

**AN EVALUATION OF AUTONOMY IN DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICE AT
THE LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

BY

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed.....*Arshad*

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ABSTRACT

Autonomy involves more or less the right of the responsible administrative officers, management and presidents to govern the institutes free of outside control. The concept of autonomy implies, in addition to the latitude required for administrative action required by executives, the freedom of the academic departments of the colleges and the research institutes within the institutions to make most of the decisions of academic and professional management.

Recent developments in Lesotho higher education have led to substantial changes in the relationship between government and higher education. The mechanisms of steering and regulation of the systems have moved from the model of centralised government in favour of increased institutional autonomy; the introduction of quality assessment systems, and an increased demand for institutional accountability.

Providing autonomy to institutions in Lesotho has a potential of delivering quality service because there is free choice, which involves providing a wider range of options both for students and learning institutions. Institutions are free to choose any strategy that may bring quality service for the students.

The aim of this study is to carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of autonomy strategy in delivering quality service at LCE. In carrying out an analysis of this strategy, Pearce / Robinson guiding theoretical strategic decision-making process model is used. The Lesotho College of Education (LCE) Mission, external and internal environment are analysed.

Recommendations are made whether or not autonomy is the viable option for LCE to deliver quality service to students.

The data obtained from this study indicates that autonomy is a suitable and an acceptable strategy to pursue, but not feasible as LCE lacks the financial and human resources necessary to fulfil the necessary requirements for autonomy as will be explained in the study. Other recommended strategies are the concentric and diversification strategies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Background information | 2 |
| 1.3 Motivation for the Study | 5 |
| 1.4 Problem Statement | 5 |
| 1.5 Research objectives | 6 |
| 1.6 Methodology | 6 |
| 1.6.1 Data collection | 6 |
| 1.7 Value of the study | 7 |
| 1.8 Limitations of the study | 8 |
| 1.9 The structure of the Research | 8 |
| 1.10 Summary | 9 |
| CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND GUIDING THE STRATEGIC DECISION – MAKING MODEL | 10 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 10 |
| 2.2 The Company Vision, Mission and Social Responsibility | 11 |
| 2.2.1 Company Vision | 11 |
| 2.2.2 Company Mission | 12 |
| 2.2.3 Company Objectives | 12 |
| 2.2.4 Company Social Responsibility | 13 |
| 2.3 Macro Environment | 14 |
| 2.4 Micro – Environment | 15 |
| 2.5 Autonomy | 16 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 2.5.1 | The Implications of Autonomy in Education Institutions | 18 |
| 2.6 | Service Quality | 19 |
| 2.7 | Service Quality Dimensions | 21 |
| 2.8 | The Five Dimensions of Service quality applied to Education Institutions | 23 |
| 2.8.1 | Reliability | 24 |
| 2.8.2 | Responsiveness | 24 |
| 2.8.3 | Assurance | 25 |
| 2.8.4 | Empathy | 25 |
| 2.8.5 | Tangibles | 25 |
| 2.9 | The benefits of Quality Service in the Education Sector | 26 |
| 2.10 | The Strategy Implementation | 27 |
| 2.11 | The Strategy Evaluation | 28 |
| 2.11.1 | Suitability | 28 |
| 2.11.2 | Acceptability | 28 |
| 2.11.3 | Feasibility | 29 |
| 2.12 | Summary | 29 |
| CHAPTER 3: LCE CASE STUDY | | 31 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 31 |
| 3.2 | LCE Vision | 31 |
| 3.3 | LCE Mission | 31 |
| 3.4 | LCE Specific Objectives | 32 |
| 3.5 | LCE Organizational Structure | 32 |
| 3.5.1 | Organizational Chart Explanatory Comments | 32 |
| 3.6 | LCE Resource and Capabilities | 34 |
| 3.7 | Number of Academic and Non – Academic Staff | 36 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----------|
| 3.8 | LCE Programme Enrolment | 36 |
| | 3.8.1 The Number of Students | 41 |
| 3.9 | Projection of Student Enrolment by the Year 2006 / 7 | 42 |
| | 3.9.1 Explanatory Notes | 43 |
| 3.10 | LCE Competitive strength | 44 |
| 3.11 | LCE SWOT | 45 |
| 3.12 | Summary | 52 |
| | CHAPTER 4: EVALUATIONS AND FINDINGS | 53 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 53 |
| 4.2 | LCE Macro Environment | 53 |
| | 4.2.1 The Political / Legal Environment | 53 |
| | 4.2.2 The Economical Environment | 54 |
| | 4.2.3 The Socio – Cultural Environment | 56 |
| | 4.2.3.1.1 Demography | 56 |
| | 4.2.3.1.2 Geographical Shifts | 56 |
| | 4.2.3.1.3 The HIV / AIDS Pandemic | 56 |
| | 4.2.3.1.4 The Impact of HIV / AIDS on LCE | 57 |
| 4.3 | The Technological Environment | 57 |
| 4.4 | The Cultural Environment | 58 |
| 4.5 | The Lesotho Education System | 58 |
| 4.6 | Forces of Competition in Lesotho Education Sector | 59 |
| | 4.6.1 The Threat of Substitutes | 60 |
| | 4.6.2 The Threat of Potential New Entrants | 60 |
| | 4.6.3 The Extent of Competitive Rivalry | 61 |
| | 4.6.4 Bargaining Power of Buyers | 61 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------|
| 4.7 | The Future Impact of the Five – Force Model within LCE | 61 |
| 4.8 | LCE Micro – Environment Impact | 62 |
| 4.9 | LCE Current Situation | 64 |
| 4.10 | Assessing Suitability | 65 |
| 4.11 | Assessing Acceptability | 65 |
| 4.12 | Assessing Feasibility | 66 |
| 4.13 | Summary | 66 |
| CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | | 68 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 68 |
| 5.2 | LCE Management | 68 |
| 5.3 | The Student Services | 69 |
| 5.4 | Financial Resources | 69 |
| 5.5 | Academic Programmes | 70 |
| 5.6 | Staff Development | 70 |
| 5.7 | Material Resource | 71 |
| 5.8 | The budget | 71 |
| 5.9 | The Management Information System | 71 |
| 5.10 | LCE recommended Strategies | 72 |
| 5.11 | Conclusion | 73 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 74 |
| APPENDICES | | |
| Appendix A | | 79 |

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

| TABLE NO: | DESCRIPTION | PAGES |
|-----------|---|-------|
| 1.1 | Faculties and departments of LCE | 4 |
| 2.1 | Quality Service dimensions | 23 |
| 3.1 | LCE management qualifications | 37 |
| 3.2 | Faculties members qualifications | 37 |
| 3.3 | Non – academic Staff qualifications | 38 |
| 3.4 | LCE programme enrolment | 38 |
| 3.5 | Programme enrolment year 2 (2002) | 39 |
| 3.6 | Programme enrolment year 3 (2000) | 39 |
| 3.7 | Projection of students enrolment (2006 / 7) | 41 |
| 3.8 | LCE key success factors | 43 |
| 3.9 | SWOT Academic Programme | 44 |
| 3.10 | SWOT Staff Development Programme | 45 |
| 3.11 | SWOT Management | 46 |
| 3.12 | SWOT Student services | 47 |
| 3.13 | SWOT Financial Resources | 48 |
| 3.14 | SWOT Material Resources | 49 |
| 3.15 | (a) Space | 49 |
| 3.16 | (b) Furniture | 50 |
| 3.17 | c) Office and Communication Equipment | 50 |
| 4.1 | Evaluation of Autonomy strategy | 68 |

| FIGURE NO: | DESCRIPTION | PAGE |
|-------------------|---|-------------|
| 1.1 | Pearce / Robinson strategic management mode | 8 |
| 3.1 | LCE Organizational Structure | 34 |
| 4.1 | LCE Current Situation | 65 |
| 5.1 | Grand Strategies Selection Matrix | 73 |

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| BLIS | Bachelor of Library Information Science |
| CERT. Adult ED | Certificate in adult Education |
| CLIS | Certificate in Library Information Science |
| COSC | Cambridge Overseas School Certificate |
| DEP | Diploma in Education Primary |
| DES | Diploma in Education Secondary |
| DIP ED | Diploma in Primary Education (Full – Time) |
| DIP TECH | Diploma in Technology |
| DIP. ADULT ED. | Diploma in Adult Education |
| DLIS | Diploma in Library Information Science |
| DTEP | Diploma in Education Primary (Distance Teacher Education Programme) |
| EPE | Free Primary Education |
| GOL | Government of Lesotho |
| J.C | Junior Certificate |
| LCE | Lesotho College of Education |
| MIS | Management Information System |
| NHTC | National Health Training College |
| NTTC | National Teachers Training College |
| NUL | National University of Lesotho |
| SADC | Southern Africa Development community |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organization |

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

USAID

United States Agency for International Development

WFP

World Food Programme

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges facing education systems in most countries today is how to meet demands for higher quality public education within increasingly severe national economic and also fiscal constraints. Faced with the severe economic pressures, many countries must find new fiscal resources, understand deterioration and continued inequity in access and also increase the efficiency with which educational resources are applied to the problems of instructional quality and equity of access (Windham and Wang, 1986).

This study examines autonomy strategy for improving the quality of education at Lesotho College of Education (LCE). It identifies and evaluates the effectiveness of autonomy strategy in delivering quality service at LCE.

To achieve this objective evaluation of the autonomy strategy will be made. In evaluating the effectiveness of autonomy, the study is organized as follows: background information of the LCE, followed by motivation of the study, then a problem statement, value of the project, research objectives, methodology adopted and finally, the structure of the research is discussed. The theoretical background behind the strategic management model adapted from Pearce /Robinson is be explained. The LCE case study has been outlined. Having examined the above issues, recommendations are made whether autonomy is the viable option for LCE to deliver quality service to LCE students.

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lesotho has one teacher training college Lesotho College of Education (LCE). LCE replaced the National Teachers training College (NTTC), the former denominational teacher training college, of the Lesotho Evangelical church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican church of Lesotho. NTTC first opened its doors to students in 1975. Since 1975 it has been an institution of the Lesotho Government under the Ministry of Education. The college was initially assisted by United Nation Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

When the duration of the UNESCO project expired National Teachers Training College (NTTC) was incorporated into the Ministry of Education of the Lesotho Government. It therefore, operated under the rules and regulations of the Lesotho Civil Service. The relationship between the government and the three denominational churches mentioned above continued, through representation of these churches on the board of governors and in the teaching of student teachers.

The Ministry of Education of Lesotho has always emphasized that all teacher education programmes should be planned in accordance with the Government policies. The Government attempted to provide the human, infrastructural and material resources for the College to operate successfully. Through its pre - service and in - service teacher education programmes, the College initially offered certificate programmes. By 1990 three academic divisions were established, namely, Primary, Secondary and In-service. The certificate programmes were eventually upgraded to Diploma level. The Diplomas take three and three half years teacher education duration.

The College is affiliated to the University of Lesotho (NUL). It is also engaged in developing necessary and relevant links with other institutions of higher learning within SADC and internationally.

The college changed from the National Teachers Training College to the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) on 31st July 2002. The new College has full autonomy to decide on issues such as programmes, strategic plans and resource allocation. The resources, especially the financial resources, are a subvention from the Government of Lesotho.

The following are the current Diploma Programmes now offered by the College:

- Diploma in Education Primary (DEP) offered as a full-time Pre-service Programme
- Diploma in Primary Education (DIP ED) offered as full time
- Diploma in Education Primary offered as a Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP)
- Diploma in Education Secondary (DES) as full time
- Diploma in Technology (DIP TECH) as full time.

This new development has necessitated the creation of new faculties to assimilate departments across respective divisions as depicted in table 1.1: 4. This aims at improving and coordinating effective academic and professional performance of the College and ensuring maximum utilization of its staff.

Table 1.1 The Faculties and the department of the LCE

| FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES | FACULTY OF EDUCATION | FACULTY OF SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| ➤ SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES | ➤ EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT | ➤ MATHEMATICS |
| ➤ GEOGRAPHY | ➤ CURRICULUM STUDIES | ➤ BIOLOGY |
| ➤ HISTORY | ➤ EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH | ➤ CHEMISTRY |
| ➤ MUSIC | ➤ PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION | ➤ PHYSICS |
| ➤ SESOTHO | | ➤ AGRICULTURE |
| | | ➤ TECHNICAL STUDIES |
| | | ➤ HOME ECONOMICS |
| | | ➤ ART AND CRAFTS |
| ➤ ENGLISH | | ➤ COMMERCIAL STUDIES |
| ➤ FRENCH | | ➤ COMPUTER STUDIES |

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The effectiveness and success of any organization largely depends on its operational and managerial arrangement, which meet the organization's demands on its services. For LCE to survive in the rapidly changing environment, it must prove its worth by constantly refining its vision to suit the patterns of the changing environment and programming corresponding patterns of its activities, which would lead to the vision realization. It is important to note however that the effectiveness of LCE's operations and inputs largely depends on the quality of both human and material inputs that drive the effectiveness of the programmes and services offered.

It is in this view that an in – depth study has been done on assessing the effectiveness of autonomy in delivering quality service at LCE. The study has determined whether autonomy is the appropriate strategy that will drive the college towards its vision. It has also highlighted some factors that the college should consider for effective implementation of the autonomy strategy. Lastly, recommendations of the best and appropriate strategies for delivering excellent service have been made.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is generally accepted that colleges and universities are a complex and unique forms of organization. It is very difficult to run them effectively and efficiently. LCE is not different and indeed since its inception in 1975 the college has been faced with a soaring number of complaints about poor service delivery. This means that the lecturers were not able to perform to the required standards due to many factors. Decisions regarding the College's activities are never made on time. The poor service delivery at LCE made the researcher to pose the following questions.

- Is autonomy the appropriate, effective and efficient strategy for delivering quality service at LCE?

- Is the strategy driving the college towards attaining its vision?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of autonomy in delivering quality service to students at LCE. To achieve its aim the study had the following secondary objectives:

- To evaluate autonomy in terms of the elements presented in the theoretical model Figure 1.1
- To determine factors that must be considered for effective implementation of the autonomy.
- To determine whether the autonomy strategy will improve service delivery at LCE.
- To determine the impact that the adoption of autonomy will make on service delivery in the LCE.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted within the qualitative paradigm. This study is a case study research. A case study is an extensive study of a single situation such as an individual, family or organization (White, 2000). In evaluating the effectiveness of autonomy, the case study was found more applicable as it takes place in a natural setting within the LCE. It also looked at the whole situation within the LCE. Information about LCE is mainly from the secondary resources listed in the following paragraphs.

1.6.1 DATA COLLECTION

Within the scope of this research project, the secondary sources of topic specific information encompasses the following:

- The LCE strategic Plan
- Minutes of the autonomy meetings

- LCE financial records
- Annual Reports and Budget
- Any other related information on autonomy strategy management
- The Lesotho Educational Strategic Plan
- Journals, textbooks and abstracts
- Previous research projects
- Newspapers
- Internet

The reason why the above listed sources have been considered the most relevant is the express fact that their existence is usually depending upon establishing, analysing and using business specific data and information.

1.7 VALUE OF THE STUDY

Information derived from this study will provide the LCE administration and other stakeholders such as the policy makers with a base for making right decision when dealing with similar type of problems in other similar organizations. It is also hoped that this information will provide LCE's administration with a base for determining how to approach the problem of poor service delivery at LCE through the implementation of the autonomy strategy. It was therefore, the concern of this study to provide relevant and comprehensive data that will serve as a base for the improvement of LCE, which will lead to satisfactorily results at LCE, thus improving the standard of education in Lesotho.

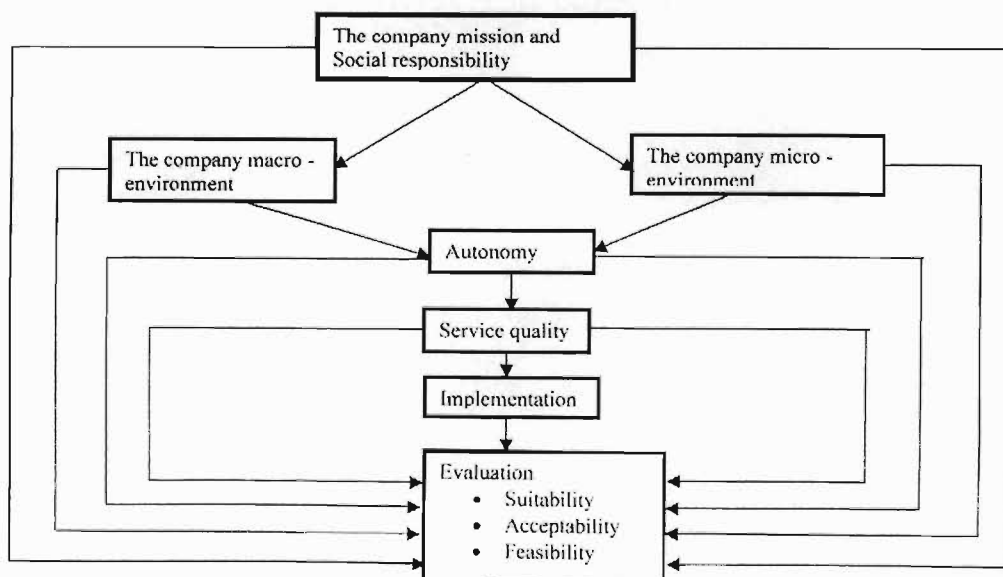
1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This was a case study research and therefore, the results will only be relevant mainly to the benefit of LCE and the Lesotho Government. Furthermore, the results obtained cannot be generalized, as countries and organizations are different in terms of nature, objectives and the environments in which they operate. Companies may be non – profit making like those that provides services to the public, e.g. health services and entertainment. With a single atypical case study it is often difficult to separate out what is unique to the organization involved and what is common to similar organizations (White, 2000). Again with secondary data it is difficult to control data collection and errors are constrained in analysis by original objectives of the research.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

LCE case study presented in Chapter Three was evaluated through the use of the structure depicted in Figure 1.1. Chapter Two covers the theoretical background guiding the strategic decision-making adapted from Pearce / Robinson. Chapter Four evaluates information presented and lastly, chapter five covers the recommended strategies and conclusions.

Figure 1.1: Adapted Pearce / Robinson Strategic management Model



Source: Pearce and Robinson (2000) *Strategic Management. Formulation, Implementation and Control*

1.10 SUMMARY

Lesotho College of Education adopted autonomy as a strategy on the 31st July 2002, with a view that the strategy will improve quality service delivery in the college as the strategy did in other institutions.

In analyzing the effectiveness of autonomy in delivering quality service at LCE, the macro-environment in which the LCE operates was analyzed, after which a specific analysis of the education sector was conducted. A thorough scanning of the internal environment was also conducted. Having examined the above issues, recommendations are made as to how autonomy can be effectively implemented and whether it is the viable option for LCE to deliver quality service to the students.

Furthermore, recommendations on possible strategies that LCE can follow as a framework for the delivery of quality service are made. Recommendations also highlight the competitive strategies that LCE should consider implementing in order to achieve a successful and effective quality of service delivery with the least amount of risk.

CHAPTER 2
THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND GUIDING THE STRATEGIC
DECISION – MAKING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (2001) defines strategy as “the science of planning and directing large scale military operation” In a war situation, if the grand strategy is correct, a number of tactical errors may be made and a few battles lost but the war will not be lost. On the other hand, Strategic Planning is a rational process that systematically evaluates the entire system, in this case, LCE and its environment, with a view of evaluating the autonomy to find out if it is geared at striking a perfect fit between achieving its primary goals and objectives.

From this definition, a conclusion can be made that strategic planning is geared towards attaining primary goals that are embodied in the vision. The vision is the nucleus of the strategic plan.

The main objective of this study is to determine whether autonomy does improve service delivery at LCE so that the college can attain its vision. To achieve this objective Pearce / Robinson (2000) Management strategic model adopted in this study is cited.

2.2 THE COMPANY VISION, MISSION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The character of an individual organization be it a business firm, governmental agency, church, or an institution of higher learning is molded primarily by its vision, mission, its basic purpose and the activities it is established to perform. Therefore, the characteristics of each organization are its vision, mission, specific objectives and its company social responsibility.

2.2.1 THE COMPANY VISION

Musaazi (2001) argues that the company vision is the point that the company hopes to reach in, say, five to ten years time. It is, in fact, the embodiment of the corporate view. It addresses such questions as:

- Where do we want the company to be in the future?
- How should the company look like in the future?
- Who will it be serving?
- What are our goal, our dreams and our vision for the company's future?

Furthermore, (Musasi, op.cit: 5) indicates that there are six steps to follow in creating a vision statement and they are as follows:

- Vision talk – presenting the ideas of vision
- Vision images – sharing mental models
- Vision words – obtaining the keywords
- Values – agree on the underlying values
- Propose a vision statement
- Signing the vision off.

Enshrined in the vision are the values, assumptions, and goals of the company which guide the different actors / actresses and define their roles. The prospects and challenges and the demands on the company, which would emerge as a consequence of the refined vision, have to be

adequately identified and described.

When developing any organizational strategy, it is necessary to develop a vision of the future within which the organization will operate. The main reason is to ensure that every opportunity is examined. Therefore, the organization's mission and vision must be clearly spelled out and address the goals and objectives of the company, the necessary staff and skills to execute the strategy.

2.2.2 THE COMPANY MISSION

The company's mission deals with a company's present business scope, that is, "who we are and what we do" (Strickland and Thompson, 2001). The company's mission statement stresses what the company's present products and services are, what types of customers it serves and what technological and business capabilities it has.

A mission statement that is developed from this perspective provides managers with a unity of direction transcending individuals, parochial, and temporary needs. It promotes a sense of shared expectations among all levels and generations of employees. It consolidates values over time and across individuals and interest groups. Finally, it asserts the firm's commitment to responsible action in symbiosis with the preservation and protection of the essential claims of insider stockholder's survival, growth and profitability (Pearce / Robinson, 2001).

2.2.3 THE COMPANY OBJECTIVES

When the company's vision and mission are clearly stated, the manager's task is now to set specific objectives that convert the strategic vision into specific performance targets. These objectives must be quantifiable, stated in measurable terms and contain a deadline for achievement. They must spell out how much of what kind of performance by when.

Unless an organization's long – term direction is translated into specific performance targets and

managers are pressured to show progress in reaching these targets, vision and mission statement are likely to end up as nice words, window dressing and unrealized dreams (Strickland and Thompson, 2001). Companies must strive to achieve both the financial and strategic performance. Achieving financial objectives can motivate and alarm both the creditors and shareholders while achieving acceptable strategic performance is important to sustaining and improving the company's long – term position and competitiveness.

2.2.4 THE COMPANY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social responsibility is a term frequently used by critics of business but is interpreted as covering a considerable variety of issues by managers, depending on their particular circumstances. It is defined as an obligation which a business assumes or has placed on it to take account of the interest of society independently of consideration of profit (Channon and Jallard, 1979).

There are several important decisions that management should consider in order to be engaged in socially responsible behavior:

- Choosing correctly the section of society, which is to benefit from its actions, that is, identifying all the stakeholders groups and weighting their relative rights and ability to affect the organization's success.
- Deciding what constitutes advantages or disadvantages for given sections of society and estimating equivalent values so that trade – offs can be made.
- Making judgments about the time frame of costs and benefits. Socially responsible action to improve community amenities will reduce profits in the short term, but can be expected to bring long – term advantages.

It is important that a company's mission statements clearly stipulate the company's contribution to the community in which it is operating. A company that has a social responsibility has some advantage because it is guided by societal norms, hence in a position to include the satisfaction of social goals in decision – making. Furthermore, the management talent, functional expertise, capital resource, innovative ability and productivity orientation of business can result in a unique contribution to solving social problems.

2.3 THE MACRO ENVIRONMENT

Strategists agree that an understanding of the environment is an essential element of developing a corporate strategy. A study of the sector or the industry in which the company operates provides information on the nature of competition as a step to developing a sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic planning emanates from two levels, namely, the macro – and micro – levels.

Strategic planning ideas at the macro level emanate from:

- National, sectoral (Education) or regional plans and strategies.
- Constraints in the development process as a result of shortages in the infrastructure, facilities, problems and the balance of payments.
- A Possible external threat that necessitates strategic planning ideas aiming at achieving self – sufficiency in basic materials and strategic needs.
- A government decision to correct social and regional inequalities or to satisfy basic needs of the people through educational development programmes.
- Unusual events such as severe drop in government's financial resources.
- Government decisions to create certain programmes which require capacity in the form of university / colleges training and knowledge.

The organization's macro environment therefore, comprises factors originating beyond, and usually irrespective of any single organization's operating situation, thus the economic, social, political, technological and ecological factors.

2.4 THE MICRO ENVIRONMENT

The micro - environment of the company prepares the groundwork for matching the company's strategy to its external market circumstances and its internal resources and competitive capabilities.

The strategic planning ideas at micro – level can emerge from:

- The identification of unsatisfied needs within the company.
- The existence of unused or underutilized human and material resources and the perception of opportunities for their efficient use.
- The need to remove shortages in essential materials, services or facilities that constrain the development effort.
- The desire of groups or organizations within the system to enhance their socio – economic independence and improve the service delivery.
- The necessity to complement or expand on opportunities previously undertaken.

At micro level the company's profile analysis is done through the following tools:

- The strategic cost analysis to assess the financial status of the company.
- The value chain to determine which area of the value chain the company creates more value.
- The competitive strength assessment, to determine the strength of company in comparison with other similar institutions, if there are any.

- The SWOT analysis to determine whether the company will be able to match its strength with the prevailing opportunities in the environment. That is will it be able to capitalize on the industry strength to take advantage of the weaknesses in the external environment, or whether will it be able to overcome its weaknesses in order to take advantage of the opportunities in the environment.

2.5 AUTONOMY

In an educational usage, there is little doubt that the term “autonomy” is used in a variety of ways (Dearden, 1972:453). At best, it has been said, it is used as a synonym for being independent (Lankahear, 1982: 96). But there is little doubt also that Barrow’s influence on development (Piaget and Kohlberg, 1982) has been strong. First, historically, Barrow (1975) applies the concept of “AUTONOMY” unequivocally to individuals. “Autonomy” in the groundwork is formally defined as “the property the will has of being law to itself”.

In the critique of practical reason, it is described as the fundamental law of practical reason: ‘So act that the maxim of your will can always at the same time be valid as a principle making universal law’.

In this second formulation, the connection between being rational and being moral is clear. According to Barrow (1975) the self makes the law that it then obeys; the self is not merely subject to the law but is to be conceived as making the law. Acting autonomously in accordance with the law, is not caused, but is “the spontaneous activity to the will’. In this sense then, the autonomous person, self legislating in accordance with a universal moral principle, is said to be free because is not under the causal compulsion of desires and of principles of mere expediency.

Dearden and Hare (1975) see autonomy as involving essentially independent judgment, of which moral judgment is but or an aspect. In other words for those thinkers there is no necessary connection between thinking autonomously and thinking morally (and between autonomous and moral action)

Maharaj (1991) argues that to be autonomous a person must be able to choose between alternatives on rational grounds. This means that autonomy doesn't entail being able to act on whim, or without thought. Far from it, it implies being able to deliberate about alternatives in a situation. This implies seeking knowledge to inform those judgments. It implies not just waiting around to be told what to do.

The principle of Institutional Autonomy can also be defined as the freedom for members of the academic community – that is scholars, teachers and students – to follow their scholarly activities within a framework determined by that community in respect of ethical rules and international standards, and without outside pressure (Internet 1).

In the case of LCE, autonomy will enable LCE to have freedom on all its academic activities e.g. the College will be able to have full control on their budget, this will enable the College to budget accordingly. LCE management will have full control on the way the College is managed. As a result, this will enable the College to provide quality service to students and hence improve the standard of education in Lesotho.

2.5.1 THE IMPLICATIONS OF AUTONOMY IN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Among other things, autonomy in an education setting implies:

- Financial independence for institutions and freedom in spending, with virement between heads of budget (e.g. To exchange expenditure from the budgets for personnel costs and material)
- Competition for students becomes more important since the number of pupils is the base for financing the institutions
- Less detailed prescriptions of the curriculum, which increasingly takes the form of general indication of global aims.
- Other requirements of lecturers and other personnel of the institutions increase. Competencies and abilities are seen as important rather than formal qualifications. These competencies are to be determined by the institution's management and not by the central government.
- Autonomy necessitates the freedom for the institution to negotiate with unions.
- Institutions management gets more of the role of employer as a consequence of which the representative body of personnel gets another role: that of representing the employees.

These implications differ between sectors within a country. For instance, in Netherlands, the autonomisation started in higher education, followed by the sector of further education (secondary vocational education), it is now being implemented in the first phase of secondary education and will end up with primary. Not only within countries but also especially between countries striking differences between the degrees of autonomisation can also be observed. In Southern European countries, for example, the autonomisation tendencies are hardly observable. In some Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, as well as in Central Europe, these tendencies can be seen quite clearly (Internet 2).

For the purpose of this study, Autonomy means the independence of institutions of higher education from the state and all other forces of society, to make decisions regarding its internal government, finance, administration, and to establish its policies of education, research, extension work and other related activities (Laksiri et al., 1988). Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that autonomy simply means the degree to which an individual / institution has power to make decisions about the way the work will be carried out.

2.6 SERVICE QUALITY

A wide variety of activities in organizations can be labelled as services, for instance, education, health care, national and local public services. Both the profit and the non-profit making organizations such as colleges and universities provide service to its customers. Nevertheless in all instances, excellent service quality and creating value to the customer are the corner stones of success.

There are several definitions of customer service. Phillip Kotler (1991) defines service as any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.

On the other hand, Zeithaml and Bitner (2001) hold that in the simplest terms, service is deeds, processes and performances. They further indicate that “services include all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced, and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser”.

Kotler (2001) concurs with Zeithaml and Bitner (2001) that services are originally intangible and relatively quickly perishable activities whose buying takes place in an interaction process aimed at creating customer satisfaction but during this interactive consumption this does not always lead to material possession.

The three definitions are generally similar as they emphasize the intangibility of a service. A conclusion can be made that services are intangible; they can only be experienced not seen or touched. They cannot be produced or displayed ahead of time for customer assessment. The customer cannot test drive before deciding to buy like one would do with a car. As a result, customers are always faced with the uncertainty of the outcomes from a service. They build expectations from information available, possibly from advertisements or word of mouth from other people who have had exposure to the service.

Services cannot be inventoried as such if demand for them increases there is no stock from which excess demand can be catered for. This is exacerbated when it is not possible to use a reservation system. While the demand capacity matching problem is not unique to services, it may be more critical as excess demands for service creates waiting lines, service delays and congestion in the service facility, hence affect the quality of service delivered by the organization.

Furthermore, in service industries, customers cannot be separated from the production process like in the case of manufacturing industries. Simultaneity of production and consumption means that the organization would be faced with clients that demand a service all at the same time, hence capacity problem. Another problem is that the supplier would not have time to mend defects without the customer knowing. It is important that procedures are laid out as a measure of quality control. Poor performance on a particular day would affect an organization's

performance as it would affect customer's perception. It is believed that customers share their experience with others and they tell more people if the experience was not satisfactory (Rust et al, 1996).

Services are mostly offered through humans. The quality of service is likely not to be similar to each and every customer as there is no way of polishing and making corrections before presenting the offer to the customer. Human nature would contribute to non-standardization of the service. A service provider's mood of the day is likely to affect the delivery.

LCE predominantly use humans to deliver a service, therefore, the college will only be able to provide quality service if its employees are performing to expected standards. Employees do their work by interacting with customers / students who in most cases participate in the production process. The production system used facilitates the smooth interaction of employees and customers. Performance of the college is seen, therefore, as a function of employee's work and customers participate through a system and the relationship will determine the performance level of the unit. If performance is low it can be traceable to the failure of certain individuals within the college.

2.7 SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS

Quality is a personal evaluation. Although this evaluation may be influenced by physical conditions and circumstances, quality entails feelings, attitudes, and values, and is more than the sum of objective indicators. In the assessment of work life, quality refers to the evaluation of activities and experiences in carrying out the specific job and its relationship to the general world of work (Chapman and Carrier: 156. 1990).

Quality on the other hand can be defined as a judgment by customers or users of a product or service. It is the extent to which they believe the product or service surpasses their needs and expectations (Gitlow et al., 1989).

An unstated, but implicit goal of educational institutions is to provide an enriched environment that enhances the academic experiences of students and the quality of work life for the lecturers. Changes in the educational system affect the quality of the teaching experience for the lecturers. The lecturers continues to grow intellectually and depending upon the changes introduced, that growth may be capitalized by increased motivation or wasted in an empty regimen of activities. Research suggests that customers do not perceive quality as one-dimensional concept, that is customer's assessment of quality include perceptions of multiple quality factors. It has also been established that customers consider ten dimensions in their assessment of service quality as follows:

- Reliability** involves consistency of performance and dependability, performing the service right the first time and honoring promises.
- Responsiveness** concerns the willingness of employees to provide service and timeliness of service.
- Competence** possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.
- Access** involves approachability and ease of contact.
- Courtesy** involves respect, politeness, consideration and friendliness of personnel.
- Communication** means keeping customers informed and listening to them.
- Credibility** involves trustworthiness, honesty and having the customer's best interest at heart, e.g. company name and reputation and personal characteristics of personnel.
- Security** this is the freedom from danger, risk or doubt, e.g. confidentiality.
- Understanding** it involves making the effort to understand the customer's needs.

Tangibles the physical evidence of service (Berry et al, 1985)

These dimensions were redefined by further research into five dimensions depicted in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Quality service dimensions

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Reliability | Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately |
| Responsiveness | Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service |
| Assurance | Employees knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence |
| Empathy | Caring, individualized attention given to customers |
| Tangibles | Appearance of physical facilities equipment, personnel, and written materials |

Adapted: Service marketing by Zeithaml and Bitner (2001)

2.8 THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY APPLIED TO EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Service quality offers a way of achieving success among competing services, particularly when several firms that offer nearly identical services are competing within a small area, such as colleges, establishing service quality may be the only way of differentiating oneself. Such differentiation can yield a higher proportion of consumer choices, hence the difference between financial success and failure. The five quality dimensions that are applied in the education sector are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The five terms will be explained in the following paragraphs:

2.8.1 RELIABILITY

Keeping students satisfied and happy is a priority for any academic and professional institution. This can be achieved when services are provided accurately and dependably. For instance, if a student is promised that her assignment will be marked within a certain time the lecturers must honor this promise, since making mistakes and being careless can result in students losing confidence in that lecturer.

Berry et al., (1990) indicated that the confidence of customers is the greatest asset a company can have. Providing outstanding service reliability can result in outstanding service quality that in turn is likely to earn the confidence of students.

When a student experiences a problem with a service, the manner of a problem resolution becomes crucial if handled correctly, one can win the customer back, but arguing with a customer leads nowhere and very often results in loss of the customer, hence the slogan “customer is king”. Keeping this in mind and acknowledging that reliability is at the heart of quality service can serve as a good foundation on which to build a reputation for outstanding service quality (Kandhai, 2002).

2.8.2 RESPONSIVENESS

Lecturers and non – teaching staff must show eagerness and willingness to assist students and at the same time provide prompt service. Lecturers must have consultation time for students. Students should not wait for services for a long time, as time is very crucial and yet limited. Services must be available when students require them. Business hours must be consistent, reasonable and known to students. Emergency situations should also be catered for.

2.8.3 ASSURANCE

The employees' knowledge, skills, courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence is an important dimension that students use to judge service quality.

To provide quality service the colleges must provide their employees with relevant training to keep up - to - date with new developments and changes in the education sector. Lecturers must establish trust and confidentiality among their students so that they can feel free to tell them any problems they encounter in life that may hinder their progress at school.

2.8.4 EMPATHY

Students need to feel cared for and understood by their lecturers. Individual attention should be given to students, as they come from different environments and therefore they too are different. Lecturers need to show caring concern and sincere commitment to listen and understand student problems.

2.8.5 TANGIBLES

The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and written materials can attract the students even before the service can be delivered. When approaching and entering the college, the student may make an evaluation based on the cleanliness of the exterior of the building, its location and proximity to other buildings and services, the amount of traffic noise from a nearby highway, and the dress of the employees. Therefore, colleges must have visually appealing surroundings. Modern looking equipment is also essential in this regard. Staff must be seen neat and energetic. Failure to attract the students at first glance will not motivate the student and may have a bad impression about the institution.

2.9 THE BENEFITS OF QUALITY SERVICE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

- Keeping and attracting more students are vital to an institution. A quality service delivery creates loyal students and increases positive word – of – mouth advertising.
- Keeping good employees too is vital. Staff members are more content to work for an institution that provides high quality service delivery. Employees have a sense of pride working in such an environment.
- Reducing costs should be adhered to. Providing a quality service delivery not only brings in more revenue for the institution but reduces costs, for instance, the costs of advertising can be reduced as the service institutions mostly rely on word – of- mouth advertising.

The aim of every organization whether is selling product or providing service is to create a high level of satisfaction in consumers and to make maximum profit. In the provision of many services, there are no absolute standards; only degrees of client satisfaction and consumer satisfaction can always be increased by accepting additional cost, by buying better equipment or better buildings and by charging lower prices. As many organizations have to satisfy many different groups, increasing the satisfaction of one group may reduce the satisfaction of another.

Newmann (1993) carried out an experiment whose chief preoccupation was to seek ways to improve the quality of service delivery in public education via various forms of restructuring. Newmann experiment showed that parental choice, greater school autonomy and shared decision-making are among the eleven most popular restructuring strategies that improve quality

service delivery in schools. I tend to agree with Newmann that autonomy produces quality service. This is because there are many case studies of individual schools that have been turned around after being given autonomy. Within the United States, for instance, there have been celebrated instances whereby schools have turned failure into miraculous success of providing quality service to students.

2.10 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

This is the most critical phase of the company's strategic decision – making. In this phase the company has to translate the strategic thought into organizational action. The company moves from the planning work to working on the plan. There are tools to work on the plan namely:

- Identify short – term objectives, if well developed, these objectives provide clarity, a powerful motivator and facilitator of effective strategy implementation.
- Initiate specific functional tactics, which will translate business strategy into activities people need to execute.
- Communicate policies that empower people in the organization, this is very important as it will empower operating managers and their subordinates, policies can empower the doers in an organization by reducing the time required to decide and act.

A powerful part of getting things done in any organization can be found in the way its reward system rewards desired action and results. Rewards that align manager and employee priorities with organizational objectives and shareholder value provide very effective direction in strategy implementation (Lynch, 1997).

Generally, implementation covers the activities required for an organization to put its Strategies into practice. The basic general objectives, specific plans, the necessary finance coupled with a monitoring and control system ensure compliance.

2.11 THE STRATEGY EVALUATION

In evaluating the strategy it is important to firstly clarify the basis on which an initial selection of the best option is to be done. Evaluation against the mission and objectives is useful to find the best strategic option, but non – quantified objectives may prove just as important for some organization.

In non – profit making organizations, the criteria also needs to reflect the broader aspects of the service or contribution to the community and to take into account the different decision-making processes and beliefs that may motivate such organizations. This may make strategy option evaluation more diffuse and open –ended.

Additional criteria for evaluation include the ability to build on the strength and core competences of the organization and avoid its weaknesses. Generally, in evaluation, strengths are more important than weaknesses, but occasionally weaknesses cannot be ignored. Different parts of an organization and those involved in individual projects will have different perspectives on the evaluation process. As indicated in chapter one strategy can be evaluated in terms of three criterions namely, Suitability, Acceptability and Feasibility.

2.11.1 SUITABILITY

Suitability of strategy refers to how well each option matches the organization's environment, and how well it delivers competitive advantage. That is the extent to which the strategy fits with the future trends and changes in the environment.

2.11.2 ACCEPTABILITY

The acceptability of strategy is concerned with the expected performance outcomes such as risk or return if a strategy is implemented. This may affect the overall shareholders of the company.

2.11.3 FEASIBILITY

The feasibility of strategy refers to how the organization's culture, skills and resources match the organization's environment. The strategy may be consistent with the mission and objectives but lack feasibility in culture, skills and resources internal to the organization competitive reaction, other matters external to the organization and lack of commitment from managers.

2.12 SUMMARY

In order for the management to craft the strategy that delivers quality service, and that is acceptable to shareholders, they need to address the question "what is our business and what will it be?" Management views and conclusions about organization's future course, the market position it should try to occupy, and the business activities to be pursued constitute a strategic vision for the company. The company strategic vision spells out a direction and describes the destination. Effective visions are clear, challenging and inspiring, they prepare a firm for the future. The strategic and financial objectives convert the mission into specific performance targets.

Finally, the strategy is shaped by both the macro and micro - environment factors. The major external factors are societal, economical, political, technological, ecological and the company's market opportunities and threats. The primary micro factors are the company's strengths, weaknesses, competitive capabilities and the company's culture and share values. A good strategy must well match to all these situational consideration. In addition a good strategy must lead to sustainable company performance.

Generally, the success of the strategy in delivering quality service mainly depends on the financial position of the company and on the commitment of the management and employees in

implementing the strategy.

CHAPTER 3

THE LCE CASE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to implement the autonomy strategy successfully, LCE needs to know its current position in relation to its markets as well as the political, social and economic environments in which it is operating. An organization environment consists of all the factors that are external to its marketing system and that impinge on a successful exchange process with its customers. An organization cannot fulfill its mission if it does not know its current position to its market. Therefore LCE needs to know its mission, vision, objectives, and its environment so that it is able to deliver quality service to its customers.

3.2 LCE VISION

LCE Vision is to play a vital role in the development of the nation, as a center of educational excellence and leadership in teacher education, research and services relevant to the changing needs of the community (LCE 2002 / 3 calendar).

3.3 LCE MISSION

The primary mission of the College is to train and produce competent teachers for the school system of Lesotho and who are also able to offer necessary services in the community. Thus, the philosophical basis of the College encompasses the principles of life-long education and continuous professional growth and development of practitioners in education.

In view of the Vision and Mission statements given, the college specifically will be involved actively in:

- Reviewing the College programmes so that they address the current needs of the

nation.

- Exploring all possible and relevant resources in order to step up student enrolment.
- Establishing links with other similar institutions so as to create opportunities for tutors and student teachers' exposure to constructive experiences.
- Encourage the College staff and student teachers to be involved in appropriate research projects on social, education and development issues.
- Expanding and maintaining the infrastructure facilities, and resources to expedite the smooth running of the academic and non-academic activities.
- Empowering academic and non-academic staff through an institutionalised training policy to upgrade their qualifications and relevant skills.

All in all, the College aims at monitoring its academic, non-academic and professional activities, with the view to accelerate development and growth instilling quality assurance and excellence. (LCE 2002 / 3 calendar).

3.4 LCE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Although each faculty has its objectives, the all – embracing goal of the college is to create efficient management so that all members of the college can contribute to academic and non – academic development. The college specific objectives are:

- Plan for the expansion, innovation and maintenance of the infrastructural facilities and resources to facilitate the smooth running of the academic and non – academic activities.
- Recruit suitable and qualified staff to serve in the various sections and departments of the college.
- Improve the student's welfare, including Career Guidance and counseling and academic affairs.
- Ensure an effective and widely agreed system for allocating distribution of

resources between the faculties and departments.

- Encourage the up – dating and improvement of the academic programmes and standards through curriculum review.
- Improve the revenue production systems of the College.
- Develop record – keeping structures and systems of the College.
- Promote the inclusion of HIV / AIDS Awareness and Early Childhood Development education in the appropriate programmes of the College.
- Empower academic and non – academic staff through a well – planned training policy (LCE Strategic plan 2002 / 3).

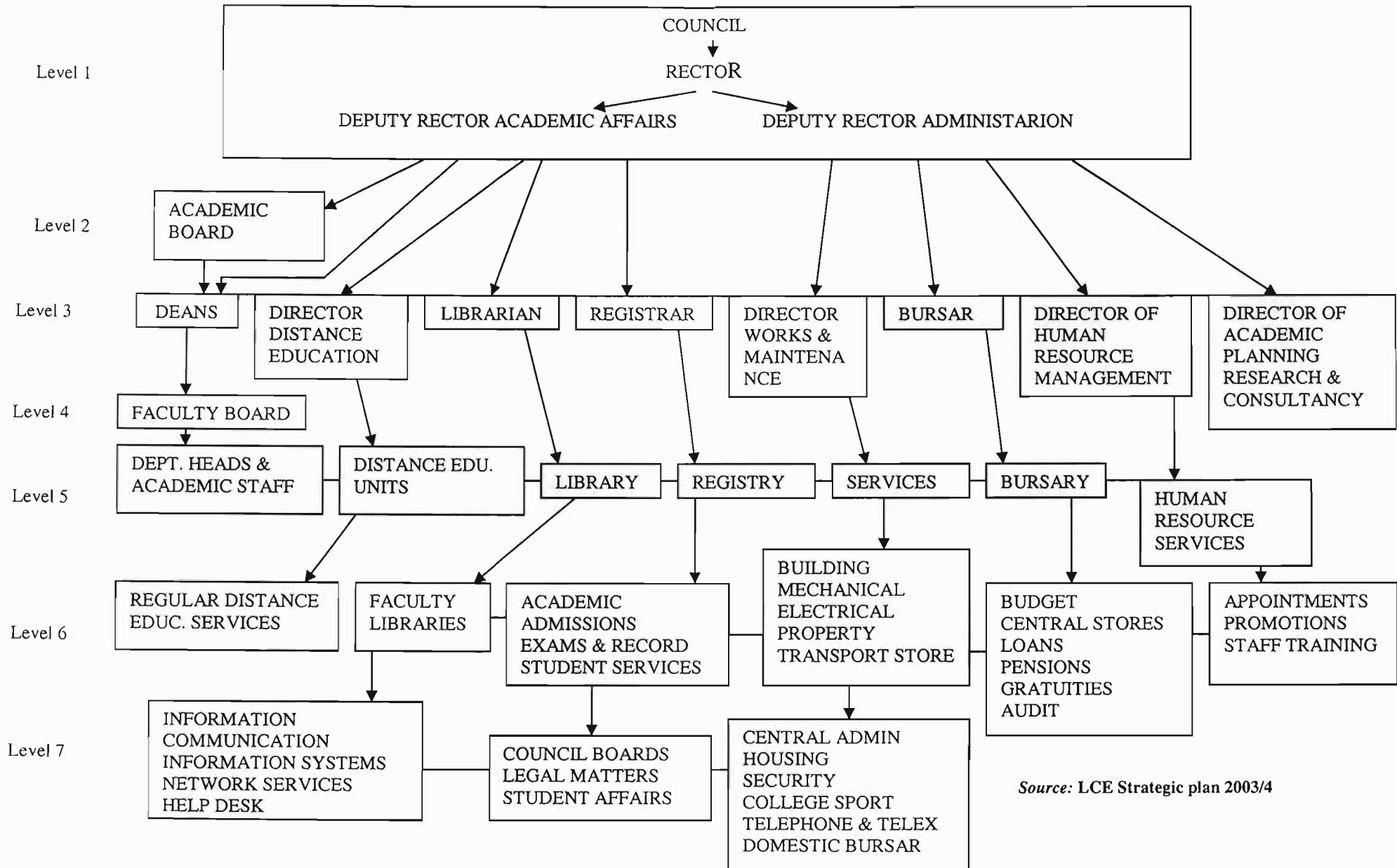
3.5 LCE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

An organizational structure is a means to help management achieve its objectives. Objectives are derived from the organization's overall strategy so it is only logical that strategy and structure should be closely linked. For instance, an organization such as LCE focuses on providing educational services to the community, therefore, its structure – is supposed to be the one that promotes standardized and efficient educational service to the community. Robbins (2001) argues that organizational structure should follow strategy, and if management makes a significant change in the organization strategy it will need to modify its structure to accommodate and support that change.

In order to provide quality service and facilitate quality management of LCE the functional departmentalization (grouping of activities by functions) organizational chart has been adopted. This will operate over the Five Year Plan period, but will be constantly reviewed and modified as evidence is gathered about its strength and weaknesses. LCE organizational structure is depicted in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

LCE Organizational Structure



Source: LCE Strategic plan 2003/4

3.5.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART EXPLANATORY COMMENTS

LCE organizational Chart is designed to explain at a glance the structure of the College in terms of its administration, the levels and the major services rendered. The explanatory levels are numbered and arranged in a descending order from the top administration down to the services rendered. The levels are seven, and they are as follows:

Level One:

This level consists of the ruling Council (which is the top administrative body of the College), the Rector (Chief executive officer of the college) and the two Deputy Rectors – one responsible for Academic Affairs and the other responsible for Administration. The Rector is responsible to the Council and the Deputy Rectors to the Rector. The chairman of Council is selected from out of the College and serves for a period of five years.

Level two: Academic Board

This is a major administrative board chaired by the Rector, and it is responsible for academic and professional matters. It consists of the Deputy Rectors, Directors, Deans and Heads of Departments and academic units. It discusses and approves programmes and courses, academic examinations set and done and any regulations connected with the academic and professional life of the College. Some special decisions of the Academic Board may require to be approved by the Council.

Level Three: Principal Officers of the College

These include the Deans, Librarian and all Directors as indicated on the third level of the chart. All the officers at this level are responsible to the Rector and they are part of the management of the College.

Level Four:

This level includes departments or units under their respective principal administrative officers and according to their roles in the college.

Level Six and Seven:

These two levels portray the nature of services rendered by the relevant units. Certainly, these levels imply the support or non-academic staff required to handle and render vital services.

NOTES:

The old title of "DIRECTOR" of the College has been dropped in preference to "RECTOR" the old nomenclature is left to indicate other Directors as indicated on the chart.

The Organizational Chart does portray two vital functions of the College namely, the academic and professional type of functions and the administrative and supportive type of functions:

The Deans, Director of Distance Education, Librarian and Registrar execute the academic and professional functions. All what comes under them is associated with these types of functions. The administrative and supportive types of functions are implemented by the director of works and maintenance, bursar, director of human resource and director of academic planning, research and consultancy. In the same way, whatever comes under them pertains to these types of functions.

3.6 LCE RESOURCE AND CAPABILITIES

As indicated earlier the human resource is the most crucial resource for the service organizations such as LCE. The human resource is the one that is in direct contact with the customers. In the case of LCE reference is made to the management, academic and non-academic staff. Other resources such human resources are depicted in the following diagrams.

Table 3.1 LCE management qualifications

| QUALIFICATIONS | NUMBER OF HOLDERS |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| PHD | 1 |
| MASTERS | 6 |
| HONOURS | 0 |
| 1 ST DEGREE | 1 |
| DIPLOMA | 0 |

Source: LCE 2002/3 Calendar

Table 3.1 shows that the majority of senior staff are master holders. The only person holding PhD is the Rector of the college.

Table 3.2 Faculties members qualifications

| QUALIFICATIONS | ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCE | EDUCATION | SCIENCE | VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| PHD | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| MASTERS | 18 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| HONOURS | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 1 ST DEGREE | 16 | 1 | 17 | 14 |
| DIPLOMA | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

Source LCE 2002/3 Calendar

According to the above table, the only faculty that has PhD holder is the faculty of science. The majority of master's holders are found in the faculty of art and social science, followed by 1st degree holders in the faculty of science.

Table 3.3 Non – Academic Staff Qualifications

| QUALIFICATIONS | ACCOUNTS STAFF | LIBRARY STAFF |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| COSC | 1 | 0 |
| 1 ST DEGREE (B.COMM) | 2 | 0 |
| DIP.ADULT ED. DLIS/BLIS | - | 1 |
| CLIS/DLIS | - | 1 |
| CWA/CBS | - | 1 |
| CERT.ADULT ED DIP.ADULT ED. | - | 1 |

Source: LCE 2002/3 Calendar

In non – academic staff the highest qualification is the 1st degree. There are only two staff members who are holders of 1st degree. The rest are holders of different certificates and Diplomas.

3.7 NUMBER OF ACADEMIC AND NON – ACADEMIC STAFF

The total number of academic and non – academic staff is 105 (excluding blue collar staff).

The total percentage of PhD holders is 2%, masters 34%, 1st degree 48%, Diploma 4% Honours 8%, any other certificates 4% and COSC 0.9%. These percentages confirm the fact that the majority of the staff members are the 1st degree holders at 48%.

3.8 THE LCE PROGRAMME ENROLMENT

Table 3.4 Programme enrolment year 1 2002

| PROGRAMME | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| DIP.EDU.PRI 01 | 49 | 149 | 198 |
| DIP.EDU.PRI 02 | 43 | 105 | 148 |
| DIP.PRI.EDU | 7 | 58 | 65 |
| DIP.EDU.SEC.01 | 45 | 71 | 116 |
| DIP. EDU.SEC 02 | 55 | 75 | 128 |
| DIP.TEC.EDU | 11 | - | 11 |
| DTEP | 70 | 432 | 502 |
| TOTAL ALL | 280 | 890 | 1168 |

Source: LCE Strategic Plan 2002/3

Table 3.5 Programme enrolment year 2 2002

| PROGRAMME | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| DIP.EDU.PRI 00 | 48 | 119 | 167 |
| DIP.PRI.EDU | 6 | 62 | 68 |
| STC | - | 1 | 1 |
| DIP.TEC.EDU | 16 | 4 | 20 |
| TOTAL ALL | 70 | 186 | 256 |

Source: LCE Strategic Plan 2002/3

Table 3.6 Programme enrolment year 3 2002

| PROGRAMME | MALE | FEMALE | TOTAL |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| DIP.EDU.PRI 00 | 26 | 114 | 140 |
| DIP.PRI.EDU | 9 | 36 | 45 |
| STC | 39 | 90 | 129 |
| DIP.TEC.EDU | 14 | - | 14 |
| TOAL ALL | 88 | 240 | 328 |

Source: LCE Strategic Plan 2002/3

3.8.1 NUMBER OF STUDENTS

The total number of students in the 2002 was as follows:

PRIMARY DIVISION

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Diploma in Education Primary | 653 |
| Diploma in Primary Education | 178 |
| Diploma in DTEP | 502 |

SECONDARY DIVISION

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Diploma in Education Secondary | 244 |
| Sec. Teachers Cert. | 130 |

Diploma in Tech.Educ.

45

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS

1752 (*LCE 2002 /3 Strategic plan*)

The number of female enrolment is growing higher each year over that of males, particularly in the Diploma in Primary Education programmes. This implies a projection of a higher number of female primary teachers in years to come.

3.9 PROJECTION OF STUDENT ENROLMENT BY THE YEAR 2006 / 7

The LCE projection of student enrolment by the year 2006 / 7 is shown in table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Projection of Student Enrolment by the year 2006

| PROGRAMME | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| YEAR 1 | | | | | |
| DEP | (02) 148 | (02) 150 | (03) 158 | (05) 174 | (05) 174 |
| DEP | (01) 198 | (03) 158 | (04) 165 | (04) 165 | (06) 182 |
| DES | (02) 128 | (02) 141 | (03) 148 | (05) 163 | (05) 163 |
| DES | (01) 116 | (03) 148 | (04) 156 | (04) 156 | (06) 172 |
| DIP ED | 65 | 74 | 77 | 81 | 85 |
| DIP TECH | 11 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| DTEP | 502 | 150 | 158 | 166 | 174 |
| TOTAL | 1168 | 841 | 884 | 928 | 974 |
| YEAR 2 | | | | | |
| DEP | (00) 167 | (01) 198 | (02) 150 | (03) 158 | (05) 165 |
| STC | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| DES | - | (01) | (02) | (04) 148 | (04) |
| DIP. ED | 68 | 116 | 141 | 77 | 156 |
| DIP. TECH | 20 | 65 | 74 | 22 | 81 |
| DTEP | - | 11 | 21 | 268 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 256 | 602 | 255 | 673 | 180 |
| | | 992 | 641 | | 605 |
| YEAR 3 | | | | | |
| DEP | (99) 140 | (00) 167 | (01) 198 | (02) 150 | (03) 158 |
| STC | 129 | 1 | - | - | - |
| DES | - | - | (02) | (03) 141 | (03) 148 |
| DIP. ED | 45 | 68 | 116 | (04) 74 | 77 |
| DIP. TECH | 14 | 20 | 65 | (05) 21 | 22 |
| DTEP | - | - | 11 | (06) 255 | 268 |
| TOTAL | 328 | 256 | 602 | (07) 641 | 673 |
| | | | 992 | | |
| YEAR 4 | | | | | |
| DTEP | - | - | - | 602 | 255 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 1752 | 2089 | 2517 | 2844 | 2507 |

Source: LCE Strategic Plan 2002/3

3.9.1 EXPLANATORY NOTES

- For DEP and DES the numbers inside brackets signify the year of entry into the programme as there would be 2 groups of DEP and 2 groups of DES in year 1 because the duration of the academic year is about 16 months
- STC programme is being phased out so the college has one student in year two and 129 students in year 3. It has been replaced by DES.
- DTEP is a four-year programme, STC, Dip.Ed. , And DIP. Tech are three year programmes while DEP and DES take three and half years
- For DTEP the first intake of 502 was in 2002 and was too high so in 2003 was 502 and it had to drop to 250 in 2003 and the increase in the subsequent years was based on 250, i.e. 150 at year 1 level and 100 at year 2 levels in 2003.
- In 2006 the grand total drops because the initial intake for DTEP in 2002 was 502 and it had to drop to 250 in 2003 and the increase in the subsequent years was based on 250, i.e. 150 at year 1 level and 100 at year 2 level in 2003.

3.10 LCE COMPETITIVE STRENGTH

NUL has been used as the main competitor of LCE, as it also trains teachers, although at degree level.

Table 3.8: Key success factors (Rating scale: 1= very weak; 10= very strong)

| KEY SUCCESS FACTOR/STRENGTH MEASURE | LCE | NUL |
|--|------------|------------|
| Variety of teaching subjects | 8 | 5 |
| Good Reputation | 7 | 8 |
| Qualified Lecturers | 2 | 7 |
| Computer Services | 4 | 6 |
| Students Accommodation | 8 | 6 |
| Management Qualifications | 2 | 7 |
| Library Facilities | 4 | 7 |
| Financial Resources | 2 | 6 |
| Staff Development Programme | 4 | 4 |
| OVERALL STRENGTH RATING | 42 | 57 |

The above Table shows that NUL's overall strength is 57 while LCE is 42. This is an indication that LCE is in a weaker position compared to its major competitor NUL. LCE has to improve in such areas as training staff and management of the college. The library facility is another factor that needs considerable attention.

3.11 THE LCE SWOT ANALYSIS

LCE Management can create a quick overview of a company's strategic situation through the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is based on the assumption that an effective strategy derives from a sound "fit" between a firm's internal resources (strength and weaknesses) and its external situation (opportunities and threats). A good fit maximizes a firm's strength and opportunities and minimizes its weaknesses and threats. LCE SWOT analysis is done in consideration of its academic programmes, staff development programmes, management, student's services, financial resources and material resources.

Table 3.9: Academic Programme

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCE is the only teacher training in the country • The programmes offered at LCE are credible. • Programmes run on a semester system • Quality Assurance measures are in a form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) External Examiners (b) Validation of all the programmes by NUL • New programmes are introduced • Evaluation and Review of programmes done • Presence of some qualified local and international staff | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate planning leading to delayed approval of yearly results • Poor inter – department / divisional cooperation and communication impedes team work and effective / maximum utilization of faculty • Culture of ignoring the deadlines affects quality assurance measures negatively. • Inability to recruit a required number of staff as enrolment rate of students increases. • Failure to monitor the graduates of LCE affects negatively its relationship with the schools |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capacity to admit all qualifying candidates is a clear indication for | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High staff turnover • Declining standards of secondary |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>introducing more distance education programme to cover other levels of teacher education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new programmes. • Review of current programmes • Organize staff development activities including exchange programmes for staff • Develop induction programmes for the new graduates of the LCE | <p>and primary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of monitoring of teaching activities • Lack of commitment and low sense of responsibility of some lecturers • Globalisation • Distance teacher Education programmes offered by other institutions regionally and abroad • Competition from other institutions is very high |
|--|--|

Table 3. 10 Staff Development Programme

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to ensure that junior staff go for further training • Existence of a central budget • Backup accrued from scholarship grants | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds for further studies are inadequate • No sabbatical leave for academic staff • High staff turnover • Lack of policy guiding staff development |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few number of academic staff are enrolled in Masters and PhD courses abroad and in the region • Establishing links with other colleges and institutions of higher learning. • National Manpower Development providing financial support for staff development plan | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarce opportunities for staff promotion • Staff attrition • Collaboration between LCE and other institutions not beneficial without a well thought out instrument for institutionalisation of the relationship |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International scholarship donations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain drain to south Africa and other SADC countries after acquisition of training |
|---|--|

Table 3.11 Management

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers are accessible to all the stakeholders • Existence of a functional organization | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the managers do not possess relevant qualifications and experience. • Too many acting positions at managerial level • Managers do not have a say in the recruitment and promotion of staff. • Communication system is not well established. • No facilities for staff socialization |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the staff development programmes through which unqualified managers could take up courses in relevant areas. • Involving decision making on | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor performance of the heads • Unstable management • Poor image of the college • Inaccessible records |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>recruitment and promotion of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the communication systems. • Establishment of the Disciplinary Boards for staff and students • Establishment of the positions that are required to strengthen the management. • Formulation and implementation of policies to enhance decision making and guide the activities • Establishment of an efficient record keeping system | |
|---|--|

Table 3.12 Students Services

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office accommodation with a computer for the SRC • Availability of staff in the staff welfare department • Existence of Boarding and lodging facilities • Centralized guidance and counseling services • Availability of sports and recreational facilities • Availability of a tuck shop • Existence of the SRC and the group leaders • Established management committees for students | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute shortage of staff in the student welfare department. • Limited space for dining, sports and recreational facilities • Inability of the SRC to run the tuck shop efficiently and effectively. • Inadequate time for students to have independent studies • No funds for students organizations |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit staff for the student welfare department • Expand the facilities – dining sports and recreational hall. • Organize capacity building workshops in the tuck shop management for the SRC | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible strikes if the services are not good or are inadequate. • Lack of continuity in the management of the tuck shop |
|--|---|

Table 3. 13 Financial Resources

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of government subvention • Donor funding • School fees • Fund raising from income generating projects/ activities | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff less involved in budgeting and other financial decisions • Income generating activities are not many outside school fees • No policy guiding out – sourced service provision • Delaying processes of tendering and payment of suppliers • Slow process of reimbursing travel expenses of staff |
| <p>OPPORUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start more income generating activities. • Start faculty consultancy activities • Employ qualified financial managers / administrators and accountants. • Financial management | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of finances to ensure smooth running of offices, departments and the college as a whole. • Loss of suppliers. • Low morale of staff not receiving motivation |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>consultancies engaged for designing an efficient computerized accounting system and installation of relevant software.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of internal efficient audit | |
|---|--|

Table 3. 14 Material Resources
(a) Space

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is space for development • Availability of physical infrastructure <p>OPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for multi – storied buildings must be considered. • Since there is unused space, more offices lecture rooms and staff houses can be built | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor planning of physical infrastructure • Lack of offices, lecture rooms and accommodation for staff • No staff canteen • Lack of room for record keeping • Inadequate space for the Accounts department • Non – existence of a health center <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding of students in the lecture rooms and staff in shared offices • Sharing of offices undermines tutoring of students |

Table 3.15 (b) Furniture

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some offices have good furniture • Some furniture is available in the lecture rooms | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate furniture in the lecture rooms and offices • Staff houses do not have basic furniture • Inadequate record keeping in filing cabinets |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With locally generated funds, procure required furniture | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints from staff and students when furniture is inadequate |

Table 3.16 (c) Office and communication equipment

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of audio visual equipment • Availability of computers • Availability of sports equipment • Availability of communication equipment – telephones, internet, fax • Existence of printing equipment | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate and old equipment in the following sections; audio visual, printing, sports, offices etc • No internet for staff and students • Poor maintenance of existing equipment • No programme designed for the efficient processing of record |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of some of the services required by the central administration • The college can use its budget to | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of equipment where there is no sense of accountability • Staff and students remain |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>buy and install some of the listed equipment</p> | <p>rather backward without access to modern communication system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of being out of date with local, international development or current event / affairs. • Poor quality of services where equipment is inadequate |
|---|---|

Source: LCE strategic plan 2003/4

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3.12 SUMMARY

LCE's ultimate aims are clearly spelled out in its mission. LCE mission provides all shareholders with a unity of direction transcending individuals, parochial, and temporary needs. It also promotes a sense of shared expectations among all levels and generations of academic and non – academic staff.

The LCE external environment consists of factors that play a principal role in determining the opportunities, threats and constraints that the LCE faces. These factors are political, economical, socio – cultural and technological. Factors that directly influence LCE prospects originate in the education sector in Lesotho, and such factors are the availability of substitutes institutions, competitor rivalry and bargaining power of students. Lastly, LCE operating environment comprises factors that influence LCE immediate competitive situation, such as the LCE competitive position, LCE human and financial resources. LCE operating environment shows that the main strengths of LCE are the fact that it is the only college in the country that trains teachers at Diploma level. The college also gets the subvention from the Lesotho government. LCE has to take an opportunity of these strengths and overcome its weaknesses.

On the other hand, the college is faced with critical weaknesses that it should overcome in order to implement the autonomy strategy in such a manner that the strategy will deliver quality service to students. The weaknesses are lack of both financial and human resources facilities.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATIONS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of corporate strategy for an organization is to add value and to develop sustainable competitive advantage. This means that the best strategy is the one that adds value; develop sustainable competitive advantage and offers quality service to customers. The strategic options offer many different ways in which these might be achieved. This refers to some ground rules that can be used to test each of the options and discover which is the best at delivering the objectives.

In this chapter, LCE macro and micro - environments are evaluated with the aim of finding out if autonomy strategy delivers quality service to students. Evaluation of autonomy strategy is also done on the basis of three-evaluation criterion, suitability, acceptability and feasibility.

4.2 LCE MACRO ENVIRONMENT IMPACT

In order to deliver quality service to students LCE needs to know its current position in relation to its markets, as well as the political, social and economic environment in which it operates. LCE macro environment consists of all the factors that are external to its own marketing system and that impinge on a successful exchange process with its customers.

4.2.1 THE POLITICAL / LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

The LCE is greatly influenced by the political and the legal environment. The way in which the LCE is governed depends on the Acts of Parliament. For instance, the establishment of the College membership, functions, affiliation with other institutions, governing Council, funds, assets and resources, application of revenue by the college, budget, statutes and ordinances,

annual reports, student union and regulations are all governed by The Lesotho College of Education Act of 1997.

The education policy is decided by legislation, and law controls charitable status. For instance, one of the Lesotho Education policies is now of free primary education (FPE) for all Basotho Children. In 2000 primary school fees were abolished for standard 1, in 2001 for standard 2, with the abolishment of all standards by 2006 (Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan 2001). For LCE, this policy means increased enrolment rate, additional teaching practice expenses, improved lecturers qualifications, more classrooms and laboratories. This has a great impact on LCE as the College will have to train more primary teachers to implement the new policy adapted by the Lesotho government.

Furthermore, the Education Act No 10 of 1995 (Education Act 1995) published in the Lesotho Government Gazette envisaged to be “ An act to consolidate all the enactments relating to education and to provide for matters incidental thereto” In the objectives particular reference is made to the provision of special care and treatment in relation to education for disabled children, and additionally to the provision of conditions, which foster tolerance, friendship, peace and non-discrimination. Although the policy is acceptable, as nobody should be discriminated regardless of any deficiency, the policy implies that the LCE should provide for lecturers who will be trained to train teachers who will train the disabled children. The LCE needs additional efforts in relation to human resources, funds, recruitment, infrastructure and monitoring.

4.2.2 ECONOMICAL ENVIRONMENT

According to the Quarterly Review of the Central Bank of Lesotho (2002), annualized monthly inflation rate started the year 2002 at 13.2 percent but declined slightly by the end of the year to 12.6 percent. Inflation rate in Lesotho has been registering double digits since the beginning of the year 2002. A rapid currency depreciation of about 40 percent during the year 2001 has largely been responsible for the observed surge. Food price inflation continued to play a key role, rising further from 20.5 percent to 30.9 in the year 2002. Fuel and transport costs played a significant role in rising inflation. The price of almost every product has escalated including education and health services. This greatly affects LCE, as very few parents will be able to afford the fees.

Another factor that will greatly affect LCE is the high rate of unemployment in Lesotho. The Lesotho labor market is characterized by some low labor demand in relation to supply. Over the years the high unemployment rate has been alleviated by migration to South African mines. However, since the early 1990s the industry has been characterized by massive retrenchments, adversely impacting on the number of Basotho employed in the industry. In addition, the weak price of gold, technological advances, and South Africa's policy of affirmative action and localization have resulted in further retrenchments. As a result this has contributed to a large extent on the high unemployment rate in Lesotho, thus adversely affecting the education in Lesotho.

LCE will also be affected by a severely constrained national fiscal environment, particularly in the first four-year of the autonomy plan where the main thrust of the activities falls. The Government of Lesotho (GOL) Ministry of Finance medium term resource projections, influenced by flat economic growth and tightening fiscal policy, predict an upfront drastic decline in the national resource envelope, followed by three years of less severe decline.

Under current projections the available domestic real resources in 2006 / 7 will be 15 percent less than in the current financial year 2002/2003 (Education Sector Strategic Plan 2001). This is an indication that the Lesotho government subvention to LCE will be negatively affected.

4.2.3 SOCIO - CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

LCE needs to take account of social factors that affect its activities. These social factors include population, education and environmental and cultural aspects of LCE work.

4.2.3.1 Demography

People make up markets so that population trends are an essential part of LCE's environment. Changes in age structure are an important consideration for LCE. The birth rate in Lesotho is very high and it is continuing year by year. This is very crucial for LCE, as changes in the birth rate will affect LCE 's potential market in the near future.

4.2.3.2 Geographical shifts

A geographical shift in population is another factor that has a great impact on LCE. LCE is located in the Maseru district, which is the capital city of Lesotho. People from the other nine districts of Lesotho migrate to Maseru to search for work, and improve their standard of living. This is due to the fact that all the services in the country are centralized. People migrate to the city with the hope that they will get jobs. These shifts in population create changes over a period of time, for LCE. It resulted in the number of students increasing on yearly basis. In 2000, students' enrolment was 1073. In 2001 it rose to 1194 and in the year 2002 it was approximately 1700 (LCE strategic plan 2002).

4.2.3.3 The HIV / AIDS Pandemic

The United Nations Resident Representative, Scholastic Kimaryo (2002) argues that over 30 percent of the Basotho nation is infected with HIV/AIDS. She further notes that the large portion of the 30 percent infected with HIV/AIDS is young people who face the danger of dying in the next five to ten years. The trends show that the epidemic has hit hardest among the ages 15 to 49 years who are sexually active and economically productive.

4.2.3.4 THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON LCE

- Increased absenteeism for various reasons including repeated attacks of illness and prolonged sick leave for those who have developed AIDS. Others are absent due to the extended responsibility to care for loved ones who are sick.
- Increased staff turnover due to various reasons including sickness and death, while some leave to escape the stigmatization, which is a serious consequence of HIV/AIDS.
- Loss of skills due to sickness and death of the trained human resource
- Loss of tacit knowledge, those who come in newly lack the experience on the job and do not have the institutional memory of aspects of those jobs they have been charged with the responsibility to perform.
- Decline in morale of staff that have to watch in helplessness the misery and undignified end to colleagues who are infected.
- Increased demand for training and recruitment to replace lost staff
- A decline in productivity is the ultimate result of the above.

The above impact has serious implications on LCE performance which if not attended would lead to delivery of poor service and finally college closure, a situation which has been reported in some countries where HIV /AIDS have reached alarming proportions

4.3 THE TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Technological shocks continue to shape the education sector. The development of new products changes, among other things, the ways in which people work. LCE is greatly influenced by a vast array of modern equipment such as the use of computers and the Internet. With the use of computers and Internet, communication will be easier between students and lecturers. Lecturers will be able to prepare notes effectively and efficiently and send them to students through the use of the Internet. Again, students will be able to learn at home and be able to get a vast array of information from the whole world. Lecturers need to travel to places for meetings. The use of video-conferencing can enable lecturers to communicate with other lecturers from other colleges without physically going there. This will have an impact at LCE, as the country's standard of education will improve.

4.4 CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

A shift in cultural values is another factor that has greatly influenced LCE. In the early days teaching profession was highly respected and considered a prestigious profession.

A teacher used to be someone who was highly respected amongst the Basotho nation. This culture has now completely taken a different picture. Most of the Basotho children opt for teaching profession when they have nowhere to turn to. They do not take teaching for the love of it but because it is the easiest alternative when one has not performed well especially in COSC English Language. This has a major impact for the LCE as the lecturers are faced with a difficult task of teaching people not interested in what they are being taught. As a result, the college is likely to produce incompetent teachers. Therefore, the standard of education in Lesotho is negatively affected.

4.5 THE LESOTHO EDUCATION SYSTEM

It is of paramount importance for the management team of LCE to understand the Lesotho Education system and the forces of competition in the Lesotho Education Sector.

The Education system of Lesotho is a joint responsibility of three partners, the government, the churches (which own most of the schools), and the community. There are three main cycles within the system, according to the level and type of education. The first level consists of primary education that covers seven years of basic education.

The second level consist of three types of education, namely, a three-year course leading to the junior certificate (JC) followed by a two-year course leading to the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC). Finally, technical and vocational education. The third level is tertiary education, and includes the National University of Lesotho (NUL), LCE, and Lerotholi Polytechnic and many other lower level technical training schools. Teachers Training is offered at LCE and NUL. Other government ministries also offer training programmes at tertiary level. For instance, the ministry of Health runs the National Health Training College (NHTC) (Sebatane et. al., 2000).

This sector is mainly supported by donor agencies, which individually or collectively, play an important role in the conceptualization, design, funding and implementation of sector analysis.

These are some of the major donors in the Lesotho Education Sector, USAID, UNICEF, WFP, and UNDP.

4.6 FORCES OF COMPETITION IN THE LESOTHO EDUCATION SECTOR

Porter (1998) suggests that competition is the basis for any industry / sector. A competitive strategy aims to establish and maintain a profitable position within a particular industry. Two central themes are crucial, the first being the attractiveness of the industry for long term profitability, and the second, being, competitive strategy relative to competition. Industry / sector analysis assumes importance mainly because of the considerable evidence that the industry / sector environment in which an organization operates has been a strong influence on its economic performance. A substantial body of research indicates that the profit potential of an industry is not a matter of luck, but depends upon many variables, structural attributes and strategies adopted by players within the industry. Using Porter's five-force model, the attractiveness of the Lesotho Education sector is discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.6.1 THE THREAT OF SUBSTITUTES

In the Lesotho Education Sector, LCE is faced with competition from different kinds of competitors entering the sector. Competition for LCE comes from other tertiary institutions such as the Lerotholi Polytechnic, Lesotho Health Training College (LHTC), and many other small vocational schools such as St Elizabeth Vocational school etc. The major competitor of LCE is the National University of Lesotho (NUL) as it also trains teachers. This availability of substitutes inevitably invites students and parents to compare quality, features, price and other attributes. NUL poses a significant threat to LCE by relaxing their admissions policies through the new bridging courses they offer to students who do not perform well in English Language at COSC.

4.6.2 THE THREAT OF POTENTIAL NEW ENTRANTS

An industry with high entry barriers and low exit barriers will prove to be more attractive as it means new organization can penetrate the industry and poorly performing organizations can exit easily. Although LCE competes internationally, the College enjoys limited profits due to the inability to match existing specialized know-how of the organization already in the educational sector.

Legal restrictions, Heavy Capital costs, Availability of Students, and Availability of qualified lecturers are the significant barriers to entry into this sector. The Lesotho government regulates the educational sector fully. There are set rules and regulations in relation to the opening of new schools as well as upgrading existing schools, changing the form of a school, adding new classes and transferring a school site.

4.6.3 THE EXTENT OF COMPETITIVE RIVALRY

Competition is very intense and evolves rapidly in the education sector. There are many institutions in the country established by expatriates, which are directly competing with LCE. Expatriates in the country establish these institutions. They offer different certificates in fields such as Marketing; Banking, Human resources and Secretarial courses. The bases for competition are selection, price, and effectiveness of advertising, the variety of value added service provided by these institutions and the issue of qualified lecturers. This heavy competition in the education sector results in strong rivalry amongst domestic institutions.

4.6.4 BARGAINING POWER OF BUYERS

The education sector is characterized by high bargaining power of buyers because of their easy access and the ability to compare different prices, features and additional services provided by the institutions. The more information the students and parents have the better bargaining position they are in. In addition to this, the students' costs of switching from LCE to other institutions, for example is almost nil. This indicates that the services of a rival seller such as the NUL are basically better than the services offered by LCE. As a result, students gain high bargaining power because it is easy to switch from seller to seller at little or no cost.

4.7 THE FUTURE IMPACT OF THE FIVE-FORCE MODEL WITHIN THE LCE

There are many substitute institutions available for the Basotho students. This is a great challenge facing LCE. For LCE to be competitive, and provide exceptional services to students it needs well-qualified and dedicated Academic and Non – Academic Staff. More than anything else, strong and effective management is the foundation of good and quality service.

LCE management should play both the administrative and leader's role so that while maintaining the functioning of the college, they must at the same time try to bring about changes and be able to do so smoothly and with a minimum of opposition or resistance. The success of the autonomy depends on dedicated LCE management, academic and non-academic staff.

Competition from many small institutions in the country is very intensive. In order for LCE to out compete such institutions, it needs to offer exceptional services and programmes. It can introduce programmes for teachers who are to teach the disabled mainly because this factor is mostly ignored in Lesotho. It can also offer subject like French and Career Guidance as the teaching subjects.

4.8 LCE MICRO – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

LCE contribution to the community is remarkable. It is reflected in its mission statement stated in chapter 3. LCE trains and produces competent teachers for the school system of Lesotho and who are also able to offer necessary services to their communities. LCE produces essential service in the community; therefore its mission is appropriate and relevant for the Lesotho community needs.

LCE organizational structure follows integration via the horizontal dimension. This occurs via integrating the management of different departments without the direct need to go through the chain of command. For instance, the Deans, Director of Distance education, Librarian, and the registrar are all empowered to act on their own in their areas of responsibility. Lecturers are empowered to exercise initiative in promoting students learning. This structure is appropriate for LCE as employees develop their own answers and action plans, making decisions and being accountable for the results is part of their job. This structure also shortens organizational response times, spurs new ideas, creative thinking, innovation and greater involvement on the part of subordinate managers and lectures. With lecturer's empowerment, jobs can be defined more broadly, several tasks can be integrated into single job, and people can direct their own work. Fewer managers are needed because deciding how to do things becomes part of each person's or team job.

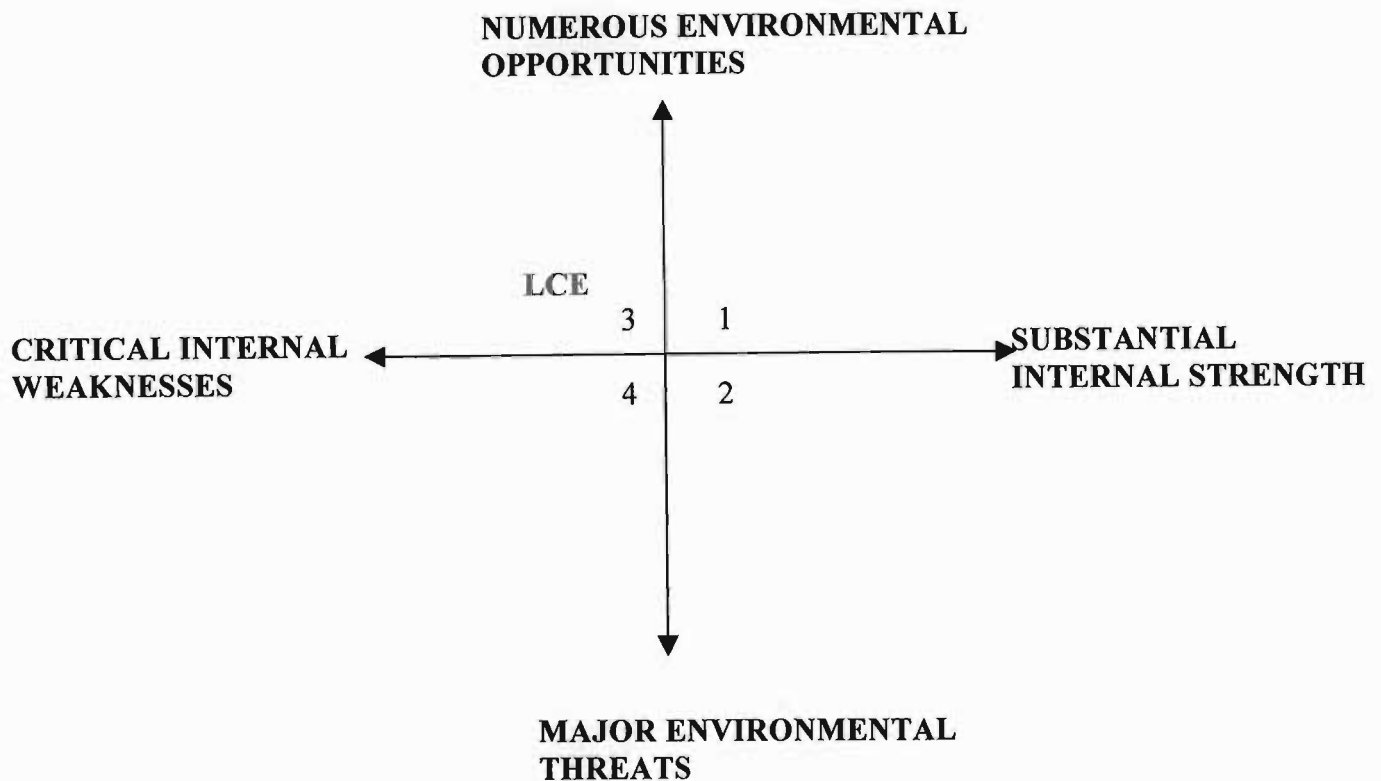
LCE staff members are mainly 1st degree holders (48%). There are about 2 % of PHD holders. This is an indication that LCE lacks qualified management, academic and non –academic staff. Holders of key positions do not posses relevant qualifications and experience. This is the main weakness of LCE, and therefore as a result implementation of autonomy strategy in delivering quality service at the college is questionable. It is very difficult for companies to implement any strategy if it lacks relevant skills.

The college is also experiencing some shortage of staff in some departments. For instance in the department of Health and Physical Education, the number of available positions is four, and all those positions are vacant. The Art and Craft department is entirely manned by the part –time lecturers, while other departments the number of part – time lecturers are higher than the number of regular lecturers. This situation lowers the performance of the college greatly, thus lowering the quality of service delivered by the college. Besides that, the part – time lecturers put priority on the primary duties at their workstations and they are not at the disposal of the students for consultation. This condition has in some cases provoked unnecessary unrests on the part of the students and staff.

Another major issue facing LCE is acute shortage of finances; as a result the college is not able to attract highly qualified lecturers. Even those who are serving the college, their morale is generally low, leaving the college to be difficult to manage. Disillusionment is manifested by disloyalty, defiance and unprofessional conduct of staff members. This issue has a great negative impact on LCE as it hinders the delivery of quality service to students.

4.10 LCE CURRENT SITUATION

Figure 4.2 LCE current situations



According to the analysis done LCE is at cell 3. It faces impressive market opportunities but is constrained by weak internal resources. These weak internal resources are characterized by a slack of financial resources, inadequate planning leading to delayed approval of yearly results, high staff turnover, managers lacking relevant qualifications and experience, managers not having a say in the recruitment and promotion of staff, acute shortage of staff in the students welfare department and poor planning of physical infrastructure. The focus of LCE strategy is to eliminate the internal weaknesses so as to more effectively pursue the market opportunity. The question remains: Will the college be able to pursue the autonomy strategy with these internal weaknesses?

4.10 ASSESSING SUITABILITY

The new autonomous LCE has growth potential, as it is the only teacher training college that offers Diploma in education in the country. Its major competitor is NUL as it also trains teachers although at degree level. In terms of its product breadth, the college offers different teaching subjects compared to its major competitor NUL. It offers teaching subjects, which the NUL does not offer such as Art and Craft, Music Physical education and Health Education.

As indicated earlier LCE has many opportunities within the environment in which it operates but at the same time it is faced with critical internal weaknesses. The major critical weakness is its financial problems. Therefore, in order to be competitive in this environment and overcome its financial problems, autonomy strategy is the best option as the college will be able to decide what to do to generate more income. It is with this view that the autonomy strategy is considered suitable for LCE.

4.11 ASSESING ACCEPTABILITY

The autonomy strategy might be acceptable and attractive to all the stakeholders. The stakeholders are the community at large, LCE management, lecturers, and students. For lecturers, salaries and benefits are expected to be increased. For instance, in the new autonomous LCE the college staff will be given car allowances, housing allowances, home improvement and furniture, severance pay, medical scheme, gratuity will be paid at the end of the contract to all members of staff who are permanent and pensionable. Lastly, members of staff employed on permanent and pensionable terms shall be expected to contribute to a pension scheme at a rate, which shall be stipulated in the financial regulations approved by the council. Lecturers and students will have more say in any decisions concerning them unlike in the previous NTTC. Although there are many issues, which might satisfy lecturers, one may conclude that if they have enough salaries,

have more academic freedom and more say in any decisions concerning them their performance will increase, thus deliver quality service to students.

4.12 ASSESSING FEASIBILITY

Although the autonomy strategy seems to be a suitable and acceptable option to pursue, there are other difficulties that may limit the likelihood of its success. LCE does not have enough resources and competences to deliver and implement the autonomy strategy successfully. The college lacks both the human and financial resources to implement the strategy. As indicated in Chapter 2 the majority of the managers in the college do not possess relevant qualifications and experience. Lecturers are also not well qualified as the majority of them are holders of first degree.

Furthermore, the college relies only on government subvention. There are no income generating activities outside school fees. No policy guiding out – sourced service provision and staff is less involved in budgeting and other financial decisions. As a result of all these factors, there is lack of commitment from managers, students and employees. It is in this view that the researcher feels that the feasibility of autonomy strategy is questionable.

4.13 SUMMARY

LCE is faced with major challenges, of which it has to consider for it to implement the autonomy strategy successfully. The college is operating in an environment that is politically and economically unstable. The college is greatly influenced by the Lesotho education policies. High inflation rate and unemployment are also the major hiccups for the LCE. Another major threat facing LCE is the issue of HIV /AIDS pandemic. Young and skilled labour is diminishing due to HIV /AIDS. LCE is operating in the era of technology therefore, improvement in the department of computer studies is a major concern. Competition from substitutes institutions must also be considered. The college must try to find ways and means of out competing its main competitors NUL. This can be achieved through offering highly competitive services. Financial constraints are a big challenge for LCE. The question remains: “ How will the college generate some funds so that it can implement the autonomy strategy successfully?”

Although the strategy autonomy seems suitable and acceptable the feasibility of pursuing the strategy is still questionable as depicted in table 4.1. In order for the college to be able to deliver quality service to students it needs to work on its internal weaknesses and make use of its market opportunities.

Table 4.1 Evaluation of autonomy strategy

| EVALUATION CRITERIA | AUTONOMY STRATEGY |
|--|--|
| SUITABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifecycle • Positioning • Value Chain • Business portfolio | Strategy suitable at embryonic stage Demand for Education will increase Increase value for money Likely to increase profitability |
| ACCEPTABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk • Return • Shareholder Expectation | Low High High |
| FEASIBILITY | Resources not sufficient to implement the strategy |

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers recommendations of how autonomy can be effectively implemented so that it delivers quality service to students. This means the specific areas that the college should pay more attention to in order to make autonomy a success. It also covers recommendations of other strategies that the college can adopt in order to deliver quality service to students. Lastly, conclusion of the project will be made.

5.2 LCE MANAGEMENT

The new autonomous LCE is at embryonic stage, therefore, the best management will be the one that will build on LCE strength, and create gradual changes. Management that will focus on long – term goals of the college. Management that possess talents such as product or service innovation, problem solving skills that would complement the chosen strategy. Management that will rally the support of the academic staff, non – academic staff and students, as they will help in the implementation and continuous evaluation of the strategy.

For the autonomy strategy to be implemented successfully, so that it delivers quality service to students, LCE administration should consider training sessions for the senior management team to improve the college managerial system. This can be achieved through arranging training in educational management for the senior management team. It can also be achieved through implementing a programme for sending academic and non – academic staff to seminars and workshops in management education. This will enable senior management to acquire managerial skills that they will be able to apply in the administration of the college and thus provide quality service for students. LCE management should be given a say in the recruitment and promotion

of staff, so that the college employs people with relevant skills and qualifications, that is, people who will be able to provide quality service to students.

5.3 STUDENT SERVICES

The college should encourage independent studies for student. This will enable students to even make some research on their own thus improving the quality of service. This can be achieved by investing more in library facilities. LCE library should be improved. The system of issuing and returning books should be fully computerized.

Extra mural activities are very crucial for the development of students. Therefore, the college needs to provide enough sporting facilities, such as grounds and other facilities for in - door games. This will enable the students teachers to do the same in the schools where they will be going to teach, thus improve the standard of education in Lesotho.

Security measures on the campus should be strengthened. Both the staff and students should be provided with identity cards to swipe when using college facilities such as the library, computer and laboratory. This will minimize traffic, which usually result in theft in the campus. It also allows easy access to the college facilities.

5.4 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

To enable the college to overcome its financial problems, departments such as the Home – Economics, Commercial Studies, Art and Craft and Technology Studies should introduce education with production. This means that they should introduce income - generating activities outside the school fees. The college should employ qualified financial managers / administrators and accountants who will be able to handle the college funds effectively. Qualified managers and accountants who will be able to audit the college books of accounts.

5.5 ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

For effective implementation of autonomy strategy each faculty should introduce new courses according to needs assessment. For instance, courses such as Marketing, and Economics should be introduced in the commercial studies department. Computer as a course should be compulsory to all students. Lecturers should visit similar institutions in neighboring countries for comparison of what they are doing and benchmark the modern techniques of teaching to upgrade the performance of student teachers. Frequent curriculum review for each department is necessary, and this will enable the lecturers to provide students with up – to – date information. Workshops and refresher courses for lecturers should be conducted to upgrade the content and skills of the curriculum.

5.6 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

As indicated in chapter 3 one of the major weaknesses of LCE is a great shortage of qualified staff. In order for the college to overcome this problem it should secure funds from donors for lecturers to further their studies. This will also motivate LCE staff and as a result they are likely to deliver quality service to their students. It will also reduce the rate of staff turnover. The college should also introduce more incentives schemes for staff, such as sabbatical leaves; frequent departmental meetings to share ideas with other members of staff are of necessity for staff development.

5.7 MATERIAL RESOURCE

To improve LCE staff attitudes towards their work and their level of performance, which will result into quality service, the college should improve lecturer's offices, staff accommodation and lecture rooms. For instance, lecture rooms and offices should be well ventilated with air conditioners and heaters in winter. Rooms for record keeping and the health center for both the

staff and students should be available. Lastly, Internet facilities for both lecturers and students should be available 24 hours. This will improve communication between lecturers and students.

5.8 THE BUDGET

Another most expensive issue, which the college should consider cutting in their budget is student food. The college spends large sums of money on student food. Furthermore, administration of such food is questionable. This issue can enable the college to reduce the expenses of pilfering, storage, and paying staff that is responsible for the cooking. Uncalled strikes can also be avoided because in most cases food is the source of strikes in schools and colleges. It will be cheaper for the college to outsource this service to private catering companies. In this regard the money that was supposed to be used for student food can then be used to improve the library facilities.

5.9 THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Lastly, LCE should introduce the management information system (MIS). The system will provide factual accurate data. There will be no over or under budget for the subsequent years, because the integrated payroll will provide accurate numbers of employees to be paid, their remuneration as well as their increments. MIS will also enable LCE managers to generate reports on ad hoc basis. Certain key financial reports will be automatically produced just in time by the system on a periodic basis. If the college can implement the above mentioned factors, the autonomy strategy will not only improve the service quality but will also improve the LCE staff attitudes towards their work in general and their level of performance. Thus, improve the standard of education in Lesotho.

5.10 LCE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Figure 5.1 Grand strategies Selection Matrix

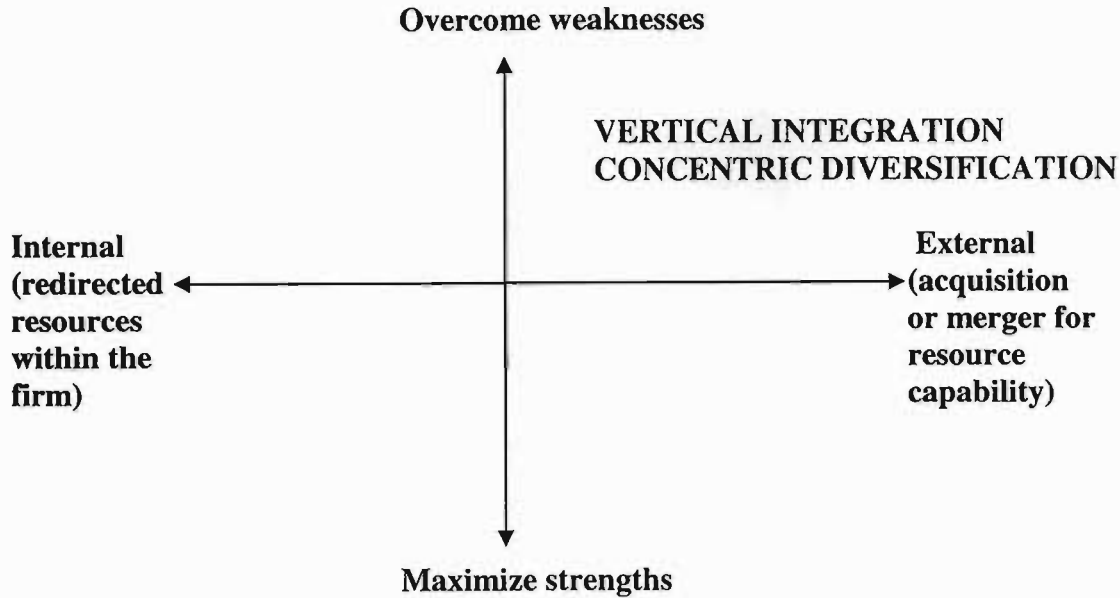


Figure 5.1 indicates that for LCE to overcome its weaknesses, mainly financial and human resources weaknesses, it should consider vertical integration strategy with financially sound institutions such as the NUL. Through this integration LCE can overcome its financial problems and implement the autonomy strategy successfully and deliver quality service to students.

To further strengthen its competitive position in the market LCE has to exploit its opportunities by expanding its product line and services. This may be achieved by adopting concentric strategy by introducing new programmes such as those for training teachers for the disabled children and by offering degrees and PhDs. The vertical integration with NUL will also eliminate competitors and provide the LCE with access to new markets such as markets for the first degree and Masters degree programmes. Again since NUL and LCE are affiliated and related, the distinctive competencies of the two are likely to facilitate a smooth synergistic and profitable expansion.

5.11 CONCLUSION

The autonomy strategy is still at an infant stage because the autonomy was only granted on the 1st of July 2002. As a result it is difficult to assess effectively if it has brought any major changes at LCE as it did in other countries. Presently, what is remarkable is that most junior degree holders are given an opportunity to further their studies; the departments have been abolished and now referred to as faculties, and certificates have been abolished and replaced by Diplomas. New senior posts have been created and advertised. On the other hand, with people delivering the service in these case lecturers, and non – teaching staff the situation remains the same. There is no change in the way the service is delivered.

A conclusion can be made that although autonomy is a viable option to pursue, there are some factors, which must be considered for the strategy to be successful. Among others the main factors are the financial and the human resource of the college. Autonomy has improved service delivery in the LCE to some extent. Other strategies, which are worth considering in the future, for the LCE to deliver quality service to students, are vertical integration and concentric diversification strategy.

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APPENDIX A

THE LETTER TO LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RECTOR

University of Natal

Durban

South Africa

2nd September 2002

The Lesotho College of Education Rector

P.O. Box 1393

Maseru 100

LESOTHO

Dear Sir,

**RE: RESEARCH ON EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
AUTONOMY STRATEGY IN DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICE IN THE
LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.**

I am a final year student at the University of Natal Durban, pursuing MBA programme. I am currently carrying out a research study the focus of which is on “**EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NEW AUTONOMY STRATEGY** that the Lesotho College of Education” is currently pursuing. It is hoped that you may well be aware that for the college to produce well-trained, effective, and efficient teachers it has to implement appropriate strategies which will enable it to achieve its objectives, appropriate strategies which will drive the college towards attaining its mission.

It is with this view in mind that the researcher solicits your assistance and cordial cooperation herein as nearly as circumstances will permit.

May I hereby allay your fears by stating in no uncertain terms that the information that will be provided is supposed to be highly confidential and will accordingly be treated by the researcher as such.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Regina M. Thetsane".

Regina M. Thetsane.