies, managing resistance, enhancing team skills, and improving communication practices.

Each challenge has specific implications that affect the effectiveness of strategy evaluation and decision-making processes.

Matrix 8 highlights several key themes that reflect the challenges participants face in strategic management, particularly in strategy evaluation. These themes encompass issues related to data and information, measurement metrics, limited funding, strategy complexity, resistance to change, skill gaps, and communication.

* The theme of Data and Information involves challenges with incomplete or insufficient data, which significantly impairs the effectiveness of strategy evaluation. Participants struggle to gather comprehensive data, making it difficult to accurately assess the performance of strategies. This suggests that organizations need robust data collection and management systems to ensure evaluations are based on reliable and complete information, enhancing the accuracy and utility of performance assessments.

The theme of Measurement Metrics addresses the challenge of inconsistent or non-standardized metrics across different projects. Without uniform metrics, it becomes difficult to measure and compare success consistently. This indicates the necessity for standardized performance metrics that align with strategic goals to ensure objective and comparable evaluations. Developing and implementing consistent metrics can improve the clarity and reliability of performance measurement, enabling more effective benchmarking and decision-making.

Limited Funding reflects the constraints imposed by insufficient budgets, which affect the ability to conduct comprehensive evaluations. Financial limitations often restrict the scope and depth of evaluations, leading to potential gaps in assessing strategy performance. Addressing this theme involves optimizing resource allocation and seeking cost-effective evaluation methods to ensure that evaluations are sufficiently funded and conducted with the necessary depth and rigor.

Complexity of Strategy highlights the challenges posed by intricate and multifaceted strategies, which can make evaluation processes overwhelming and difficult to manage. Complex strategies often involve numerous variables and interactions, complicating the assessment of their impact. Simplifying strategies or breaking them into more manageable components can help make evaluations more feasible and less burdensome, facilitating clearer insights into their effectiveness.

Resistance to Change represents the difficulties encountered when evaluation results suggest significant strategic adjustments. Pushback from stakeholders can impede the implementation of necessary changes, hindering organizational progress. This theme emphasizes the need for effective change management strategies, including clear communication of the benefits of adjustments and involving stakeholders in the evaluation process to mitigate resistance and foster acceptance.

Skill Gaps refers to the lack of expertise within teams needed to conduct thorough evaluations. Insufficient skills and knowledge can compromise the quality and accuracy of performance assessments. Investing in training and development or bringing in external expertise can address these gaps, enhancing the evaluation process and ensuring more reliable and insightful performance analyses.

Lastly, Communication Issues involve problems with how evaluation results are conveyed to stakeholders, leading to misinterpretation and ineffective use of findings. Clear and effective communication is crucial for ensuring that evaluation results are understood and acted upon appropriately. Improving communication strategies, such as using clear reporting formats and providing regular updates, can help enhance the impact and relevance of evaluation results.

Overall, addressing these themes involves a combination of improved data management, standardized metrics, optimized resource allocation, simplified strategies, effective change management, skill development, and clear communication to enhance the strategy evaluation process and support better decision-making.

Table 6. Challenges' Participants Encounter in Strategic Management as to Strategy Evaluation

Participant	Responses	Initial Codes	Themes
1	<i>"It's difficult to align performance metrics with strategic goals."</i>	Goals	Alignment Issues
2	<i>"We lack the tools to accurately measure performance."</i>	Lack tools	Measurement Tools
3	<i>"Evaluating performance is time consuming and often subjective."</i>	Time management	Evaluation Challenges
4	<i>"There's a disconnect between departments on performance criteria."</i>	Department disconnect	Interdepartmental Issues
5	<i>"We struggle with setting realistic performance benchmarks."</i>	Benchmark s	Benchmarking Issues
6	<i>"Performance data is often outdated by the time we analyze it."</i>	Outdated data	Data Timeliness
7	<i>"There's resistance to performance evaluations from some team members."</i>	Resistance	Resistance to Evaluation

The text outlines several challenges that participants face in strategic management when measuring and evaluating performance.

Participant 1 expresses difficulty in aligning performance metrics with strategic goals, which is categorized as an Alignment Issue. This suggests a mismatch between what is being measured and the organization's actual strategic objectives. The implication is that if the performance metrics do not adequately reflect the strategic goals, the evaluation process may not effectively gauge the implementation of the strategy. To address this, organizations should ensure a clear link between performance metrics and strategic objectives, potentially by revisiting and refining the metrics to better align with the goals.

Participant 2 mentions a lack of appropriate tools to accurately measure performance, which falls under Measurement Tools. This indicates that the absence of suitable tools impedes the ability to precisely assess performance. The implication is that without the right measurement tools and technologies, evaluations may lack accuracy and reliability. Organizations should invest in or develop effective measurement tools and technologies that can provide precise and actionable performance data.

Participant 3 finds the evaluation process to be time-consuming and often subjective, captured under Evaluation Challenges. This suggests that the evaluation process is not only lengthy but also prone to personal biases. The implication is that these challenges could lead to inefficiencies and inconsistent evaluations. To mitigate this, organizations could streamline the evaluation process by adopting more structured and objective evaluation methods and leveraging technology to reduce time and bias.

Participant 4 highlights a disconnect between departments on performance criteria, categorized as Interdepartmental Issues. This challenge implies that different departments may have varying performance evaluation criteria, leading to confusion and misalignment. The implication is that such disconnects can create inefficiencies and hinder the integration of departmental performance data. Improving interdepartmental communication and establishing unified performance criteria can help ensure consistency and clarity across the organization.

Participant 5 struggles with setting realistic performance benchmarks, under Benchmarking Issues. This indicates difficulties in establishing benchmarks that are both challenging and achievable. The implication is that unrealistic benchmarks may lead to demotivation or inaccurate assessments of performance. Organizations should focus on setting achievable and relevant benchmarks through careful analysis and comparison with industry standards to drive realistic performance expectations.

Participant 6 noted that performance data is often outdated by the time it is analyzed, falling under Data Timeliness. This challenge implies that delays in data processing affect the relevance and usefulness of performance evaluations. The implication is that outdated data can lead to decisions based on past rather than current performance. To address this, organizations should implement systems and processes that enable more timely data collection and analysis, ensuring that performance evaluations are based on up-to-date information.

Participant 7 reports resistance to performance evaluations from some team members, categorized as Resistance to Evaluation. This suggests that some employees are unwilling to engage with or accept the results of performance evaluations. The implication is that such resistance can undermine the evaluation process and its effectiveness. Addressing this challenge may involve fostering a culture of openness and transparency, communicating the benefits of evaluations clearly, and involving team members in the evaluation process to reduce resistance.

In summary, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including aligning metrics with strategic goals, investing in measurement tools, streamlining evaluation processes, improving interdepartmental communication, setting realistic benchmarks, ensuring timely data analysis, and managing resistance to evaluations. Each challenge has specific implications that affect the effectiveness and efficiency of performance measurement and evaluation processes.

In addition, Matrix 9 framework outlines several key challenges that organizations face in measuring and evaluating their strategic performance. These challenges can be categorized into distinct themes, each reflecting specific difficulties that impact the effectiveness of performance assessment.

The first theme, Alignment Issues, relates to the challenge of ensuring that performance metrics are properly aligned with strategic goals. Misalignment between metrics and objectives makes it difficult to accurately evaluate strategy execution, underscoring the importance of developing metrics that directly reflect strategic aims.

The second theme, Measurement Tools, concerns the lack of appropriate tools and technologies needed for accurate performance measurement. Without the right tools, performance data may be inaccurate or incomplete, affecting the reliability of evaluations. Organizations need to invest in robust measurement capabilities to gather precise data and conduct effective assessments.

The third theme, Evaluation Challenges, encompasses the time-consuming and subjective nature of performance evaluations. Time management issues and personal biases can lead to inconsistent and inefficient evaluations. Addressing these challenges involves streamlining the evaluation process and adopting more objective, standardized methods.

The fourth theme, Interdepartmental Issues, arises from the disconnect between departments regarding performance criteria. Lack of coherence and consistency in performance standards across departments can create confusion and misalignment. Fostering better communication and collaboration to establish unified criteria is crucial.

The fifth theme, Benchmarking Issues, involves the difficulty of setting realistic performance benchmarks that are both achievable and relevant. Unrealistic benchmarks can lead to unrealistic expectations and potentially demotivate employees. Organizations should focus on establishing practical, attainable benchmarks based on thorough analysis and industry standards.

The sixth theme, Data Timeliness, refers to the problem of performance data being outdated by the time it is analyzed. Delays in data collection and analysis can reduce the relevance of performance evaluations. Implementing real-time data systems can ensure that evaluations are based on the most current information, improving the responsiveness and accuracy of strategic adjustments.

The seventh and final theme, Resistance to Evaluation, highlights the challenge of some team members resisting performance evaluations. Addressing this resistance involves creating a culture that values feedback and transparency, and engaging team members in the evaluation process to ensure wider acceptance and utilization.

Overall, addressing these themes requires a comprehensive approach to improving alignment between metrics and goals, investing in effective measurement tools, streamlining evaluation processes, fostering interdepartmental consistency, setting realistic benchmarks, ensuring timely data analysis, and managing

resistance. Addressing these challenges can enhance the effectiveness of performance measurement and evaluation, ultimately improving strategic management and decision-making.

Strategies Employed by the Participants to Overcome the Challenges in Strategic Management

Table 7. Strategies Employed by the Participants to Overcome the Challenges in Strategic Management

Participant	Responses	Initial Codes	Themes
1	<i>"We held regular brainstorming sessions to encourage innovative solutions to challenges."</i>	Innovative Solutions	Collaboration and Innovation
2	<i>"We established a mentorship program to support new managers in understanding strategic management."</i>	Mentorship Program	Capacity Building
3	<i>"Frequent training workshops helped our team stay updated on best practices in strategic management."</i>	Training Workshops	Continuous Learning
4	<i>"Creating a feedback loop allowed us to adjust our strategies based on team input."</i>	Feedback Loop	Stakeholder Engagement
5	<i>"Forming cross-departmental teams improved communication and streamlined decision-making."</i>	Cross Departmental Teams	Collaboration and Communication
6	<i>"We utilized data analytics to assess the effectiveness of our strategies and make informed adjustments."</i>	Data-Driven Decisions	Evidence Based Management
7	<i>No response</i>	n/a	n/a

The matrix encapsulates the strategies employed by the participants to overcome the challenges in strategic management. The generated themes are as follows: collaboration and innovation, capacity building, continuous learning, stakeholder engagement, collaboration and communication, and evidence-based management.

The first participant stressed the value of regular brainstorming sessions in order to foster creative solutions to problems in strategic management. This strategy demonstrates a dedication to developing an innovative and collaborative culture within the company. The company fosters an atmosphere that emphasizes creativity and group problem-solving in addition to utilizing a variety of insights by allowing team members to share ideas and viewpoints. These brainstorming sessions play a crucial role in removing obstacles to communication and fostering the emergence of original ideas that might not have been taken into account during a more hierarchical decision-making process. This tactic is consistent with modern

ideas of organizational management, which support the use of participatory methods to foster creativity and flexibility in the face of difficulties.

The creation of a mentorship program to assist newly appointed managers in comprehending strategic management was emphasized by the second participant. The initiative highlights the importance of developing leadership qualities in aspiring managers, which is a crucial aspect of capacity building. The organization creates a friendly learning environment and promotes knowledge transfer by matching up novice managers with experienced mentors. This tactic improves new managers' personal competencies while fortifying the organization's ability to lead as a whole. These kinds of mentorship programs are crucial for helping novices navigate the complexity of strategic management because they offer them the direction, understanding, and real-world experience needed to make wise decisions.

The third person talked about how regular training sessions help the team stay current on strategic management best practices. This strategy highlights the organization's understanding of the necessity for continual professional development and incorporates the idea of continuous learning. Through the provision of frequent training opportunities, the organization guarantees that its workforce have the most up-to-date knowledge and skills required to effectively tackle changing strategic problems. In the quickly evolving business world of today, businesses need to be continuously learning in order to stay responsive and competitive. In addition to improving individual talents, this dedication to professional development fosters a culture of lifelong learning inside the company, which is crucial for long-term success in strategic management.

The development of a feedback loop that enables strategy adjustments depending on team input was mentioned by the fourth participant. This approach, which stresses the value of include team members in the strategic management process, is a perfect example of the theme of stakeholder engagement. Through proactive input solicitation and integration, the firm fosters employee ownership and accountability by exhibiting a willingness to listen to its workforce. In addition to improving decision-making quality, this participatory method helps the organization be flexible and responsive to the demands and expectations of its stakeholders. The feedback loop is an essential tool for continuous development because it makes sure that tactics are dynamic and change in response to group comments and real-time insights.

Creating cross-departmental teams is one way to enhance communication and expedite decision-making, according to the fifth participant. This approach reflects an awareness of the significance of dismantling organizational silos and is consistent with the principles of collaboration and communication. Cross-departmental teams enable knowledge sharing and improve coordination by bringing together members of several departments, which eventually results in better informed and efficient decision-making. This cooperative approach fosters creative solutions that make use of the team members' varied areas of expertise in addition to a comprehensive awareness of organizational constraints. The focus on interdepartmental cooperation emphasizes how important it is to cultivate an integrated organizational culture that promotes common objectives and group problem-solving.

The sixth participant talked on evaluating the efficacy of plans and making well-informed adjustments using data analytics. This response highlights the organization's dedication to using data-driven methodologies in decision-making, so embodying the subject of evidence-based management. Utilizing empirical data to assess strategic objectives enables the company to make well-informed modifications that improve efficacy and performance. The incorporation of data analytics into strategic management methodologies emphasizes the significance of matching choices to quantifiable results, a prerequisite for

both responsibility and ongoing progress. This data-driven approach improves the caliber of strategic choices while also cultivating an open and impartial culture inside the company.

The seventh participant's failure to respond could indicate a lack of interest or trouble communicating the tactics used to overcome obstacles in strategic management. This lack of feedback points to a possible weakness in the group's initiatives to promote involvement and candid communication among its members. It emphasizes how crucial it is to create an inclusive atmosphere where each member feels appreciated and encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences. By making sure that all opinions are heard and included into the group's strategy for conquering obstacles, filling this gap can give the company important chances to improve its strategic management procedures.

The commonalities found in the methods participants used to get over strategic management obstacles point to a thorough strategy for improving organizational effectiveness. Through brainstorming sessions, collaboration and innovation emerged as essential drivers, building a culture that valued innovative approaches to problem-solving. The introduction of mentorship programs, which assist new managers in acquiring critical strategic management abilities, highlighted capacity building. Frequent training seminars were used to stress continuous learning and make sure team members were up to date on best practices. A key feature of stakeholder engagement was the development of feedback loops, which allow teams to modify their plans in response to group feedback and encourage accountability and ownership. The establishment of cross-departmental teams strengthened collaboration and communication even further while improving information flow and decision-making effectiveness. Lastly, the use of data analytics to support evidence-based management allowed for well-informed strategy modifications based on empirical findings. When taken as a whole, these topics show how strategic management may be approached in many ways, with the main emphasis being placed on data-driven decision-making, engagement, development, and cooperation.

In sum, the generated themes on strategies employed by the participants to overcome the challenges in strategic management are as follows: collaboration and innovation, capacity building, continuous learning, stakeholder engagement, collaboration and communication, and evidence-based management.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to explore the Narratives of Strategic Management Practices, Challenges, and Strategies: A Case of a State University. The following conclusions are offered: First, a state university's present strategic management procedures demonstrate a thorough approach to developing, putting into practice, and assessing strategies. Qualitative replies from middle and upper management emphasize the significance of creating vision and mission statements, performing internal and external audits, and including stakeholders in the planning process when formulating a strategy. For example, the institution regularly includes members from many stakeholder groups to create an inclusive and methodical approach and uses SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This dedication to stakeholder participation highlights the institution's flexibility and response to the changing nature of higher education. Second, the challenges faced by participants in strategic management, particularly in strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, reveal a variety of interconnected issues that hinder progress. Participants noted difficulties in aligning institutional goals with national and local standards, limited financial resources, stakeholder conflicts, and the complexities of conducting comprehensive external and internal audits. In sum, the generated themes on strategies employed by the participants to overcome the challenges in strategic management are as follows: collaboration and innovation, capacity building, continuous learning, stakeholder engagement, collaboration and communication, and evidence-based management.

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