

MEETING EXPECTATIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS PROPERLY IS THE KEY TO INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS OF A UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Any type of public or private University is in need of interacting with its stakeholders to conduct its operations smoothly. Stakeholders have different expectations from the University. If these expectations can be learnt through a systematic process and efforts are made to meet the stakeholders' expectations, it is expected that this may largely contribute to the organizational success. It is imperative for a University to develop hearty relationship with its stakeholders to achieve their support and patronization in performing institutional activities with utmost efficiency and effectiveness. It is recognized as an important determinant of quality higher education to enhance competitive ability of the University graduates. The necessity to meet the expectations of stakeholders in a University has been intensified due to rapid globalization and intense competition in the higher educational market in the present days.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Expectations, Building relationship, Strategies, Institutional success and University

INTRODUCTION

Any organization irrespective of its nature and operations relies heavily on its stakeholders for attaining success. A University offering tertiary level education has to deal with various stakeholders while offering its educational programs. These stakeholders are comprised of students, teachers, administrative staff, alumni, employers, government agencies, mass media, guardians, conscious citizens groups etc. Each of these stakeholders has unique type of expectations, which must be met by the University by means of applying superior strategies. Conceptualizing the expectations in precise form and analyzing these properly to decide whether these can be met fully or partially may help in formulating strategic options aimed at meeting with these expectations. It is also necessary for the stakeholders to understand the genuine ability of the enterprise to satisfy their expectations. A confrontation meeting with each stakeholder may go a long way to minimize the gap in the expectations of both opposing parties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The involvement of stakeholders in higher educational institutions for achieving quality higher education is a highly talked about issue in the present days. As such, academicians have tried to analyze the issue from different perspectives. Ulewicz, R. (2017) in his research article on “The Role of Stakeholders in Quality Assurance in Higher Education“, opine that quality education at the tertiary level is closely linked with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the University system. A University is required to take input from stakeholders to devise its educational services of desired standard for meeting the diverse needs of internal and external stakeholders.

Savage, L., Kryklic, O. & Kyrechenko, K (2018) published a research paper on “The role of Internal and External stakeholders in Higher Education system in Ukraine”, in which they identified the categorization of stakeholders of HEIs based on multi-dimensional criteria and argued that the goal of a University should be to meet the needs of all its stakeholders for attaining sustainable institutional development. They developed a model to select and coordinate the interest of groups of stakeholders at the higher education institutions to facilitate their strategic planning. They emphasized on management decision making within HEIs in keeping with the interests of stakeholders.

Labnauskis, R. & Ginevicius, R. (2017), in a research article entitled “Role of Stakeholders leading to Development of Higher Education Service”, analyzed the needs and expectations of diverse University stakeholders and tried to show how the roles of stakeholders contribute to the development of a higher education institution. They argued that HEIs needed to achieve compromise, harmonise and establish priorities leveraging the needs of stakeholders for finding the right strategic options for the development of higher education institution.

Maric. I (2013), in a research article on” Stakeholder Analysis of Higher Education Institutions” attempted to explore the critical parameters for stakeholder analysis and implementation in the higher education sector. By making proper stakeholder analysis, HEIs can enforce entrepreneurial style of leadership for transforming and reacting to dynamic changes in higher education through strategic management of higher educational programs.

The above review of literature provides hint about the research gap in meeting the expectations of stakeholders for institutional success. It is necessary to devise mechanism of addressing the expectations of stakeholders and showing the

potential benefits to the higher education system from the ability to meet expectations of stakeholders. This is why, this research paper has been prepared.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the need for meeting the expectations of stakeholders systematically by a University to ensure institutional success, it has been found that many higher educational institutions are callous to this requirement. Their indifferent attitude may be the result of their lack of awareness about the issue, absence of precise knowledge about the stakeholders' expectations and strategies to be adopted in addressing to the expectations. Reportedly, the dissatisfaction of stakeholders is the root cause of organizational failure in many cases. For removing the dissatisfaction of stakeholders, an orderly approach must be devised by an organization to uncover the genuine expectations of stakeholders and then formulate strategic options to cater to these expectations.

Newspaper reports reveal that some Universities become involved in various malpractices and corruptions while playing their roles. As a consequence, large segments of the society become affected and they after become frustrated. The failure of government agencies in arousing transparent and accountable behavior from the University administration creates the opportunity to play unethical role by the University. This sort of situation must be overcome. In an effort to examine this research issue in depth, this study has been initiated.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The salient objective of this study is to examine how an organization can achieve operational success by meeting the expectations of its stakeholders. More specific objectives of the study are the following:

- a) To present the conceptual aspects of stakeholder.
- b) To illustrate the importance of developing relationship with stakeholders for an institution.
- c) To identify the mutual expectations of various stakeholders of an enterprise.
- d) To reveal the facilities and strategies needed for meeting the expectations of stakeholders.
- e) To uncover the process, gains and constraints in developing relationship with stakeholders of an organization.
- f) To suggest the measures for overcoming the institutional problems arising from the stakeholders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper has been developed based on qualitative research approach. The researcher has made use of his knowledge and long teaching & administrative experiences in preparing this paper. Brainstorming on the research issue and practical problem solving approach have been employed in the analysis of the subject matter.

CONCEPT OF STAKEHOLDER

According to DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary, a stakeholder refers to “a person with an interest or concern in a business, project etc.” Basically any person or group having deep involvement with an enterprise may be termed as stakeholder. For example, an organization operates with the help of employees, customers, suppliers, media & regulatory agencies to achieve its objectives. These groups having relationship with the organization for safeguarding their mutual interests are known as stakeholders. A stakeholder can affect or be affected by the activities of an organization. Pesquex & Damak-Ayadic (2012) define stakeholders as “all agents (representatives), who can influence or become influenced when implementing the organizational objectives”. From the perspective of University, internal or external publics having impact upon the performance of its day to day activities are its stakeholders, such as, students, teachers, administrative staff and government agencies. The following features are evident from the concept of stakeholder.

- It is an individual or group having keen interest in the operation of an organization.
- Stakeholders maintain relationship with an organization for protecting their mutual interests.
- It provides services, support and patronization to the organization for its survival and success.
- It is capable of creating impediments in the operation of an enterprise.

Why should a University lay emphasis on developing relationship with its stakeholders?

- ❖ Stakeholders are the integral parts of the organization. Their patronization to the organization depends largely on their satisfaction. To achieve this satisfaction, relationship building with stakeholders is immensely necessary. According to Freeman (1984), organizations capable of managing relationships with stakeholders effectively are expected to

survive for a longer period and can show better performance than those who do not develop and maintain such relationship with stakeholders.

- ❖ A University is surrounded by numerous stakeholders with different needs and expectations. Harmonizing the needs and expectations of these diverse groups towards the achievement of higher educational goals is a sine-qua-non for the successful existence of a University. The quality assurance in higher education is also closely linked with the integration of organizational interests with the stakeholder's interests.
- ❖ Stakeholders can support the organization in various ways. A university will be able to attract the interest of more students if the present students are satisfied. High level of satisfaction of the existing teachers will induce them provide their best to the teaching, learning and research process. Alumni are the ambassadors of the University, who can help in enhancing reputation of the University. The support of other stakeholders can also yield rich dividend for the University. So relation-building with stakeholders has important favorable impact on the University.
- ❖ Stakeholders can also create problems for the University. These problems impede the normal functioning of the University. It becomes difficult to implement the Academic Calendar. The academic environment may get polluted. Often administrative decisions cannot be properly implemented. Chain of command and accountability cannot be enforced.
- ❖ The main responsibility to build up relationship with stakeholders lies on top management of the University. A proactive and efficient top management can take systematic step to build up relationship with stakeholders. The departmental head and administrative staff should be alert to the grievances of stakeholders and should act as helping hand in the problem solving process. Formal and informal communication may help in strengthening the bond of relationship with stakeholders.

EXPECTATIONS OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Expectations of Students from the University

- a) Quality education at an affordable cost.
- b) Congenial learning environment.
- c) Modern class rooms with audio-visual aids.
- d) Library facility with adequate stock of books, journals & reference books.
- e) Teaching by highly qualified and experienced faculty members.
- f) Involvement of students with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- g) Scholarships and tuition waiver for meritorious students.

Expectations of University from the Students

- a) Students will participate in their scheduled classes of a semester regularly with ample devotion.
- b) Students will prepare their lessons regularly through the study of their reading materials as advised by their teachers.
- c) Students will take part in all their co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for developing their mental faculties properly.
- d) Students will behave properly with their teachers and administrative staff by following the codes of behavior.
- e) Students will not create any disciplinary problem in the University.
- f) Students will regularly pay their tuition and other charges payable to the University Account as per rule.

Expectations of Teachers from the University

- a) Conducive environment for teaching.
- b) Attractive salary and fringe benefits.
- c) Existence of research support facilities along with needed fund.
- d) Separate room for each teacher with internet connectivity.
- e) Timely increment and promotion to higher post, subject to the fulfillment of prescribed promotional criteria.
- f) Opportunities for career development.

Expectations of University from the Teachers

- a) Teachers will take all their assigned classes as per class routine regularly with ample preparations.
- b) Teachers will assess the students in their learning process carefully, transparently & efficiently and give them feedback on their performance.
- c) Teachers will use the modern teaching and assessment strategies while teaching and evaluating the performance of the students.
- d) Teachers will act as helping hand in supporting the students in their learning process and deciding their future career.
- e) Teachers will devote to research activities on contemporary issues which will eventually facilitate the quality publications.
- f) Teachers will perform additional responsibility as assigned by the department with utmost sincerity and efficiency.

Expectations of Administrative Staff from the University

- a) Clear job specification along with needed authority.
- b) Satisfactory salary and fringe benefits.
- c) Desired working condition for smooth handling of administrative affairs.
- d) Availability of policy manual, departmental prospectus, clear rules and procedures.

- e) Good behavior from teachers and top management.

Expectations of University from the Administrative Staff

- a) Administrative staff will discharge their responsibilities efficiently, transparently and ethically.
- b) Administrative staff will maintain punctuality, discipline and obedience to seniors in performing their duties.
- c) Administrative staff will contribute their best to the growth process of the University.
- d) The University expects that administrative staff will accomplish their responsibilities as per job-related policy and rules framed by the University.
- e) Administrative staff will not create any problematic situation in the University.

Expectations of Alumni from the University

- a) University must produce quality graduates, who will be nationally and globally competitive.
- b) There shall exist strong alumni association in each department, which will maintain continuous relationship with the University.
- c) University will consider the viewpoints of Alumni in designing curriculum, improving the quality of education and organizing various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- d) University will provide necessary facilities to help the alumni operate properly within the University campus on a regular basis.

Expectations of University from the Alumni

- a) Alumni will work as the ambassadors of the University to facilitate in enhancing its reputation and image.
- b) Alumni will maintain a continuous bond of relationship with the University in general and the department in particular to support the University in all possible ways.
- c) Alumni will contribute in designing curriculum and improving the quality of education in the University.
- d) Alumni will play an important role in finding out suitable jobs for the new graduates of the University.
- e) Alumni will provide financial patronization in creating educational facilities and organizing important events in the University.

Expectations of Employers from the University

- a) Employers expect that a University will produce knowledgeable, highly skilled and behaviorally proficient graduates in keeping with their needs.

- b) Employers are inclined to employ the graduates with right basic skill along with other generic skills from day one so as to see them discharge assigned responsibilities with utmost efficiency.
- c) Employers should have keen interest to contribute to the development of quality education in the University.
- d) It is the earnest desire of employers that the university graduates will play a meaningful role in the development of their enterprises.

Expectations of University from the Employers

- a) A University expects that the employers will provide employment to its graduates, subject to the fulfillment of required qualifications.
- b) Employers will express their expectations to the University precisely as regards the competencies to be possessed by the graduates, which may facilitate the process of sound planning of academic programs in the University.
- c) Employers will patronize the academic activities in the University by providing supports, advice and financial assistance to the poor & meritorious students.
- d) Employers will provide internship facilities to the graduating students for attaining practical learning inputs.
- e) Employers will provide training to the recruited graduates for developing their job-related skills.
- f) Employers will share their entrepreneurial and managerial experiences with the University students for helping them to learn important lessons about the practical world.

Expectations of Government Agencies from the University

- a) Government agencies including Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission, Bangladesh Accreditation Council expect that a University will offer quality higher education to produce nationally and globally competitive graduates.
- b) Government agencies desire that the Private Universities will be administered as per the provisions of the Private University Act-2010. There shall not be any violation of Act at any stage.
- c) It is the expectation of government agencies that a University will be run as a non-profit organization and it will adopt all measures in compliance with law for the benefit of its stakeholders.
- d) A University will comply with all the directives provided to it from time to time from the Government agencies for ensuring good governance and accountability.

Expectations of University from the Government Agencies

- a) Government agencies will evaluate the overall performance of the University transparently and judiciously.
- b) Government agencies will play supportive role in the growth of a University.
- c) Government agencies will safeguard the genuine interests of students, teachers and administrative staff working in the University.
- d) Government agencies will provide precise guidance to the University from time to time for ensuring and enhancing the quality of higher education.

Expectations of Mass Media from the University

- a) Mass media expects that all academic and administrative operations of a University will be transparently handled.
- b) There will be no discrimination in the University based on religion, sex, income and family background in respect of admission of students, recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff, teaching and assessment and award of financial grants or scholarship to students.
- c) A University will not only impart quality education, but also take step for creating good human beings with qualities of head and heart.
- d) The University will make scholarly contribution to the generation of new knowledge and ideas.

Expectations of University from the Mass Media

- a) Mass media will play its role in a fair and transparent manner while presenting news, views or reports regarding a University.
- b) Mass media will publicize the achievements and performance of a University in time and in a logical way.
- c) Mass media will work as a media partner of the University in organizing various academic and extra-curricular events.
- d) Mass media will support and patronize the University in its growth process.

Expectations of Guardians from the University

- a) Guardians expect that their children will have the access to quality higher education which will develop them into competent graduates.
- b) It is the sincere desire of guardians that their children will be properly looked after to make them knowledgeable, technically competent and morally sound graduates.
- c) University will provide all needed facilities to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical ideas to make their learning process effective.
- d) After completion of graduation, the Universities will endeavor to find good jobs for them through its career and placement division.

Expectations of University from the Guardians

- a) Guardians will take care of their children by regular monitoring of their devotion to studies and progress in the learning process.
- b) Guardians will clear off the tuition & other educational charges of their children pursuing higher studies in the University.
- c) Guardians will maintain relationship with the University by participating in the guardians' meeting or any other events where they are invited to attend.
- d) Guardians will speak favorably about the University to others, if the university provides educational programs of desired standard.
- e) Wealthy guardians if satisfied with the desired standard will provide financial patronization to the University.

Expectations of Conscious Citizens from the University

- a) Conscious citizens expect that a University will make continuous improvement in its educational quality for developing excellent human resource vitally needed for the country.
- b) University graduates will be imbued with patriotism and will play their roles in such a way that benefit the society.
- c) The graduates of a University will be equipped with morality and leadership quality to be able to lead the nation for achieving its cherished goal.
- d) University graduates will bring name and fame for the nation by dint of their effective performance in any national responsibility.

Expectations of University from the Conscious Citizens

- a) Conscious citizens will play a constructive role that may facilitate the efficient and transparent handling of the University activities.
- b) Conscious citizens will maintain relationship with the University to share the invaluable experiences and ideas with the internal stakeholders of the University for their benefit.
- c) Conscious citizens will come forward to assist the University in overcoming its pressing problems, when their supports are cordially sought by the University.
- d) Conscious citizens will create social awareness for eradicating the social pollutions and misconceptions, which will eventually help the University achieve its mission.

INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES AND STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR MEETING THE STAKEHOLDERS' EXPECTATIONS

A University must be endowed with all needed human, physical, financial and logistics to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge & skills to the students. When required infrastructural facilities are created within the University premise, the learning process of students becomes smooth. Students learn not only in the class rooms or laboratories but also from the class mates or study session at libraries. Since there are various expectations of different stakeholders, these are to be met properly by means of prudent strategies. Some of these strategic options are described below:

- ❖ **Confrontation Meeting:** The top management of a University can systematically organize confrontation meeting separately with each stakeholder to have precise understanding about their expectations from the University and also convey to them about the University's expectations from each stakeholder. The frank and free discussion between the University authority and concerned stakeholder will help to know each other's viewpoints. It will facilitate to reach to a point of agreement about mutual expectations. Then the University authority will sincerely try to meet the stakeholders' expectations for attaining desired success.
- ❖ **Regular meeting with stakeholders:** The University may adhere to a policy of meeting the stakeholders at regular intervals to become well-conversant with their current feelings, grievances (if any) or suggestions to offer or accept. This type of meeting gives opportunity to strengthen the bond of relationship with stakeholders. If any problem is identified through such meeting, a very well-thought out solution can be developed to remedy the problem. Meeting with stakeholders may take place at the departmental level with students, teachers, administrative staff, alumni and guardians to sort out the problem areas.
- ❖ **Establishment of Complaint box at the University Premise:** A University should establish complaint box within its premise to enable the stakeholders to place their grievances from time to time. The complaint box should be opened at regular intervals to verify the complaints lodged by any stakeholder. If the complaints deserve to be resolved, it should be brought to the notice of top management of the University for appropriate Decisions. This responsibility may also be assigned on the Proctorial office of the University.
- ❖ **Framing of disciplinary rules:** There is an immense necessity to frame disciplinary rules and regulations for stakeholders like students, administrative staff and teachers. Such rules may help enforce

accountability and rule of law. If any problem arises from a particular stakeholder, that should be solved by following the laid down procedure in the disciplinary rules & regulations.

- ❖ **Regular communication with stakeholders:** The University should maintain close contact with the stakeholders through impressive communication. The communication must aim at informing the stakeholders about all sorts of impediments in the functioning of the University. These can be obviated through direct assistance of stakeholders.

HOW TO BUILD UP RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS?

A University should strive to build up strong relationship with the stakeholders by meeting their genuine expectations. To lay a strong foundation of building relationship with the stakeholders, it may be worthwhile to follow certain principles. These are:

- ❖ The relationship must be mutually beneficial to both the parties.
- ❖ The relationship with stakeholders must be based on mutual trust and confidence.
- ❖ There should exist caring attitude of the University authority towards the problems encountered by each stakeholder.
- ❖ Administrative staff and faculty members should bear joint responsibility to establish and strengthen relationship with stakeholders.
- ❖ The relationship with stakeholders must be long lasting. Towards this end, different forums may be established by the University.
- ❖ The University should regularly review the state of relationship with stakeholders and if any problem is identified, this should be overcome through well-thought out corrective measures. In fact, the belongingness of the stakeholders can be created through well-planned communication of information, message and various events concerned with University activities.

WHAT GAINS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY A UNIVERSITY FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS?

A University can reap rich dividends by serving the interests of its stakeholders. Satisfied stakeholders can be a source of immense benefit for the University. Some of these are stated below:

- ❖ The overall image of the University will be enhanced when it is capable of meeting the expectations of stakeholders.
- ❖ The patronization of stakeholders can facilitate the growth process of the University.
- ❖ The academic and administrative activities of the University can be smoothly conducted with the help of satisfied stakeholders.
- ❖ A positive attitude of stakeholders can contribute to raise the income of the University and create fund for developing required infrastructure of the University.
- ❖ Satisfied alumni not only speak highly about the educational quality of the University, but also take responsibility to create some educational facilities for the University.

INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS

In case of poor relationship with stakeholders, an institution like University is expected to face various academic, administrative and social problems. In such situation, it becomes difficult to execute the institutional vision and mission properly. The following problems that stem from the institutional stakeholders deserve mention:

- ❖ Academic calendar cannot be effectively implemented due to lack of support from the stakeholders.
- ❖ It is difficult to enroll more students in different academic programs in the absence of satisfaction of present students.
- ❖ Qualified and experienced teachers cannot be retained when they become de-motivated for any reason.
- ❖ Negative social perception is created about the quality of education hampering the interest of the University.
- ❖ Guardians become scared about the future of their children pursuing education in the problematic University.
- ❖ The existing controlling bodies of the University authority try to find fault of the University failing to ensure the stakeholder's satisfaction.
- ❖ The normal growth process of the University is frequently disrupted when stakeholders show negative attitude.

HOW TO OVERCOME THE INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS?

- ❖ Satisfaction of stakeholders' expectations must be given topmost priority by the University.
- ❖ There should exist separate cell in each academic department of the University to deal with stakeholders' expectations.

- ❖ Proctorial office should take responsibility to deal with problems arising from existing or past students.
- ❖ Guardians' meeting may be organized in each year to disseminate information about the academic and co-curricular activities conducted by the University for producing quality graduates.
- ❖ Alumni activities need to be activated to increase their involvement in academic development of the University.
- ❖ The University should pay special attention to the grievances of teachers and administrative staff to obtain their support & positive role in the University system.

CONCLUSION

Stakeholders are the interest groups of the University. They become associated with the University to achieve their personal objectives and meet their expectations. If these objectives and expectations are met, they can help the University attain its mission and vision. The multi-dimensional expectations of stakeholders need to be precisely understood by the University to identify the strategic options to be employed for meeting such expectations. It is true that no University can successfully operate without the patronization of the stakeholders. As such, time has come to build strong bond of relationship with stakeholders to survive and thrive in competition in the higher educational market in the present days. The involvement of stakeholders in the University system may also go a long way to make desired improvement in the quality of higher education in our country. Consequently, the society and nation as a whole will be benefitted.

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