STRATEGY MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY ON A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

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This study has explored the strategy management process of a public University in Malaysia. An inductive approach was adopted in the study to illuminate strategy issues from participants' experience. Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with three groups of participants comprising the Executive Management Team, the Operation and Management Team, and the Academics. The inductive approach allows the flexibility for findings to emerge without a predetermined conceptual framework in the research inquiry. This enabled the researcher to elicit views on the strategy management process as experienced by the participants. The findings have brought to the surface the influence of government in the University's strategy management process. Evidence suggests that the strategy has been used as a means of legitimacy of the University with the government. This has been apparent in the conformity to the institutional rules. In the context of a Malaysian university, the institutional rules are produced by the government. In line with this, institutional theory is found pertinent for the development of the conceptual framework in the study. The conformity to institutional rules has contributed to the challenges in the University's strategy management process. At the same time, the study has also shown the existence of tight and loose coupling in the University. In the study, the combination of tight and loose coupling was mainly for the purpose of resolving conflicts as the University manages its legitimacy with the government. The study provides empirical evidence of a Malaysian University's strategy management process and its influence from a context that has not yet been widely researched. In doing so, it has elicited the relevance of institutional theory.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the overview of the study. It includes the background of the study; the significance of the study; the research objectives; the overview of methodological approach; and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The interest of this study is triggered by the enterprise governance concept, introduced by the International Federation of Accountants, IFAC. They have conducted a study on corporate excellence and suggest the importance of enterprise governance in ensuring the success of corporations (IFAC, 2004). According to IFAC (2004), enterprise governance is achieved by having a balance between conformance and performance. The conformance constitutes corporate governance issues such as accountability, assurance, internal control, and issues pertaining to the boards of directors (IFAC, 2004). The performance aspect focuses on strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and the ability of corporations to respond to changes in the environment (IFAC., 2004). In their study successful corporations were found to have a good balance of conformance and performance.

Their study was conducted purely on corporations; hence the concept of enterprise governance has yet to be explored in public organisations. As suggested by Lees (2004), IFAC has overlooked the importance of enterprise governance in public organisations. In contrast to the IFAC, this study was conducted on a public organisation. The study has advanced the performance aspect of enterprise governance by exploring the strategy management process of a Malaysian public university.

At the same time, it is worth noting that the study is not meant to introduce the enterprise governance concept in the University. Instead, this study has focused on strategy management process, which is a part of the performance

aspects of enterprise governance. This is done by exploring issues within the strategy management process of the University. In other words, this study provides perspectives on the performance aspect in relation to the strategy management process of the University. Prior reading on enterprise government had developed the interest to explore more deeply into the strategy management process of the University.

The study presents a qualitative inquiry into the strategy management process of a university, i.e. strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy monitoring. The research illuminates the experience from multiple perspectives within the University.

In line with this, thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted from June to August, 2008. The semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their experiences and provide in depth reflections of the strategy management process of the University. This contributes to a rich comprehension of the strategy management process in the case study context. As such, this study was based on an inductive approach. An inductive approach allows the findings to be explored without a predetermined conceptual framework, thus provided the opportunity for findings to be revealed from the study. This study is in line with the suggestion made by Liedtka (2000), which urges explorative study to be conducted for understanding a complete view of strategy management. According to Liedtka (2000) an explorative study on political and cultural interventions is needed in order to provide a comprehensive view of strategy management. In this study, the complete view of strategy management is explored through the participants' experience. This reflects the sociological perspective adopted in the study.

1.3   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Ferlie (2002), public organisations offer a rich research site considering there are still areas to be developed, especially in providing an understanding pertaining to barriers of strategy implementation within this context. This study has provided an insight into the issues of the strategy management process in a Malaysian public university context. This is a research area which remains scarce in the current strategy literature.

Public universities have generally been viewed as complicated strategy research sites. As claimed by Fumasoli and Lepori (2011), the controversial issues of strategy in higher education have resulted in the tendency to avoid the topic by scholars. In relation to this, Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) suggest strategy studies on higher education are still underdeveloped despite it being an important strategy study area. The lack of strategy studies in this area is attributed to the nature of higher education which renders strategy difficult (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011). The complexity is inherent in the public sector structure, which is characterised by the separation of powers, the openness to the public, and the existence of bureaucratisation (Nutt and Backoff, 1987). As suggested by Schmidtlein and Milton (1988), strategy studies on higher education require an understanding of the political, structural, environmental and psychological dynamics of the institution. Despite the complexity that is inherent in such organisations, this study has provided insights into the strategy management process and its influence on this context. The insights are beneficial in providing a better understanding of the strategy management process in the context.

The study was also based on a sociological perspective. This is important in providing a comprehensive understanding of the University's strategy management process. The adoption of the sociological perspective is consistent with the recognition of the nature and complexity of strategy management within the public sector. Scholars have found that strategy should not be treated as a linear process as it involves a socio-political process (Dooris et al., 2002; Hackman, 1985; Schmidtlein and Milton, 1988). This is especially true in a public university as it is politically bounded. As suggested by Hackman (1985), universities are political organisations that operate as open systems in interaction with their environment. Because of that, it is vital to acknowledge the political realities of universities (Schmidtlein and Milton, 1988). As suggested by Dooris (2002), it is difficult to ignore the effects of strategy influences such as federal funding, politics, actions of competing organisations, social and cultural forces in a public sector strategy research.

The adoption of a sociological perspective enhances an understanding of this complexity by focusing on a subjective experience of social interaction. This allows an understanding to be reached beyond the surface of the context and provides a comprehensive understanding of issues that emerge from the study. This understanding is beneficial in providing the underlying meaning

and comprehension of the context. This is achieved by the focus on the subjective experience of social interaction, individuals and their activity as a group (Rumelt et al., 1994).

As suggested by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008), a sociological perspective provides insights into the complexity of everyday lived experiences from the perspective of the practitioners and informs the subtle process of interaction and influence among practising strategists. The approach evokes rich descriptions of the actions and interactions of actors in ways that are 'faithful to their experiences and situations' (Jarzabkowski and Whittington, 2008, p.285).

The sociological perspective adopted in this study is also pertinent considering there has been limited strategy research conducted from this perspective. As suggested by Stoney (2001), despite the popularity of strategy as a research topic, it still remains under-researched by critical sociologists. Most university strategy studies have been found to be rather plainly descriptive and avoid the understanding of the underlying meaning behind the occurrences which could have been achieved through the sociological perspective (Dooris et al., 2002). This has contributed to the deductive and formulaic approach to strategy research which was apparent in the 1990s studies (Dooris et al., 2002).

Sociological research requires a good understanding of the context and a flexible research design in capturing the real sense of the context. In line with this, a grounded theory approach has been applied in the study. This allows the flexibility to follow the emerging themes in the research inquiry. The use of the grounded theory approach in a strategy management study is also pertinent considering not many strategy studies have been conducted with this approach. The suggestion made by Rumelt et al. (1994, p.9), 'Strategic management as a field of inquiry is firmly grounded in practice', supports the research inquiry that allows theory to emerge from the findings. However, a study from this perspective has been considered extremely difficult (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). As a result, most of the strategy studies have been focused on the planning process, hence little is yet known on the real challenges involved in its implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

The study also addresses the questions posed by Boer et al. (1998), where it has provided descriptions of the University's strategy management process.

As stated by Boer et al. (1998, p.104), 'Far less are they published results of systematic investigations of how the massive change that can be observed in higher education at present actually affects institutional management and how this in turn influences what goes on at the shop floor'. This research study has elicited the influence of the government in the University's strategy management process and presented the effect of such influence. It addresses the plea made by Boer et al. (1998), which suggests that academics have a professional obligation to monitor the transition of universities and to provide occasions for discussions to take place. As stated, 'the stakes are far too high to simply sit back and let higher education run its course. An active research community can actually act as a stimulus in support of governance structures and practices that do effectively reflect the essential nature of our institutions' (Boer et al., 1998, p.110). Even though Boer et al. (1998) made the statement slightly more than a decade ago, it is still relevant in the context of Malaysian higher education, and thus needs answering. As such, this study has provided an insight into the higher education transition in Malaysia. It provides the avenues for further discussions to take place in a hope to contribute to the body of knowledge and further development of higher education in Malaysia.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To explore the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

2. To explore any issues in the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

1.5   OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

This is a case study conducted on a Malaysian public university. A case study is imperative as it allows the opportunity to gather an in-depth understanding of the context. In line with the aim to gather as much understanding of the case study context as possible, this study applied an inductive approach and grounded theory in guiding its research inquiry. The grounded theory approach allows the researcher to perceive issues as they emerge from the findings. As such, this study surfaces themes from the findings. The adoption of grounded theory allows the researcher to approach the case study without a predetermined conceptual framework and thus enables the data to be gathered based on the subjective reality of the participants in the case. This has been in line with the sociological approach of the study and is beneficial in gathering as much information as possible on the strategy management process of the University in the study.

In line with the grounded theory and the inductive approach applied in the study, semi-structured interviews were carried out face to face with thirty participants in the case study. These interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and fully transcribed in a word document. The transcriptions were analysed through line by line text analysis. This process enabled emerging themes to be captured from the data. From my experience, it is felt that the awareness of the culture and the understanding of the underlying meaning that was communicated by the participants during the interviews played an important role in surfacing the findings from the study. As such, the data analysis in the study was not merely an analysis of common words as it had also focused on the richness of the information gathered, based on implicit responses and unique perspectives.

The emerging themes from the interviews were then conceptualised. The conceptualisation process was conducted with references to relevant literature. This allowed comparisons of the findings to be made with the existing body of literature. This process assisted in greater understanding of the findings. It is found that institutional theory provides a good comparison and elaboration of the findings. As such, a conceptual framework was developed based on the institutional theory introduced by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006). This conceptual framework contributes

to the body of knowledge in strategy management literature from the context of the strategy management process of a Malaysian public university. It justifies the pertinent contributions of institutional theory in a discussion of the strategy management literature.

1.6   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This section describes the structure of the thesis. The thesis is divided into eight chapters comprising:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study. It explains the significance of the study; introduces the methodology used; and presents the research objectives of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter presents an overview of literature relevant to the study. It includes discussions of strategy concept; the importance of sociological approach to be adopted in the study; issues on strategy management in public sector; and presents the existing literature on strategy studies in higher education.

Chapter Three: The Case Study Context

This chapter describes the case study context. It provides a background of the University in light of the higher education settings in Malaysia.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter presents the philosophical approach of the researcher which has influenced the choice of research methods in the study. It provides a thorough discussion which justifies each of the methods applied in the study.

Chapter Five: Data Collection and Analysis

This chapter describes how data were captured and analysed in the study. It explains the development of the themes from raw data to the final findings. It

also explains the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), NVivo 8 in assisting the data analysis in the study.

Chapter Six: The Findings - Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, and Strategy Monitoring

This chapter explains the findings made in the study. Examples of the transcriptions from the interviews are presented and discussed to support the findings of the study.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Theoretical Contribution

This chapter presents the discussions of the findings and highlights the relevant and pertinent literature in the study. A conceptual framework has also been introduced in this chapter. The conceptual framework elaborates on the findings and locates the findings within the existing body of literature.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

This chapter concludes the study by providing a summary of the research findings; highlights the contributions of the study; discusses its limitations; and provides suggestions for future research based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with the evolution of the strategic management field. It draws towards the sociological development of the strategic management field which is parallel with the interest of this study. Later, a discussion on strategic management applications on public sector institutions is introduced. It provides the characteristics specific to the strategic management of public sector institutions. This creates the awareness of the complexity of strategy in public sector institutions. The awareness is important as this study is conducted on a public university. Discussions on university strategy literature are also presented. These are beneficial in placing the study and in identifying the gaps in the existing body of literature. This chapter ends with a summary that integrates all of the sections discussed whilst introducing the research by drawing upon the discussions made in this chapter. This includes an elaboration of the importance to derive an understanding from the sociological perspective.

Hence, this chapter is divided into four separate sections comprising the evolution of the strategic management field; strategic management in the public sector; the research on university strategy; and the chapter summary.

Strategy Management as the Terminology Used in the Study

This study is in the strategic management field. Therefore, the discussions in this chapter will cover relevant literature within the strategic management field. As defined by Poister and Streib (1999), strategic management is about managing organisations in a strategic manner. It encompasses various elements which are believed to be integrative in nature (Poister and Streib, 1999). According to Poister and Streib (1999), strategic management leads organisations to focus on common goals; it integrates the management processes and initiatives towards desired outcomes; and aligns day-to-day operations and tactical activities with the long term strategic objectives

(Poister and Streib, 1999). As such, strategic management involves a concept which embraces managerial decision, and actions which determines the long term performance of an organisation (Koteen, 1989).

In this study, the term strategy management is used despite the popularity of the term strategic management found in most literature. This is to reflect the objective of the study which is to explore issues in relation to the management of the University strategy process. The term strategy management in the study is viewed as an action of managing strategy. The emphasis of this study is similar to the concept of strategy-as-practice. As suggested by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008), strategy-as-practice aims to study strategy through the lenses of strategy practitioners and practices. Strategy practitioners are identified as the people who carry out the strategy work, and comprises senior managers, managers at multiple levels of an organisation, and influential external actors (Jarzabkowski and Whittington, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the strategy practitioners' definition extends to every staff member involved in the strategy management process of the University.

The strategy management process in this study is identified as the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring. The classification based on the three strategy processes is aimed to provide a comprehensive discussion of the topic. The strategy formulation refers to the process involved in formulating the University strategy. As suggested by Brews and Hunt (1999), strategy formulation is the process involved in identifying the ends. In the study, the formulation of the University strategy and its issues are explored. Strategy implementation refers to the actual implementation of the strategy, otherwise referred to as the means by Brews and Hunt (1999). In this study, issues in relation to University strategy implementation are explored. Strategy monitoring refers to the evaluation of the strategy. As suggested by Brews and Hunt (1999), strategy monitoring is the process which involves questioning the ends and the means. In this study, this involves exploring the strategy monitoring conducted in the University and to bring out any issues in relation to it.

According to Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008), strategy practices involve social, symbolic, and material tools applied in the strategy work. In this study, the strategy practices are reflected in the social and symbolic actions involved in the strategy management process of the University. As suggested by Hirsch et al. (1987), this can be considered as the dirty hands approach which gives

complex insights into the messy realities of practices. In this study, such insights are developed from the interest to explore strategy as something that people do in practice.

The rest of this chapter discusses the context of the strategic management literature. This is to reflect the broader discussions available within the field. It is important to note that in exploring issues within the case study context, the study has not been confined to the existing body of literature discussed in this chapter. Fuller literature will be enfolded into the discussion chapter based on the findings which emerged from the research.

2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FIELD

In order to proceed with further discussions on strategic management, it is important first to understand the meaning of strategy and what it entails. According to Rumelt et al. (1994), strategic management should be a primary concern to anyone seeking reasons for the success and failure of organisations. As such, organisations have strategic choices to make as they are faced with constant competition for survival, customers, and revenues (Rumelt et al., 1994). From the statement, strategy can be seen as associated with decision making and planning. For example, this is apparent in the origin of the word 'strategy'.

The word strategy comes from the Greek word 'strategos', meaning the art of the army general (Wernham, 1984). Strategy was originally centred in the military sphere; it originated in Athens around 508-7 BC and was used in Sun Tzu's *Art of War* in Asia around the 5th century (Heracleous, 2003). According to Heracleous (2003, p.3), early writers on strategy were focused on the qualities of an effective 'strategoi', which embodies the principles of employing troops and other strategic goals such as limitation of risk. This is evident in Sun Tzu's emphasis on meticulous planning involving ideas of overcoming the enemy without the need to fight, and the emphasis on having an effective leader to advise and manage troops and tactics in the war (Heracleous, 2003).

This background has contributed to the early development of strategy with an emphasis on decision-making and planning. It contributes to the view of strategy as plan and as position (Mintzberg, 1987b). For the purpose of the discussion, the evolution of strategic management is presented in three phases of development. The first phase is identified as the early development phase; the second phase is identified as the further development phase; and the third phase is the emerging phase. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

2.2.1 Early Development

According to Heracleous (2003), strategy came to prominence in the business world around the 1960s. This is evident in Chandler's work (Rumelt et al., 1994). In 1962, Chandler introduced a concept of strategy and structure which explains strategy as a result of precise planning, and structure as the activities and resources that are administered to implement strategy (Chandler, 1962). Strategy was defined as 'determination of the basic, long term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for these goals' (Chandler, 1962, p.13). In this respect, strategy has been described as a long term planning of an organisation which involves a determination of resource allocation in carrying out its plan. A similar definition has also been expressed by other scholars such as Langfield-Smith (1997), where strategy is defined as a long term planning of an organisation, that involves determination of scope of activity, allocation of resources, and alignment of resources with the external environment.

This is also reflected in Drucker's (1974) definition of strategy as purposeful action and Ansoff's (1965) view of strategy as a rational, top down, structured process which involves clear steps in establishing mission and goals. In this sense, strategy is perceived as formal plans derived from precise intentions of top management, and supported by formal controls in ensuring its implementation in a controllable and predictable environment (Mintzberg and Waters, 1989). The outcomes of strategies under this perspective are expected to be deliberately achieved (Mintzberg and Waters, 1989). This view is described by Mintzberg (1987b) as 'consciously intended', where its course of

actions are predetermined and used as a guide in dealing with situation (Mintzberg, 1987b, p.11).

This development encouraged a systematic approach to strategy formulation, and hence was highly mechanical, where it involved a prescribed sequence of steps (Mintzberg et al., 1998). An example of this development is evident in the influence of the economists during this era (Bowman et al., 2002). The economist was interested in analysing the structural characteristics of industry and to determine whether these characteristics are limiting the strategies of the competing organisations (Bowman et al., 2002). This has contributed to a series of analyses such as investment choices; vertical integration; profitability; growth patterns; cost and price structure introduced in strategic management field (Bowman et al., 2002).

Besides the economists, strategy scholars have also introduced various concepts on strategy. Among the influential concept is the competitive advantage concept. According to Penrose (1959), the purpose of strategy is to identify and enhance a competitive advantage of an organisation. Competitive advantage is about being different (Porter, 1985). It places emphasis on the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the organisation in order to develop a unique position of competitive advantage (Porter, 1985). The competitive advantage encourages an organisation to identify its unique position based on low-cost leadership and differentiation (Porter, 1985). Hence, the focus of competitive advantage is on the products and markets, where cost leadership encourages a low cost position, which will create high sales volumes. Product differentiations, on the other hand, focus on creating brand loyalty and positive reputation. In relation to this, Hamel and Prahalad (2005) have stressed the importance of identifying, managing, and leveraging core competencies which focus beyond the markets and products.

The thinking is then furthered by the introduction of the resource based view (RBV). The resource based view is premised on the belief that a particular integration of strategic key resources into capabilities and core competencies will produce a competitive advantage (Hart, 1995). Based on the resource based view, competitive advantage is sustainable when the capabilities creating the advantage are supported by resources which are not easily accessible by competitors (Hart, 1995). Examples of strategic resources are

resources that are difficult to imitate or substitute; non tradable; difficult to obtain; or potentially expensive for competitors to obtain (Lynch and Baines, 2004).

The discussions have presented some examples of views on strategy which relate to its early phase of development. These include the contributions made by influential scholars in the beginning stage of strategy development; and the introduction of various strategy mechanisms in line with the development. In general, the early phase of strategy development can be viewed as a formal process of conception or planning that is focussed on the organisation itself. In a way, it is predominantly inward looking. As such, it is suggested by Mintzberg et al. (2009) that the early view of strategy as formalised and structured can be a setback. It is argued to be inflexible in facing the rapid changes of environment (Stoney, 2001). Thus, various critics have described it as static (Pettigrew, 1992); linear (Handerson and Mitchell, 1997); fragmented (Schendel 1994); and dysfunctional or irrelevant (Mintzberg, 1994). The idea of strategy as a formalised and structured process is claimed to be only suitable in a stable, predictable and controllable context which is illusive considering the real world perspective (Mintzberg, 1987b). As claimed by Kay et al. (2006, p.31), 'planning goes beyond forecasting' and the business world is too complicated to be described as a model.

In relation to this, Mintzberg (1973, p.42) also suggests: 'Clear goals do not exist...the strategy-making process is characterised by the reactive solution to existing problems...' With this recognition, strategy is now viewed as a constant process of adjustment which requires a proactive response to changes in environment (Stoney, 2001). Strategy is viewed as incremental and iterative. This has contributed to the later phase of strategy development, whereby strategy which had been previously viewed as rationally formulated, is now viewed as a proactive type of planning. This has introduced the concept of emergentness (Mintzberg, 1987b) and incrementalism (Quinn, 1980).

2.2.2 Further Development

According to Mintzberg and Waters (1985), a strategy which is planned, i.e. the intended strategy, would emerge into a different degree of deliberateness

or emergentness as it moves forward and becomes a realised strategy. Based on this argument, Mintzberg and Waters (1985) claim that organisations may experience some patterns of tendencies in the directions of deliberate and emergent strategies rather than a perfect form of either. As suggested by Mintzberg and Waters (1989), deliberate strategy focuses on direction and control in getting desired outcomes, whereas emergent strategy opens up to strategic learning. Emergent strategy implies 'learning what works' and 'taking one action at a time in search for that viable pattern or consistency' (Mintzberg and Waters, 1989, p.17).

With a similar perspective, logical incrementalism encourages an organisation to continually review its strategy (Quinn, 1980). It is believed that the most effective strategies emerge through this iterative process and therefore strategy should not be viewed as a predetermined set of formulations (Quinn, 1980). According to Quinn (1980), a well formulated strategy helps in allocating an organisation's resources into a viable position, based on assessments of its relative internal competencies, weaknesses, and anticipation of changes in the environment. This change is known as the strategic reorientation, where changes in environment result in a change of an organisation's strategic course (Mintzberg, 1987a). According to Mintzberg (1987a), as an organisation pursues a given strategic orientation, it may be faced with the need to change its initial strategy to maintain its competitiveness. This continuous change occurs in the context of perfecting the initial strategy (Mintzberg, 1987a). Studies have shown that strategic change is an emergent process that is context dependent and involves an unpredictable process, where the intended strategies may lead to both the intended and unintended outcomes (Balogun, 2006).

It is claimed that strategic change, also known as strategic renewal, is an iterative process of belief, action, and learning, which aims to align the organisation's strategy with the change in its environmental circumstances (Floyd and Lane, 2000). It has been proven that effective strategies emerge through an iterative process, which can be achieved through developments and interactions of a subsystem (Daniel, 1992; Farjoun, 2002; Noda and Bower, 1996; Rumelt, 1999). As such, a successful strategic renewal will overcome the 'inertial forces' existing in an organisation's established strategy which will close the gap between its existing core competencies and the evolving circumstances of the environment (Floyd and Lane, 2000, p.154).

This is important to avoid a strategic drift, a point where an organisation's strategy becomes less and less in line with its environment (Johnson, 1992).

As a contrast to the earlier phase of strategy development, the further phase of strategy has seen an emphasis on an outward looking approach. For example, it acknowledges the importance of aligning an organisation's strategy with the external environment (Floyd and Lane, 2000; Johnson, 1992). The discussions in this section have seen the contribution of emergentness and logical incrementalism concepts in inspiring new interests in the development of the strategic management field. The development of the strategic management field continues to flourish. An example of this can be seen in the applications of other theories from a number of disciplines to understand phenomena in strategic management research (Bowman et al., 2002). For example, this has seen the adoption of sociological perspective in understanding the strategic management phenomena (Bowman et al., 2002). The acknowledgment of the importance of sociological perspective is a part of the emerging phase in strategic management field.

2.2.3 Emerging Phase

As suggested by Pettigrew et al. (2002), power, politics, cultural, learning are at the peak of discourse in the strategic management field. The adoption of a sociological approach in strategy research encourages an understanding of the complex reality of an organisation. It is a powerful tool that can be used to elicit the influence of social, political and cultural realities in the strategy process of organisations (Rumelt et al., 1994). This is made possible as the sociological approach deals primarily with human interactions. As described by Pettigrew et al. (2002), a sociological approach is a concern of the behavioural scientists which focuses on behaviour of people in determining the survival of organisations. Therefore, a sociological approach is important in strategy studies. Considering the strategy process can be influenced by various factors, it should thus not be treated as a linear process.

An example of the effort to understand the social phenomena in strategic management is the strategy-as-practice introduced by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008). According to Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008), strategy-as-practice emphasises the importance of research that closely

examines the actual doing of strategy. In fulfilling this quest, a sociological approach is useful in providing an understanding of the lived experience from the perspective of the practitioners (Jarzabkowski and Whittington, 2008).

Other scholars have acknowledged the influence of social, political and cultural intervention on the strategic management of organisation. For example, Johnson (1992) has stressed the importance of acknowledging the socio-political and cultural realities in managing issues on strategic change. It is suggested that an organisation needs to explore its cultural web in understanding the nature of its culture, its impact on strategy, and the difficulties that could be faced in the strategic change process (Johnson, 1992). Therefore, managing strategic change can be viewed as a matter of planning a system and structure that could encourage a behaviour that is in line with the logic of strategy (Johnson, 1992).

Strategy scholars have also found an extensive degree of bargaining, solicitation and political activity in the strategy decision making process (Pettigrew et al., 1992a; Quinn, 1980). Pettigrew et al. (1992a) had discovered that the strategic change process in the NHS was proven to be highly resistant to change due to the political nature of the health system which is highly segmented and pluralistic due to the existence of numerous professional groups. In his study, Pettigrew (1987, p.659) suggested that 'structures, cultures and strategies' are capable of protecting the 'interests of dominant groups'. Hence, it is argued that the biases in the structures and cultures were used to protect the dominant group which was aimed to reduce challenges towards the strategic decision that had been made (Pettigrew, 1987). Therefore, it was concluded that the development of strategic change in an organisation takes on the character of a political learning process, a long term conditioning and influence designed to establish the dominating legitimacy (Pettigrew, 1987).

In relation to this, Quinn (1980) also suggested that the strategy development process is characterised by incremental changes which are relatively unstructured, highly iterative and involve a socio-political process. Quinn (1980) also commented that power behaviour factors such as the political factors of strategic decisions, executive bargaining and negotiation processes, satisfying in decision making, and the role of a coalition in strategic management are major influences in strategic management.

This implies that strategy is a process of negotiation (Mintzberg et al., 2009). As such, strategy formation is considered as an 'overt process of influence, emphasising the use of power and politics to negotiate strategies favourable to particular interests' (Mintzberg et al., 2009, p.234). In this sense, people try to use power to formulate strategies that would favour them (Pettigrew, 1987). As suggested by Mintzberg et al. (2009) there are two types of power that can influence the organisation's strategy process. These include the micro power and the macro power. The micro power is described as the ability of interested parties to influence the strategy process and could lead to bargaining, persuasions, and confrontation among the interested parties (Mintzberg et al., 2009). The macro power refers to the ability of the organisation to exert its power and influence on its larger environment for its own advantage (Mintzberg et al., 2009). Hence, it is suggested by Mintzberg et al. (2009) that strategy also involves managing the interested parties for the organisation's own benefit. The interested parties are the stakeholders of an organisation. They are defined as any group or individual that can have an impact on or be affected by the organisation's strategy (Freeman, 2010).

In relation to this, Freeman (2010) emphasises the importance of the stakeholders approach in integrating organisation strategy with its stakeholders, whilst ensuring alignment with the external environment. According to Freeman (2010), the stakeholders approach focuses on the role of an organisation in its social system.

The discussions in this section suggest that strategy should not be treated as a linear process as it may involve various interfering factors particularly the sociological factors. This requires a sociological perspective in providing an understanding from the social dimension. Sociological perspective encourages the recognition of the socio-political and cultural influence in the strategy process. It is an appropriate means for eliciting a comprehensive understanding considering the substances of strategy which are complex, non-routine and unstructured.

The emerging phase has seen the influence of a sociological perspective in understanding strategic management in organisations. This section has presented the influence of social, political, and cultural realities in the strategy process of organisations. It provides justification for the need to delve into these aspects in an organisation's strategy process. The sociological perspective is particularly adopted in this study to surface the social

dimensions in relation to the strategy management of the University. As such, this study is unique compared to the bulk of research which has dominated the present strategy literature, as it is not aimed at analysing any predetermined framework or model. As suggested by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008), most present studies have been focused on analysing the economics based model or frameworks such as environmental analyses, resource, competencies, capabilities assessments or the alignment between organisation and environment.

2.2.4 Section Summary

The discussion in this section has provided an overview of strategic management development. It is thought that there are three significant progressions in the strategic management field that are relevant for the purpose of this study. They comprise the early development of strategy and its applications in the business organisations; the further development of strategic management which includes the recognition of emergentness within intended strategy; and the recognition of the sociological dimension and the advancement of understanding through the sociological perspective.

The early development discusses the origin of strategic management which is beneficial in providing the sense of strategy evolution over the years. The further development highlighted the importance of recognising the shift in views from strategy as formal planning to the requirement for a more proactive strategy with consideration of the changes in circumstances and environment.

The early and the further phase of strategic management have seen the focus on the content of strategy rather than on how strategy is managed in an organisation. This study is interested in exploring how strategy is managed from the perspective of those involved in the strategy process of the University. Therefore, the sociological approach provides the opportunity to learn about the strategy process from the perspective of the people who are involved in the strategy process.

The discussion provided on the sociological perspective has highlighted the importance of understanding the complexity of strategic management through

the sociological lens. Without any claims to be exhaustive, the discussions provided in this section are mainly aimed at charting the impetus of the interest in this study i.e. the interest in the sociological perspective of strategy study. This is done with an overview of development in the strategic management field which leads towards the adoption of the sociological perspective in providing an understanding of the strategy management process in the study.

It has been suggested by Bowman et al. (2002) that there are many theories that have been used in providing understanding of the strategic management phenomena. These include the economics, sociology, and psychology theories (Bowman et al., 2002). This study is particularly interested in exploring and illuminating issues and phenomena of the strategy management process from the sociological dimension. This is in line with the recognition of influences in the strategy process which are considered as unstructured, political, and negotiated.

The next discussions will present the relevance of strategic management in public sector organisations. This narrows the focus down towards the case study context which is conducted on a public university.

2.3 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The changes in the political economy have contributed to the reduction of public expenditure and privatisation of public enterprises (Ferlie, 2002). These changes demand a market-like orientation and a much more managed public sector. Along with this change, the New Public Management (NPM) has been introduced in public sector institutions (Ferlie, 2002). With the rise of the NPM, political attention is drawn towards more efficient public sector management (Ferlie, 2002). This has seen the adoption of quasi market management in public sector institutions. One of the developments relates to strategic management in the public sector. As suggested by Clark (1998), there has been a sharpening of strategic management capacity in the public sector.

Strategic management in the public sector is evident in the budgeting, performance measurements, and other management activities which are

guided by a strategic agenda (Poister and Streib, 1999). According to Ferlie (2002), one of the earliest strategy models in the public sector derives from the corporate planning movement. The corporate planning focuses on determination of resources across the organisation based on data, option appraisal, and other formal techniques (Ferlie, 2002).

An example of this can be seen in the adoption of Program-Planning-Budgeting-Systems (PPBS) in public sector organisations. The PPBS encompasses multipurpose functions which include planning; programming; and budgeting (Peterson, 1971). As such, PPBS includes major planning functions that use budget as a tool for developing short term financial planning and programming decisions (Peterson, 1971). In the context of higher education, PPBS has been introduced to provide a coordinating agency with evaluative means of allocating resources among competing programmes based on objective measures (Peterson, 1971). The implementation of PPBS in higher education has been criticised as being too focused on providing programmatic guidance (Botner, 1970) and ignoring the political realities of planning and management in higher education (Balderston and Weathersby, 1973).

In relation to this, it is suggested that the early corporate planning adopted in the public sector was mainly used for internal resources allocation (Grant, 1998). It represents the top down commitment of strategic planning which was basic and formulaic (Stewart, 2004). This reflects the early development of strategy as discussed in the recent section. In the UK, corporate planning emerged in the 1960s in the hospital and university sectors and remained influential until the mid 1970s (Ferlie, 2002).

Later in the late 1970s, the command and control approach of corporate planning was no longer found to be suitable considering the increasingly turbulent and rapid changes in the environment (Ferlie, 2002). As claimed by Mintzberg and Water (1985), this is due to the failure in formalisation where formal strategy plan limits the capability to adapt with the changes in the environment. As discussed in the earlier section, the two important concepts that contribute to this development are incrementalism (Quinn, 1980) and the emergent strategy (Mintzberg and Waters, 1978).

In a public sector, it is believed that the incremental and emergent strategies are more effective than the intended strategy as they allow public sector institutions to be more responsive to the demands of their constituents (Ring

and Perry, 1985). It is suggested by Perrot (1996), that the ability to manage emerging issues is an important element of a successful public sector institution. As such, it is believed that effective strategic management is essential for strengthening the fit between the institution and its stakeholders (Poister and Streib, 1999). Poister and Streib (1999) suggest that strategic management in the public sector is focused on strengthening the long term viability and effectiveness of public sector policy and management capacity. Therefore, given the unique characteristics of the public sector, formulaic planning is argued to be inappropriate and misleading in this type of institution (Ring and Perry, 1985).

This section has introduced strategic management in the public sector. It gives an idea of the development of strategic management in public sector institutions. The changes in political economics have contributed to the requirement of quasi market behaviour in public sector institutions. Along with this development, it is important to note that public sector institutions are different from their private sector counterparts. In a way, what applies in the private sector might not be relevant in public sector institutions. This is mainly contributed by the inherent characteristics of public sector institutions.

Therefore, the next discussions will focus on specific characteristics of public sector institutions that contribute to the difference between the strategic management of a public sector and the private sector institutions. As suggested by Nutt and Backoff (1995) strategic management in public sector institutions should be treated differently from their private sector counterparts. Thus, it is argued that the strategic management developed for private sector is potentially misleading and incomplete considering the unique characteristics of public sector institutions (Nutt and Backoff, 1995). These unique characteristics are discussed in the section that follows.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Public Sector Strategic Management

Ring and Perry (1985) suggested that the distinction of the public sector strategic management lies in its context. Unlike the private sector, the public sector context is rooted in its societal role (Ring and Perry, 1985). As such, strategy in public sector organisations is argued to be political as it is often

used as a means to justify the institution's purpose and direction to the public at large (Stewart, 2004). This is claimed to be inevitable considering the government management which is exposed to public scrutiny and opened to public debate (Allison, 1984).

The contrasting characteristics of public sector strategic management are evident in the separation of powers; the openness of the government which reflects on the pluralism in the public sector in which it is more open to the external environment when compared to the private sector; and the bureaucratic nature of the institutions (Nutt and Backoff, 1993). These three main characteristics of the public sector are further discussed.

Separation of Powers

The separation of powers is seen in the division of roles between strategy formulators and strategy implementers (Ring and Perry, 1985). As claimed by Allison (1983), the separation of power in the public sector is intended to prevent the arbitrary exercise of powers rather than to promote efficiency. As a consequence, strategic choices of public sector institutions have to be derived from the legislative process and need to be mandated (Allison, 1984). As such the strategic plans of a public sector need to be approved by its ministry (Perrott, 1996).

The top down strategic planning has contributed to the lack of ownership claimed by the public sector institutions (Nutt and Backoff, 1987). As argued by Ramamurti (1986), this is contributed to by the externally imposed social and political agendas which have consequently contributed to the loss of strategic autonomy in public sector institutions. This is in contrast to the essential practice of private sector strategy, where it requires a direct link between strategy formulation and strategy implementation with the active involvement of all relevant parties.

An example of a separation of powers in the public sector is evident in the general management functions of government which are constitutionally spread out across the federal, states, and local legislative bodies (Ring and Perry, 1985). The existence of separation of powers in these management functions is claimed to have contributed to the existence of multiple and competing interests of the controlling group (Nutt and Backoff, 1987). It is

suggested that each member of this group will protect the benefit of their individual constituents (Nutt and Backoff, 1987).

The separation of power has also contributed to the vagueness in the policy and objectives of government strategy (Ring and Perry, 1985). Ramamurti (1986) had found a heightened goal ambiguity in government department strategy. As suggested by Nutt (1993), the competition among group members leads to negotiated compromises that are purposely vague. In fact, it has been argued that the ambiguous strategy is perceived to be an asset for the public sector while a clear strategy is suggested to be counterproductive for the public sector (Ring and Perry, 1985). It is claimed by Ring and Perry (1985) that a clear strategy in the public sector can produce two counter-productive effects. First, it may serve as a rallying device for mobilising political opposition, and second, it may heighten bureaucratisation (Ring and Perry, 1985).

The discussions have presented the 'separation of powers' as one of the characteristics of public sector institutions. From the discussions, it is apparent that the separation of power has contributed to the top down strategic planning and the vagueness in strategic planning. This is because, in order to minimise the effect of competing interests within this structure, the government policy and objectives have been purposely vague.

The Openness of the Government Sector

The openness of the government sector is another characteristic of public sector institutions. As such, constituents of public sector institutions have direct constitutional access to strategy makers as compared to the private sector (Ring and Perry, 1985). For example, it was experienced by a former government official that policy had been exposed to public scrutiny and was claimed as being 'killed before it ever really got off the drawing boards' (Ring and Perry, 1985, p.279). This example shows the complexity of public sector decision-making due to the general public scrutiny. It also indicates the influence of the constituents on the strategic management of the public sector. As suggested by Ring and Perry (1985), it is inevitable for public sector strategic management to avoid its wide ranging stakeholders. The stakeholders of a public sector are defined as individuals or groups that have

interests in the institutions or might be affected by the institutions' actions (Perrott, 1996).

The openness of the government strategy has led to the politicisation of issues where strategic decisions of public sector institutions are opened to debate in legislature and media (Ring and Perry, 1985). Another effect of the openness and the existence of multiple stakeholders is the difficulty in achieving consensus. This is because each of the stakeholders evaluates strategy differently, often reaching irreconcilable conclusions (Ring and Perry, 1985).

The inherent characteristics of public sector institutions such as the openness to the general public scrutiny, vagueness in policy, and the existence of multiple stakeholders' interests have made strategic management in the public sector particularly complicated. As suggested by Ring and Perry (1985), strategy implementation in public sector institutions is difficult because of the openness to multiple stakeholders and is compounded by the vagueness in its policy.

Therefore, strategy in public sector institutions is suggested to be negotiated rather than formulated (Ramamurti, 1986). This is mainly due to its very existence which is to address the need of various constituents.

Bureaucratisation

It is also claimed that the culture of public sector institutions is also different with the existence of bureaucracy (Ring and Perry, 1985). The bureaucracy in public sector institutions is evident in the establishment of formal processes developed to monitor the conduct of its public officials (Ring and Perry, 1985). According to Ramamurti (1986), the bureaucratisation in public sector institutions is mainly reflected in the functional structures, inflexible planning and control system, red tapes and reward system. The existence of bureaucratisation has resulted from the existence of higher controlling bodies within the public sector institutions (Ring and Perry, 1985). In other words, the bureaucratisation in public sector institutions has resulted from its coexistence with the government (Ramamurti, 1986).

The existence of bureaucratisation is also partly due to the legal mandates, obligations to charter which are placed on the public sector institutions (Nutt and Backoff, 1995). This is believed to be a constraint for these institutions as it limits their autonomy and flexibility (Nutt and Backoff, 1995).

2.3.2 Section Summary

The discussions in this section provide the unique characteristics of public sector institutions. Among the characteristics identified are separation of powers; openness of the government sector; and bureaucratisation. These unique characteristics have contributed to the difference between the public sector institutions and the private sector institutions. They require a different treatment and acknowledgement as compared to their private sector counterparts.

An example that reflects on the difference between the two institutions, is apparent in the statement by Pettigrew et al. (1992b) that one of the features of the British public sector is the experience of politically driven and top down pressure for change. Based on this acknowledgement, it is claimed that the strategy formulation and implementation in this sector are shaped by a political bargaining process (Pettigrew et al., 1992b). This is inevitable for this type of institution as it is characterised by a high degree of politicisation and political behaviour of multiple stakeholders; vague and multiple objectives that are reinterpreted at a local level; limited power of top echelons due to separation of powers; and the existence of bureaucratisation (Ferlie, 2002).

As such, public sector institutions need to be responsive to the political consequences of their strategy (Perrott, 1996). This is in contrast to the private sector, where the emphasis of the public sector changes from market dependence to a complex political, economic and legal consideration (Perrott, 1996). Thus, the role of strategic management in the public sector requires managing this complexity from a strategic perspective on an ongoing basis in ensuring a current strategic plan (Perrott, 1996).

In doing so, it requires a different set of behaviours in dealing with strategic management in the public sector (Ferlie, 2002). This also reflects the complexity of strategic management in the public sector. Such complexity has contributed to the interest of this study which is based on a public university. The study explores strategic management issues whilst eliciting an understanding of this setting. As such, the sociological perspective has been adopted in the study to allow an in depth understanding of this setting.

The discussions in this section have provided an awareness of the characteristics of public sector institutions. This awareness facilitates a

further understanding of the case study context which is based on a public university. The following section will narrow down the discussions by focusing on the existing literature on university strategy. This is in line with the study conducted on a university.

2.4 RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

Most of the existing university strategy studies were focused on strategic planning. As suggested by Holdaway and Meekison (1990), strategic planning in universities had received greater attention during the 1970s and 1980s. This trend is still relevant today as the literature reveals that university strategy studies are still vastly centred on strategic planning.

Examples of such studies are conducted by Fumasoli and Lepori (2011); Holdaway and Meekison (1990); Pidcock (2001); and Thomas (1980). Thomas (1980) has indicated that strategic planning in a university is never autonomous as it is operated within laws and customs of a state. The extent of government funding has also led to the top down planning experienced in universities (Thomas, 1980). It is also suggested by Thomas (1980), that the reliance on the government for resources had contributed to the pressures for resources and greater accountability for their deployment. This resulted in various performance measurements adopted to evaluate university strategy (Thomas, 1980).

In relation to this, Pidcock's study on a new university has also shown that staff involvement in strategic planning is low, where the strategic planning has been described as being imposed by the majority of interviewees in his study (Pidcock, 2001). This has been argued as contributing to the missing link between strategic planning and the university's core business of teaching, learning, and research (Pidcock, 2001). It is believed that the top down planning had also contributed to the lack of awareness and feeling of ownership of the university strategy (Pidcock, 2001). Hence, the strategic planning of university has been described as merely a 'good paper exercise' because it is claimed to be inconsistent with the reality (Pidcock, 2001). As cautioned by Schmidtlein and Milton (1988), the use of government planning

without appropriate consideration of its applicability within the university can lead to a strategic planning failure.

In another study, Holdaway and Meekison (1990) have made an observation on Canadian university strategic planning. They have found that the strategic planning models from private institutions were too complicated to be applied in university. This coincides with the suggestion provided by Nutt and Backoff (1987) which proposes that strategy in public sector institutions should be treated differently from the private sector as it is potentially misleading and incomplete, considering the unique characteristics of public sector institutions.

Similar to the findings of Thomas (1980), Holdaway and Meekison (1990) also claimed that the university strategic planning had been more of an ad hoc process due to the reliance on public funding. In addition, it is suggested that the unpredictable social and economic context inherent in a public university had also contributed to the ad hoc strategy found (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). As suggested by Lang (1988), university planning is mainly focused on managing crises rather than avoiding crises. Therefore, it is suggested that the key to successful strategic planning in a university should comprise of the alignment with the environment, resources, purpose and most importantly, the acknowledgement of the political realities of university life (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990).

Fumasoli and Lepori (2011) also conducted a study to investigate strategies in higher education. The study was conducted on three small Swiss universities. Their study found an attempt to create organisational coherence through strategy in the universities. It was discovered that strategy coherence is influenced by the governance structure of the universities. It is suggested that the governance structure is aimed at balancing the centralised power of the government and the implementation by the academics. In relation to this, they have suggested that effective communication is necessary in this situation, in order to strike a balance between the central power and the academics (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011).

The study also indicated that coherent action is vital for small higher education institutions to survive the competition and to steer its trajectory (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011). It is claimed that the result would be different in much bigger higher education institutions as it is argued that they have the

ability to gain more power, resources, and legitimacy due to a larger student enrolment (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011).

The studies conducted by Fumasoli and Lepori (2011); Holdaway and Meekison (1990); Pidcock (2001); and Thomas (1980) have provided descriptions of strategic planning in universities. Their studies achieved a similar consensus pertaining to the reliance on governmental resources. It is claimed that such reliance has contributed to the top down strategic planning in universities (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990; Pidcock, 2001; Thomas, 1980) and the requirement for coherence through strategy in universities (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011). The findings made by them reflect on the characteristics of strategic management in the public sector which has been discussed earlier. For example, the separation of power which refers to the divisional role of strategy formulators and strategy implementers has led to the loss of strategic autonomy in universities (Pidcock, 2001). This has also contributed to the top down strategy in universities (Thomas, 1980). The openness of the government sectors which requires universities to respond to multiple constituents has contributed to the ad hoc strategic planning in universities (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). The bureaucratisation which increases the accountability on universities' activities has encouraged the adoption of performance measures in the strategic management of universities (Thomas, 1980).

Besides studies on describing the nature of strategic planning in universities, other researchers have also conducted specific studies in identifying factors that may influence the universities' strategic planning. For example, Elwood and Leyden (2000) have suggested the influence of a cultural element in the strategic planning of universities. They have indicated the importance of understanding the cultural influence in the strategic planning of universities. Culture is defined as what is typical of an organisation and represents the pattern of acceptable and expected behaviour (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). They have proposed the importance of understanding the various academic cultures in universities. According to Elwood and Leyden (2000), academic culture has been associated with multiple cultures such as collegial, bureaucratic; political; and organised anarchy (Elwood and Leyden, 2000).

Collegial refers to academic freedom where academics are allowed to focus on their own interest (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). In a collegial organisation, the individual believes in the right to be consulted (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). In

contrast to collegial, bureaucratic is associated with the existence of rules and regulations which are made through a formalised committee (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). This leads to the dominance of procedural power (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). Political is evident in the use of power to produce outcomes that favour self interest (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). In this type of organisation, power is decentralised and lies within certain interest groups (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). According to Elwood and Leyden (2000), organised anarchy refers to a fragmented organisation where power is dispersed and claimed to be ineffective.

In relation to this, Elwood and Leyden (2000) have suggested that in order to plan strategically, there is a need for higher education institutions to understand their unique cultures. It is contended that strategies can be managed and processed comprehensibly by understanding the academic culture (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). Taken from the Irish colleges example, the paper by Elwood and Leyden (2000) hypothesises that colleges have to take into consideration their existing unique cultures prior to its strategic planning. In addition to the existing culture, Elwood and Leyden (2000) have suggested the importance of a supportive strategy culture in higher education institutions (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). This supportive strategy culture includes treating strategic planning as a norm rather than a necessity during crises; linkages with external enterprises; effective leadership; involvement of faculty members in the strategy agenda; support for innovations; and delegation of clear responsibility for desired outcomes (Elwood and Leyden, 2000).

Elwood and Leyden (2000) have provided suggestions to facilitate strategic change through a specific understanding of academic culture. Others like Kotler and Murphy (1981); Shattock (2000); and Sullivan and Richardson (2011) have also provided varieties of other suggestions for implementing strategic planning in universities. These authors have developed a prescribed framework to facilitate strategic planning in higher education. This is discussed in the following section.

2.4.1 Framework for University Strategic Planning

The discussions in this section present the prescriptive framework developed by various authors in relation to strategic planning of higher education. For example, Kotler and Murphy (1981) have suggested the importance of environment and resource analysis in formulating strategic planning in higher education. They have outlined a strategic planning posture in higher education. It is suggested that environment and resource analysis help to determine goal formulation of higher education that will eventually determine its strategies (Kotler and Murphy, 1981). It is also added that higher education institutions need to develop organisation design and system design that will support the implementation of the strategy (Kotler and Murphy, 1981).

According to Kotler and Murphy (1981) organisation design involves people, structure, and culture, while system design involves designing and upgrading the systems that help to ensure the achievement of higher education strategy. Examples of system design are marketing information systems; and marketing control systems (Kotler and Murphy, 1981). Kotler and Murphy (1981) have provided a prescriptive framework based on the importance of environment and resources analyses and the existence of organisation design and system design to support the strategic management in higher education.

Another author, like St. John (1991) has provided a much narrower context as compared to Kotler and Murphy (1981). He has focused on the importance of resource management evaluation to be conducted by the state's government department responsible for higher education. According to St. John (1991), this framework can be used by the state's government to evaluate their resource management strategy. It is developed based on interviews and document reviews of a set of case studies of higher education in Minnesota and Kansas (St. John, 1991).

The framework emphasises the importance of understanding goals, objectives, outcomes, and resources in determining the resource management strategies (St. John, 1991). The framework suggested by St. John (1991) is similar to the suggestion made by Kotler and Murphy (1981) where they have highlighted the importance of goals, environment, and resources in determining higher education's strategic planning. St. John (1991) has been more specific in his suggestion where he has focused on resource management in strategic

planning. He has made specific suggestions that can be applied by the state's government involved in allocating resources to higher education. St. John (1991) has suggested various elements which are important in determining resource allocation. Among the elements suggested for a comprehensive state level resources management in higher education are: coordination of programme and facilities planning; cost management; institutional subsidies; student aid; and enrolment management (St. John, 1991).

Rudzki (1995) has also developed a framework based on a similar emphasis on resources, environmental analysis, and objectives (Kotler and Murphy, 1981; St. John, 1991). Focussing on a different context, Rudzki (1995) has concentrated on internationalisation strategy. According to Rudzki (1995), internationalisation refers to the long term strategic planning for establishing overseas links for student mobility, staff development, and curriculum innovations.

He has proposed the importance of accessing the environment, resources and objectives in planning the internationalisation strategy of higher education (Rudzki, 1995). His framework is drawn from the previous empirical studies of UK business schools in order to identify key elements of internationalisation strategy. It is proposed that strategic management in the internationalisation of higher education should include the three elements of strategic analysis, strategy choice, and strategy implementation (Rudzki, 1995).

According to Rudzki (1995) strategic analysis is the ability to understand the environment; resources; and objective of the internationalisation process. According to Rudzki (1995), strategic choice involves a process of generating options which include determination of options; evaluation of options that is generally based on the financial implications; and selection of strategy which should be based on suitability, feasibility and acceptability in the organisation. It is emphasised that strategic choice is about making a suitable option that is in line with the aims of the organization (Rudzki, 1995). Some of the examples can be seen in the choice between teaching or research, and elite or mass education (Rudzki, 1995).

As suggested by Rudzki (1995), once strategy has been decided, it is then implemented. The strategic implementation involves the allocation of resources; ensuring the most effective organisational structure to support the strategy; and management of people and systems (Rudzki, 1995). This

recommendation is in line with the earlier suggestions made by Kotler and Murphy (1981) on the importance of resources; and the existence of organisation design and system design in ensuring a successful strategy implementation.

In a more recent development, Shattock (2000) has developed a much broader framework in relation to the strategic management of universities. His framework provides suggestions on the key characteristics in guiding strategic management in universities. The key characteristics comprise competitiveness, opportunism, income generation and cost reduction, relevance, excellence, and reputation (Shattock, 2000). According to Shattock (2000), the framework is developed as a means of integrating the various key characteristics of strategic management in universities.

It is proposed that institutions should access situations comprehensively and take a holistic view of their operations in order to respond quickly and effectively to external pressures (Shattock, 2000). Therefore, it is suggested that in order to be successful, a university's strategy should focus on competitiveness by winning research funding, gaining reputation through a league table, and competing for students (Shattock, 2000). It is also reckoned that universities should be opportunist and able to seize opportunities as they arise, generate external income, and manage resources strategically by prioritising scarce resources (Shattock, 2000). At the same time, it is suggested that universities should demonstrate their relevance by addressing public issues, widening access or collaboration with industry, and tackling issues of regional unemployment (Shattock, 2000). It is explained that excellence refers to the focus on gaining reputation for excellence in all aspects such as teaching, students, services, and the ability to respond to pressures and expectations (Shattock, 2000). According to Shattock (2000) reputation can be gained through public image; the league tables; and perceptions of parents, students and employees.

As suggested by Shattock (2000), the role of strategic management is to weave these characteristics within the necessary resource constraints. This is important in order to improve institutions' effectiveness, reconciling internal and external pressures, and to serve as a channel for providing information relating to external demands (Shattock, 2000).

Another recent framework was developed by Sullivan and Richardson (2011). They have emphasised the importance of integrating practice and assessments. Sullivan and Richardson (2011) have proposed an integrated model which is aimed at instilling strategic planning throughout universities (Sullivan and Richardson, 2011). It is suggested that a strategic plan can be kept alive by integrating strategic planning with day-to-day practices and continuous assessments (Sullivan and Richardson, 2011). It is claimed that this process should involve linking institutional strategic plans with unit based goals, action steps, individual performance assessments, measureable outcomes and individual responsibility (Sullivan and Richardson, 2011). Their framework is developed to link the strategic planning with practice and assessments.

From the frameworks developed, it is noticeable that the much earlier frameworks (Kotler and Murphy, 1981; Rudzki, 1995; St. John, 1991) were focused on the importance of environmental analysis, resource analysis, and the identification of goals and objectives in determining the strategic planning of higher education. The more recent frameworks have shifted the focus towards addressing contemporary issues in higher education. For example Sullivan and Richardson (2011) have emphasised the importance of monitoring and assessments to ensure the successful implementation of strategic planning. Shattock (2000) has identified specific characteristics in channelling a comprehensive effort in guiding a university's strategic planning. It is believed that these recent frameworks were developed in response to the current higher education development which requires the adoption of a quasi market strategy with emphasis on efficiency.

So far, the strategy literature that has been discussed in this section is very much prescriptive in nature. It has tried to provide solutions and recommendations in relation to universities' strategic planning. The next section will continue to discuss other strategy studies that have been empirically conducted on universities. This will give an idea of the current strategy studies on universities.

2.4.2 Other Studies on University Strategy Research

Drawn from empirical research, other authors (Chaffee, 1980; Cooke and Lang, 2009; Hardy, 1991; Maassen and Potman, 1990) have looked at various aspects of strategic planning. For instance, Chaffee (1980) has attempted to test the type of strategy model of colleges based on adaptive and interpretive models. According to Chaffee (1980), the adaptive model involves aligning and reorienting an organisation to change with the changes in market demands. The adaptive model is claimed to be an important approach in maintaining a steady flow of resources from the market to the organisation (Chaffee, 1980). This model is based on the assumption that organisations must change with the changes in environment (Chaffee, 1980).

The interpretive model, on the other hand, views an organisation as a network of self- interested participants (Chaffee, 1980). It is contended that successful strategic management requires skilful use of all forms of communication and symbols to portray the collective reality of participants (Chaffee, 1980). It corresponds with the social contract view, based on the belief that reality is socially constructed; thus symbols and communications are used as tools for people to create, reiterate, alter, circumscribe and interpret interactions and their sense of satisfaction (Chaffee, 1980). Based on this model, strategy is defined as an orienting metaphor that allows an organisation and its environment to be understood by the organisation stakeholders (Chaffee, 1980).

Chaffee's research (1980) examined the behaviour and subsequent situations of two sets of colleges, comprised of a total of 14 colleges that had experienced severe financial difficulty in the mid 1970s. These colleges were categorised based on their recovery from financial difficulty (Chaffee, 1980). One set made a dramatic discovery while the other did not (Chaffee, 1980). The data were collected from published documents on the colleges and their history; unpublished internal memorandums; newspaper clippings, accreditation self-study reports and other archival materials that were available and considered relevant (Chaffee, 1980).

The study found that the resilient group had pursued a combination of adaptive and interpretive strategies (Chaffee, 1980). In doing so, they were selective in responding to opportunities and had invested highly in conceptual

and communication systems that guide and interpret the organisation change (Chaffee, 1980). This is in contrast with the less resilient colleges where they were likely to pursue a purely adaptive strategy (Chaffee, 1980). Therefore, Chaffee's (1980) study concluded that the adaptive strategy should be accompanied by interpretive strategy. It also suggested that the establishment of interpretive strategy requires a strong and clear sense of organisation identity which should become the basis for decision making (Chaffee, 1980). It is argued that the understanding of symbols or myths of an organisation, the salience of the political process, and the organisation culture are important in higher education strategic planning (Chaffee, 1980).

Being influenced by Chaffee (1980), Maassen and Potman (1990) seek to describe Dutch higher education based on the evaluation of the same strategy models. Observation of the biennial planning process of Dutch higher education had discovered the adoption of the interpretive model (Maassen and Potman, 1990). The claim was made based on the existence of dialogue and communication among the interested parties which had taken place during the development of the higher education strategic plans (Maassen and Potman, 1990).

The interpretive model explains strategy as a social contract (Chaffee, 1980). In interpretive strategy, organisation representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders to act in ways that favour the organisation (Chaffee, 1980). It is suggested that the complex relationship of an organisation and its environment had motivated the organisation to follow the interpretive model of strategy (Maassen and Potman, 1990). According to Maassen and Potman (1990), the adoption of the interpretive strategy had been noticeable in their study. It was argued that the characteristics of professional bureaucracy, democracy, and autonomy had made it necessary to motivate behaviour and improve interactions and relationships internally and externally (Maassen and Potman, 1990).

In addition, the study by Maassen and Potman (1990) had also found that the strategy in Dutch higher education was moving towards homogeneity (1990). It was argued that the uncertainty in the environment had stimulated the imitation behaviour of the Dutch higher education (Maassen and Potman, 1990). Both Chaffee (1980) and Maassen and Potman (1990) had tested the applicability of strategy models, i.e. adaptive and interpretive strategy models, in their studies. Chaffee (1980) had described the usefulness of the

interpretive approach in ensuring successful strategic planning of the colleges in his study, while Maassen and Potman (1990) had suggested the importance of interpretive and adaptive models in the strategic planning of Dutch universities.

 In another study, Hardy (1991) described the strategic planning in Brazilian universities. The study was based on semi-structured interviews conducted with administrators, directors or deans, professors, students, and non-academics including the members of key committees (Hardy, 1991). The empirical research was conducted on six Brazilian universities with the aim establishing the nature of strategy formulation in each university (Hardy, 1991). It was discovered that the strategy in higher education was fragmented due to the political struggle between the interest groups which had led to the occurrence of conflict (Hardy, 1991). The findings made by Hardy (1991) are similar to the findings made by Chaffee (1980) and Maassen and Potman (1990), where it had been argued that the conflict was due to the involvement of various interested parties in the strategy planning process of universities. This had led to the difficulties in achieving consensus (Hardy, 1991). The findings made by Hardy (1991) reflect on the characteristics of public sector institutions which are open to various constituents. This has seen the political struggle between the interested parties in strategic planning of the Brazilian universities (Hardy, 1991).

Another study which describes the strategic planning of universities was conducted by Taylor et al. (2008). The study was conducted on Portuguese higher education. This national study assessed the Portuguese higher education efforts in strategic planning (Taylor et al., 2008). The national survey consisting of 61 institutions representing 74.77% of all students enrolled in Portuguese higher education revealed that their strategic planning is essentially top down (Taylor et al., 2008).

The study revealed that 100% of the institutions surveyed had suggested the primary role of rector and presidents in setting the higher education strategic planning of the country (Taylor et al., 2008). The study had also shown that financial constraints were the main problem that had contributed to the existence of top down strategic planning in Portuguese higher education institutions (Taylor et al., 2008). It was claimed that the excessive power of governing bodies had led to the adoption of emergent strategies and the absence of intended strategies in Portuguese higher education (Taylor et al.,

2008). The findings made by Taylor et al. (2008) also reflect the characteristics of public sector institutions which have seen top down strategic planning due to the separation of powers between the strategy formulators and the implementers.

In a different context, Cooke and Lang (2009) conducted a study to examine the strategic plans of eight urban colleges in Ontario, Canada. The findings drawn from the review of strategy text had discovered a high degree of overlapping words, phrases and concepts from all of the colleges (Cooke and Lang, 2009). Words such as teaching, learning, applied education, academic excellence, access, students' experience, and students' success, enrolment growth, immigrant students and diversity, innovation technology and finance stability had been discovered in the strategy documents of these colleges (Cooke and Lang, 2009).

Cooke and Lang (2009) had applied an economic theory of monopsony to explain their discovery. Monopsony is described as a market of one buyer facing multiple sellers (Cooke and Lang, 2009). It is claimed that the absence of differentiation resulted from the monopsony power of the government which had led colleges to yield their responsibility based on the government strategy (Cooke and Lang, 2009). The government is described as the buyer and is in control over the key strategic elements of Canadian higher education (Cooke and Lang, 2009).

The key strategic elements that have been identified include the governance, enrolment, credentials offered, location, and entry and exit of competitors (Cooke and Lang, 2009). In relation to this, it is argued that the monopsony power of the government had led colleges to seek growth and survival based on the intent of the government rather than on competition, differentiation or competitive advantage (Cooke and Lang, 2009). It is claimed that this had contributed to the lesser attention to market and strategic issues of Canadian higher education (Cooke and Lang, 2009). The study also suggests that the government acted as a maximiser where it maximised its education service to its budget constraints with no parallel increase in funding (Cooke and Lang, 2009). According to Cooke and Lang (2009), this left colleges with fewer resources to manage as the government was willing to finance more students but would not raise grants to improve the quality or expand the capacity.

The findings made by Cooke and Lang (2009) also reflect the relationship of public sector institutions with the government. The reliance on governmental funding has given the autonomy to the government with regard to strategic planning of universities. The findings of Cooke and Lang (2009) are also consistent with earlier studies conducted by Fumasoli and Lepori (2011) and Thomas (1980) which suggest that the reliance on governmental funding has created such adherence to the government.

2.4.3 Section Summary

The review of the literature in this section has presented the vast scope of strategy studies on universities and higher education. It reveals three types of focus by scholars in this field. The first type is focused on describing the strategic planning of universities. The second type is focused on developing frameworks in relation to strategic planning of universities. These frameworks were developed for the purpose of guiding universities in their strategic planning. The third type focused on testing theories in order to explain the strategic planning found in universities.

Several themes have been discovered in relation to the description of higher education strategic planning. These include the dependence for resources on a governing body; the adoption of emergent strategy (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990; Taylor et al., 2008); the homogeneity of the strategy in higher education (Cooke and Lang, 2009; Taylor et al., 2008); and the existence of financial constraints (Cooke and Lang, 2009; Taylor et al., 2008). These literatures indicate the influence of government in the strategic planning of higher education. As a consequence of this interdependence, several authors (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011; Holdaway and Meekison, 1990; Pidcock, 2001;Taylor et al., 2008; Thomas, 1980) have suggested the existence of top down strategic planning in higher education institutions. A similar theme has also emerged in this study.

The existence of governing bodies has contributed to the complexity of strategic planning in higher education. The complexity is also contributed to by the existence of multiple interest groups in higher education institutions (Hardy, 1991). Various suggestions have been proposed in assisting the

strategic planning in this context. For example, Elwood and Leyden (2000) suggested the importance of understanding the higher education culture in planning its strategy and Chaffee (1980) and Maassen and Potman (1990) described the usefulness of the interpretive model in dealing with the complexity.

The review of the literature has also found several frameworks developed in relation to higher education strategic planning. These include the acknowledgment of the environment analysis; resources analysis; determination of goals and objective in strategic planning of higher education (Kotler and Murphy, 1981; Rudzki, 1995; St. John, 1991); and the focus on various other aspects in ensuring a successful strategic planning in this context (Shattock, 2000; Sullivan and Richardson, 2011). For example Sullivan and Richardson (2011) have suggested the importance of strategy assessment in ensuring a successful strategic planning, and Shattock (2000) has identified several characteristics in guiding comprehensive strategic planning of higher education.

The existing literature has been beneficial in providing the platform for the development of university strategy research. Despite its contributions, further development is still needed in this area. It is found that most of the existing university strategy studies have been limited to strategic planning and they have been mostly prescriptive. They are prescriptive as they avoid the possibilities of illuminating a real understanding of the strategy process within its context. As suggested by Fumasoli and Lepori (2011), the majority of the university strategy studies have been straightforward in their approach and avoid dealing with the complexity of the nature of the organisation involved. This has resulted in a lack of empirical strategy studies conducted in higher education and caused it to suffer a normative approach (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011).

It has also been argued by Dooris et al. (2002) that a convincing empirical study on university strategy in higher education has yet to be made available. It is claimed that this is due to the university strategic planning which occurs in a complex, dynamic, real world environment and is not readily amenable to controlled studies or experimental designs (Dooris et al., 2002). Therefore, as suggested by Jarzabkowski (2003), there is a need for strategy as practice research to be conducted in providing an understanding of the complexity of an organisation's strategy.

This indicates two gaps in the literature. One is the need for wider scope in providing an understanding of a university strategy process, which should not only be limited to strategic planning. Second is the need for a sociological perspective in providing the real sense of the university strategy process.

Hence, this study has addressed these gaps by focusing beyond strategic planning, and by illuminating issues from the perspectives of the people involved in the strategy management process. The issues surfaced from the sociological perspective based on participants' encounters, and have not been confined to the existing literature.

Therefore, this study brings out university strategy management issues based on the empirical research conducted and has focused on understanding the strategy management process by illuminating issues from the practice. From the findings, it has been discovered that the institutional theory provides an underlying elaboration of the phenomena encountered in the study.

The literature presented in this chapter missed the opportunity to reveal an understanding from the institutional theory perspective. For example, the following could potentially be elaborated with the institutional theory: the emergent strategy, which requires strategy to be in line with the external environment (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990); the financial constraints, which demand that universities to adhere to their constituents for funding (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2011); the influence of government which reveals the existence of an influential governing body in universities (Thomas, 1980); the existence of top down strategy as a consequence of the dependency on the governing body (Pidcock, 2001). This suggests the lack of interest in providing an underlying understanding of the phenomena encountered in the existing university strategy research. Hence, this study will advance further by providing an underlying elaboration of the strategy management process based on institutional theory. This will be fully discussed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

The following section will present the summary of the discussions in this chapter.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a general idea of the various issues that surround the topic of the study. Section 2.2 presents the evolution of strategic management field. The aim of the discussions in this section is to eventually locate the study within the emerging phase and to provide the justification of the sociological approach applied in the study.

Section 2.3 discusses strategic management within the public sector institutions. This is in line with the study which is conducted on a public university. It discusses the unique characteristics of public sector institutions in instilling awareness and the sensitivity of its inherent characteristics. This is important as the study is conducted on a public university which requires a different set of understanding from its private institution counterparts.

Finally, Section 2.4 presents the existing body of literature on university strategy. It covers a vast scope of strategy studies and literature written in this field. It creates the awareness of the existing studies conducted in this area. It also highlights the gaps in the existing literature and shows how this study differs from the existing studies. It differs as it is not built on any hypothesis or deduction; nor does it develop a prescriptive framework as found in the existing literature. Instead, this study explores strategy management issues from the perspective of those involved in the process. It extends beyond providing descriptions of the strategy management by enhancing a further understanding of the underlying meaning of the process.

Because of the wider scope that it covers, which goes beyond strategic planning which is commonly found in the existing literature, as well as the emphasis on understanding strategy management from the perspectives of those involved in the process, this study is not confined to the existing literature. It explores the strategy management process and brings out issues based on the case study context. As such, it aims to provide insights and understanding of the context from the perspective of those involved in the process. This is in line with the requirement for a sociological approach to be applied in strategy study (Jarzabkowski, 2003). The sociological approach enhances an understanding of issues within the case study context by focusing on the subjective experience of social interaction. Thus, this requires an understanding to be developed beyond the existing body of literature

discussed in this chapter. Nonetheless, the discussions of literature in this chapter have created an awareness of the current strategy issues in public institutions and university studies. In this study, the relevance of institutional theory in elaborating the findings has emerged. This is discussed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

The following chapter will introduce the case study context.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE CASE STUDY CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the case study context by locating it in its higher education setting. As such, it begins with a discussion on universities in general and explains the development that has taken place in universities, as well as presenting the major changes that are currently shaping universities globally. The discussions in this chapter also include the introduction to Malaysian higher education. This will enhance an understanding of the case study context and its issues.

The chapter is divided into four main sections, and includes universities in general and global development of universities; descriptions of the case study; and the discussions on development of higher education in Malaysia.

3.2 UNIVERSITIES IN GENERAL

Universities have been described with various functions. Scholars like Smeenk et al. (2009) suggest that universities have a role to educate and transfer knowledge; to conduct research in knowledge production activities; and to provide community service, also known as outreach. Similarly, Dearlove (2002, p.267) describes universities as 'in the knowledge business, providing an organisational context for generating new knowledge through research whilst disseminating that knowledge through teaching'. It is claimed to be a site for knowledge production, a place to produce research and education (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002).

Universities have been described as pluralistic (Baldridge, 1971; Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). For example, Baldridge (1971, p.105) explains that universities are 'fractured, divided and complicated by interlaced networks of authority, status, professional outlook, and special interests.' It is also stated

that the power is loose and ambiguous due to the complex social structure, where there is an 'extreme specialization among the university's participants, extreme fragmentation of its values, and extreme complexity in its structural arrangements' (Baldridge, 1971, p.105). It is argued by Baldridge (1971) that divisions and conflicts are inevitable even with the existence of common values and concerns. This reflects the complexity of universities as institutions.

In relation to this, universities have been described as 'multiuniversity' (Baldridge, 1971, p. 107). They are multiuniversity as they consist of a pluralistic society of students from various backgrounds, faculties, trustees, public groups with their own territory, jurisdiction and power (Baldridge, 1971). As suggested by Baldridge (1971), there are three elements of university social structure which include: complex formal structure; pluralistic goals and the growth of subcultures; and the existence of external social pressures and internal adaptations (Baldridge, 1971). The universities' social structure is considered a complex formal structure due to political process which occurs within the university, and the existence of networks of official structures which provide avenues for channelling conflicts, resolving disputes, formulating policy, and executing decisions (Baldridge, 1971).

The pluralistic goals and growth of subcultures are explained as the academic values that are often overshadowed by the diverse interests of individuals within universities (Baldridge, 1971). According to Baldridge (1971, p.118), the academic values include 'commitment to intellectual honesty, to the value of research, to the necessity of passing on the cultural heritage and to humanistic and scientific interpretations of reality'. However, it is claimed that these values are often overshadowed by the various interests of individuals within universities (Baldridge, 1971). The various interests have been expressed as epistemic cultures within universities (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). As stated, there are many epistemic cultures in universities, and the universities host many of them (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). It is suggested that the specific traits of epistemic cultures fostered by universities could contribute to conflicts (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). As described by Baldridge (1971, p.118), 'Values unify when people hold them in common; values fragment the social structure into small subcultures when there are many different competing goals'.

It is also explained by Baldridge (1971, p.124), that a university is 'one social institution among others'. This has contributed to the complex interactions between a university and its external influence, which also explains the 'external social pressures and internal adaptations' (Baldridge, 1971, p.124) faced by universities. As stated by Baldridge, these external social pressures 'bring pressure to bear on the university, which provide it with services and support' (Baldridge, 1971, p.124) and are indirectly shaping the university's destiny. The elements of universities' social structure have contributed to the changes and developments of universities over the years. This development is discussed in the section that follows.

3.2.1 Major Developments In Universities

Universities have gone through phases of identity and structural change (Dearlove, 2002). Dearlove (2002) asserts that the transformation in identity and structure of universities is caused by the pressures and demands placed upon them. Scholars agree that the pressures to shift from an elite to a mass education system (Middlehurst, 2004); the demand for vocational skills to meet the work place requirements to improve the nation's economy (Etzkowitz et al., 2000); the financial stringency with reduced public funding (Deem, 2001); the requirement for efficiency gains (Deem, 2001); the struggle to limit cost whilst expanding student numbers (Middlehurst, 2004); and the struggle to enhance income (Brehony and Deem, 2005), have all contributed to the transformation of universities.

Two major developments of the changes in universities are discussed in this section. They are the massification and entrepreneurialism of universities. These major changes have been revealed in the case study context. The discussion is aimed to provide an idea of the major developments of universities which are pertinent in providing an overall understanding of issues faced by universities at large. This is beneficial in providing a further understanding of the case study context.

3.2.1.1 Massification

The 1990s is considered to be the period of change in higher education around the world (Boer et al., 1998). Many universities in developed countries reached a mass-status and the vast majority of universities in developing countries were expanding at an unprecedented rate (Boer et al., 1998). In relation to this, Altbach (2010, p.25) states that 'there is no country that is immune from the pressure for massification'. As described by Altbach (2010, p.25), massification refers to an academic system which 'enrols large number, and higher proportion of relevant age group of students in a range of differentiated academic institutions'. Massification, also known as 'Fordist', has seen a shift from elite specialisation with a strong professional control to mass production in higher education (Parker and Jary, 1995). According to Trow (2006), the world academic system is classified into three categories based on the percentage of participants of the relevant age group in post-secondary education. These categories are classified as elite, with 15% participants of the relevant age group participating in post-secondary education; mass, with 20% to 30% participation of the relevant age group participating in post-secondary education; and universal, with 30% of the relevant age group participating in post-secondary education (Trow, 2006). In relation to this, it is argued that higher education is inevitably moving towards universal access (Trow, 2006).

An example of universal access is globalisation. Globalisation refers to the global spread of business and services as well as key economic, social, and cultural practices in a world market (Johnstone, 2010). These are normally conducted through internet and multinational companies (Johnstone, 2010). According to Held et al. (1999, p.2) globalisation is defined as 'the widening, deepening and spreading up of worldwide interconnectedness'. It is a process of growing integration of capital, technology, and information across national boundaries to create an increasingly integrated world market, which would eventually increase global competitiveness (Johnstone, 2010). Globalisation is one of the elements that have contributed to the increasing demand for higher education. Other contributory elements include the rise of the middle class and the economic growth in developing countries (Altbach, 2010).

With the increasing demand for higher education, universities are forced to pursue the massification trend (Altbach, 2010). For example, it is stated that in

most European countries, access to university is guaranteed to students who complete their secondary school examinations (Altbach, 2010). This has contributed to the increased number of students in higher education and it is also added that this increase is not supported by any increase in funding (Altbach, 2010). As such, universities have been compelled to accommodate the rise in student numbers without a corresponding increase in their funding (Jary and Parker, 1998).

This has contributed to various challenges. Among the challenges are: scarcity in funding (Altbach, 2010; Boer et al., 1998; Enders and Teichler, 1997); the existence of managerialisation of academic institutions (Altbach, 2010; Czarniawska and Genell, 2002; Deem, 2001; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004); the changing nature of the academic profession, where most academics have lost their power and autonomy within the university (Altbach, 2010; Boer et al., 1998; Bryson, 2004; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004; Parker and Jary, 1995), and in many countries there have been increasing workloads and class size (Altbach, 2010; Boer et al., 1998; Bryson, 2004; Enders and Teichler, 1997; Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). In addition to this, student related challenges have also been observed. For example, there have been diverse types of students and student cultures in universities, each requiring a different approach. Students have also been less carefully selected (Altbach, 2010) and this has created a different set of challenges to the academic. Another challenge is that students consider themselves as customers, thus changing the relationship between universities and students, and the way universities deal with students (Altbach, 2010).

Massification of higher education has also contributed to the change in university's governance (Altbach, 2010). One of the changes is the adoption of new managerialism in universities. New managerialism refers to contemporary business practices and private sector ideas or values in public sector work practices. It is an ideology about the 'application of techniques, values and practices derived from the private sector' and the actual use of those techniques and practices in publicly funded organisations (Deem, 2001, p.10). Theorists of new managerialism regard it as an ideological approach with emphasis on the primacy of management; monitoring of employees' performance; attainment of financial targets; devising means of publicly auditing quality of service delivery; and development of a quasi market for services (Deem and Brehony, 2005). It is based on an objective search for

efficiency, effectiveness and excellence, with emphasis on continuous improvement of organisations (Deem, 2001).

Along with new managerialism ideology, universities are forced to adhere to the principles of mass production (Altbach, 2010). It is claimed that one-to-one interactions with students are now replaced by mass lectures and crowded tutorials where market-like analogies have become the common jargon within a university (Altbach, 2010). This has seen an increase in class size, the pressures for academic staff to provide detailed feedback on students' performance, and the expectation that academic staff will be available outside their timetable hours (Davies and Thomas, 2002).

According to Dearlove (2002), mass higher education has pushed teaching against the wishes of many academics, and has resulted in an inadequate number of classrooms to cater for the increasing number of students. This has 'challenged the right of academics to teach in their own rooms,' at their chosen time (Dearlove, 2002, p.263). The lack of resources and support available to universities is explained by Altbach as due to the economic rationalism, where government and society are not prepared to bear the cost of the massive expansion of their education system, and, at the same time, are not willing to lower their expectations (Altbach, 2010).

The lack of funding despite the increased number of students has left universities with 'no choice but to be more enterprising' (Dearlove, 2002, p. 264). As stated by Clark (1998, p.xiii), higher education is 'pushed and pulled by enlarging, interacting streams of demand, and universities are pressured to change their curricula, alter their faculties, and modernize their increasingly expensive physical plant and equipment – and to do so more rapidly than ever'.

As a result, higher education has to cater for more and increasingly diverse constituents, with fewer resources (Altbach, 2010). The massification of higher education has seen the transformation of university identity and structure (Smeenk et al., 2009), from being traditionally comfortable with easy administration and collegiality to the assertion of management and governance (Dearlove, 2002), to a focus on efficiency and a deficit of the bureaucratic model (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), with heavy emphasis on privatisation and market mechanisms (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

In line with this development, du Gay (1996) suggests that students have been reimaged as customers. With the development of students as customers, there is a mismatch between the research oriented academic and the demands of students who are aware of their rights as customers (du Gay, 1996). Students have been demanding and becoming more critical of the quality of the education they are receiving (Davies and Thomas, 2002).

With these changes, universities appear to arrive at a common entrepreneurial format in the late 20th century (Etzkowitz et al., 2000). It is suggested that there is a pattern of transformation toward entrepreneurialism emerging in universities from different continents such as US, Latin American, Europe and Asia (Etzkowitz et al., 2000). Universities have grown from knowledge producer which is state financed into knowledge production market which is self-financed (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). The entrepreneurialism is further discussed in the following section.

3.2.1.2 Entrepreneurialism

Entrepreneurialism, otherwise known as commodification (Willmott, 1995), McDonalization (Parker and Jary, 1995) or marketisation (Enders, 2000) encourages academics and administrators to seek out new ways to raise private sector funds, particularly through consultancy and research in higher education (Deem, 2001). This transformation reflects the wider socio-economic changes which lead to the exposure of public sector organisations to market disciplines (Willmott, 1995). For example, in relation to this development, the University Grants Committee (UGC) has considered universities as corporate organisations that need to engage in strategic academic and financial planning, where the Vice Chancellor of a university is recognised as a Chief Executive (Dearlove, 2002). This development has contributed to the strong central management of universities, where UK universities are claimed to be more managerial, with declining discretion for academics and a growing gap between senior management and others (Dearlove, 2002) .

The development towards the entrepreneurial university has seen efforts to identify, create, and commercialise intellectual property as institutional

objectives in various academic systems (Etzkowitz et al., 2000). The entrepreneurialism has also boosted quality assurance, evaluation, and ranking as standard procedures in western countries and eastern European universities (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002). It is suggested that these mechanisms provide common criteria for evaluation which are necessary in the global economy competition (Czarniawska and Genell, 2002).

In their eagerness to generate income by becoming entrepreneurial, universities have been cautioned that this recent development can pose a threat to their traditional integrity (Pelikan, 1992). It is argued that 'as universities become more identified with commercial wealth, they also lose their uniqueness in society' (Powell and Owen-Smith, 1998, p.267). Brooks (1993) has called for entrepreneurialism to be resisted. It is claimed that entrepreneurialism in universities would jeopardise their role as independent critics of society (Krimsky, 1991).

It is believed that entrepreneurialism could contribute towards academic capitalism behaviour (Deem, 2001). According to Deem (2001) academic capitalism exists in a competitive environment where academics capitalise their knowledge for the purpose of securing income. As suggested by Slaughter and Leslie (1997, p.9) 'they are academics who act as capitalists from within the public sector; they are state subsidized entrepreneurs'. Academic capitalism encourages market like behaviour among academics, which can be seen in the choice of research conducted, for example, the shift from curiosity driven research towards more applied research for industry (Deem, 2001). It is suggested that with the reduction of funding, universities are forced to be selective in their choice of research (Deem, 2001). Under such circumstances, a university would only conduct research that would attract industrial funding for the purpose of generating income (Etzkowitz et al., 2000).

3.2.2 Section Summary

In general, it can be said that the changes in the university's environment have transformed the university's identity and structure. From being an elite higher education institution, it has been transformed into a mass production higher

education institution. With massification status, universities have to seek new sources of financing. This has led towards entrepreneurialism in universities with an emphasis on efficiency and quasi market behaviour. This is inevitable, especially with the effect of globalisation and internationalisation on universities. The universities have no choice but to keep up with the changes. As a consequence, this has seen changes in the way universities are managed. The collegial management style (Parker and Jary, 1995) has been transformed into new managerialism (Brehony and Deem, 2005).

This section has provided a discussion on universities in general, and the development of universities in terms of their identity and structure over the years. The awareness gathered from the discussions is important in understanding the impetus for the changes that are taking place in the case study context. The University in the case study has not been excluded from the major changes that have been taking place in universities around the world. In the case study context, these changes have contributed to the various adaptations seen in its strategy. An example of this is the University strategy of becoming an entrepreneurial university, and its strategy in increasing student enrolment. This will be further discussed in the Findings chapter.

The next section will provide a description of the university in the case study.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

The case study is based on a public university in Malaysia. In Malaysia, public universities are funded by government and are self-managed institutions (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). Ninety percent of their funding comes from government, with the remainder derived from student fees (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). Currently there are twenty public universities in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

The University in the case study has gone through several phases of progression. It began in 1956 as a training institute with two main objectives, which were to rebuild rural society and to improve the Malaysian economy (Yaacob, 1997). From a training institution, it progressed to become a college in 1965 (Yaacob, 1997). According to Yaacob (1997), a man power survey was

conducted in 1965 by the federal government. The survey indicated that there was a shortage of trained professionals and semi-professionals among the Malays, an ethnic group that dominates the majority of the population in Malaysia (Yaacob, 1997). This had triggered the requirement for a place of vocational training for the Malays. The requirement had created a bigger demand for student intakes and had also led to a relocation of the University, which was then a college, to a much bigger site in 1967 (Yaacob, 1997).

Its continued expansion resulted in 13 more campuses being built in 13 states throughout Malaysia, comprising Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Johor, Melaka, Nigeria Sembilan, Perak, Palau Pinang, Perlis, Sabah, Sarawak, and Selangor as its main campus and centre of administration (Pusat Perancangan Strategik, 2007).

In the year 1999, it was granted university status (Pusat Perancangan Strategik, 2007). Since 2007, it has offered 9 certificate programmes, 2 pre-diploma programmes, 7 pre-degree programmes, 74 diploma programmes, 115 degree programmes, 8 professional programmes, 59 masters programmes and 21 PhD programmes (Pusat Perancangan Strategik, 2007).

3.3.1 The University Administration Team

The discussions of the University administration team will include the teams that are involved in the day-to-day operation of the University. This will start with the Executive Management Team.

The University administration is headed by the Executive Management Team which is led by the Vice Chancellor; and assisted by the Senate and the Executive Committee. The Executive Management Team is responsible for general planning, monitoring and implementation of decisions in ensuring the achievement of organisational goals. The Executive Management Team is led by the Vice Chancellor, who is also a member of the Board of Directors, which is the highest authority in deciding major strategic and development directions of the University. The duties of the Vice Chancellor include general supervision over the arrangements for education, instruction, training, finance, administration, welfare and discipline in the University and managing the day-to-day administration and management of the University.

As seen in Diagram 3.1, the Executive Management Team is supported by the Operation and Management Team. The Operation and Management Team is responsible for the implementation of fundamental and selected activities. It comprises four Deputy Vice Chancellors: Academic and International (DVC1); Students Affairs & Alumni (DVC2); Research and Innovation (DVC3); and Industrial & Community Networking (DVC4). All of the Deputy Vice Chancellors also hold a position on the Executive Management Team of the University. Therefore, in this study, the Executive Management Team is represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellors of the University.

Other members of the Operation and Management Team include the Legal Advisor; Registrar; Chief Financial Officer (CFO); Chief Librarian; Rector of Branch Campuses; the Deans of Faculties; and Directors of Academic Centres. The audit of the Operation and Management Team is carried out by the Internal Audit Division.

Each department represented on the Operation and Management Team has its own subunits. For example, the subunits for DVC1 include Corporate Communication; InQKA (Institute of Quality & Knowledge Advancement); Students Admission; Auxiliary Police; ilQam (Institute of Leadership & Quality Management); Academic Development; Curriculum Affairs; OIA (Office of International Affairs); and UPENA (University Publications Unit). The DVC2 subunits include Student Development; Co-Curriculum; Sport Centre; and Health Centre. The DVC3 subunits are Research; Development, Facility, Management & ICT; and Centre of Strategic Planning. The DVC4 subunits are Entrepreneurship; Employability of Graduates; and Community & Industrial Networking.

The Rector of Branch Campuses comprises thirteen directors of branch campuses throughout the country, i.e. Sabah, Sarawak, Perlis, Terengganu, Johor, Melaka, Perak, Pahang, Kelantan, Pulau Pinang, Kedah, Nigeria Sembilan, Selangor; INTEC (International Education College); and the two newly formed campuses, Puncak Alam and Puncak Perdana Campuses.

The Deans of Faculties represent 24 faculties in the University. These faculties are classified under three main clusters: Science and Technology; Social Science and Humanities; and Business and Management. There are twelve faculties under Science and Technology (Pharmacy, Medicine, Health Science, Dentistry, Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering,

Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Architecture, Sport Science & Recreation, and Applied Science); seven faculties under the Social Science and Humanities (Arts and Design, Music, Artistic & Creative Technology, Education, Administrative Science & Policy, Communication & Media, and Law); and five faculties under the Business and Management (Office Management, Accounting, Business Management, Hotel & Tourism, and Information Management).

An illustration of the University Administration Team is presented in the organisational chart on the following page:

Chancellor

Board of Directors

Executive Management

Vice Chancellor

Senate

Executive Committee

Operation & Management

Head of Internal Audit

Legal Advisor

DVC 1

DVC 2

CFO

DVC 3

Registrar

DVC 4

Chief Librarian

Rector Branch campuses

Corporate Communication; INKA; Students Admission; IMPAK; MDAB; Auxiliary Police; iLQAM; Academic Development; Curriculum Affairs; OIA; I-Learn; InED; UPENA

Student Development; Co-Curriculum; Sport Centre; Health Centre

Research; Development, Facility, Management & ICT; Centre of Strategic Planning

Entrepreneurship; Employability of Graduates; Community & Industrial Networking

13 campuses in Malaysia; INTEC; Puncak Alam & Puncak Perdana Campus

Deans of Faculties; Directors of Academic Centres

DVC1 - Deputy Vice Chancellors of Academic and International

DVC2 - Students Affairs & Alumni

DVC3 - Research and Innovation

DVC4 - Industrial & Community Networking

InQKA - Institute of Quality & Knowledge Advancement

ilQam – Institute of Leadership & Quality Management

OIA – Office of International Affairs

UPENA – University Publications Unit

INTEC - International Education College

Diagram 3.1: University Administration Team (author's own)

The following section will further discuss Malaysian higher education which serves as a backdrop to the case study context.

3.4 HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

This section is focused on the discussions of Malaysian higher education. The purpose of the discussions is to provide an overview of the trends and understanding of the structure behind the case study context.

According to Mok (2010), higher education in Malaysia is closely monitored by the government. This can be seen in the committees which have been set up to control and coordinate universities in Malaysia since 1962 (Yaacob, 1997). The governance of higher education in Malaysia is believed to be necessary for the purpose of national interests. As quoted from Sirat (2010, p.461), 'historically the national government has and continues to steer higher education policy in a direction that is generally considered as in the national interest'. The national interest is interpreted as nation building for the purpose of social justice and national security (Sirat, 2010). An example of national interest can be seen in the objective of higher education at the time of Malaysian independence in 1957, i.e. to instil the spirit of unity and loyalty, and to produce graduates that would assume the duties of foreign experts in public and private administration (Yaacob, 1997).

The governance of higher education in Malaysia began in 1962, with the creation of the Higher Education Planning Committee which was aimed to analyse the need for higher education in Malaysia (Yaacob, 1997). Later, in 1968, it was replaced by the Higher Education Advisory Council, which carried the same role as the previous committee (Yaacob, 1997). Then in 1972, a Division of Higher Education was created under the Ministry of Education to administer and coordinate higher education (Yaacob, 1997). In 2004 and up to the present, a Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has been created specifically to monitor universities in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

Currently, there are 20 fully-fledged public universities, 21 polytechnics, and 37 community colleges that are under the control of the Ministry of Higher

Education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The scope of governance of the Ministry of Higher Education applies to public universities and does not extend to the private universities (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The private universities are independently operated and subject to minimal intervention from the Ministry of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The discussions that follow will elaborate on the development of higher education, pertaining to public universities in Malaysia. This is mainly discussed to reflect the case study which is conducted on a public university.

3.4.1 Development of Higher Education in Malaysia

Prior to 1969, the government had a minimal influence over the administration and development of public universities in Malaysia (Sirat, 2010). In 1970, the relationship between the government and public universities had started to move towards state centralism, where universities were seen as an important vehicle to improve the socio-economic and political status of the indigenous population (Sirat, 2010). State centralism is evident in the introduction of the University and University Colleges Act in 1971 (Sirat, 2010), which governs the establishment of all public universities in Malaysia. Its aim is to control higher education at university level and monitor student activities (Yaacob, 1997). Increasingly through this Act, public higher education has become an agent of the government as it moves towards the attainment of national aspirations (Sirat, 2010). Higher education is perceived as a means to restructure Malaysian society, to enhance its human capital development and economic growth (Lee, 2004).

By the late eighties, the government had sole control of university education and its administration. The power of the government was extended to staff appointments, student enrolment, curriculum development and financing of universities (Sirat, 2010). In the late nineties, the globalisation and internationalisation of higher education around the world exerted different pressures and demands upon the Malaysian higher education system. Like other countries, it has shown an inclination towards marketisation of higher education (Sirat, 2010). This is evident in the corporatisation of public universities in 1997, with the aim of diversifying the funding sources of

universities (Sirat, 2010). The corporatisation and privatisation of public universities were intended to make them proactive, as it was argued that the existing governance model was not helping universities to face new challenges (Mok, 2010).

Higher education in Malaysia was made ready to face global challenges through the reformation of public universities in line with the ideas and practices of corporatisation (Mok, 2010). In January 1998, the oldest university in Malaysia, the University of Malaya, was corporatised. This was followed by eight other public universities in the country (Mok, 2010). Under the corporatisation policy, the public universities were 'allowed to borrow money, enter into business ventures, and establish companies and consultancy firms as well as acquire and hold investment shares' (Mok, 2010, p.427). The public universities are expected to 'diversify their financial resources by charging students tuition fees, increasing the number of students', working 'closely with the business and industrial sectors' and by 'offering professional courses, consultancy and community services' (Mok, 2010, p.427).

With the amendments of the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 in 1995, corporatised universities are empowered to engage in these quasi market activities (Lee, 2004). For example, corporatised public universities are allowed to franchise their programmes to local private colleges (Mok, 2010). This has seen the increase in franchise colleges in Malaysia. For example, from 1996 to 1999, in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (one of the public universities in Malaysia) franchise programmes increased from 1 to 33 (Mok, 2010). Another public university, University Sains Malaysia has franchised 23 of its educational programmes to 12 private colleges (Lee, 2004). The university formed a holding company in 1988 for the purpose of generating its source of income (Lee, 2004). The university's income is obtained through consultancy, contract research, rental of space, providing courses, and franchising its diploma and degree programmes (Lee, 2004).

The result from the corporatisation is evident in the diversification of income of these public universities. However, the corporatisation has not made the public universities free from the control of the government. The government still maintains its steering role particularly in ensuring equity access, consumer advocacy, national identity and other social agendas (Lee, 2004). In fact, the government has strengthened its position from being a provider to a

regulator and protector of higher education (Lee, 2004). This is clear with the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education in March, 2004.

Realising the importance of higher education in the socio-economic development of Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education has been set up to oversee development and monitor the academic standards of private and public universities (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). Its missions include creating strategic and systematic plans for higher education, reinforcing management systems in higher education, increasing levels of capacity, accessibility and participation in higher education, enhancing the quality of higher education in line with international standards, and internationalising Malaysian higher education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The study has brought to the fore the influence of the Ministry of Higher Education on the case study context. This is discussed in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

The next section will focus on the current trend of management practices in Malaysian higher education.

3.4.2 New Public Management (NPM) in Malaysia

The corporatisation of public universities in Malaysia is mainly influenced by the NPM movements in the western countries. As suggested by Sirat (2010), the movement of NPM in the west and in some other developing countries has influenced the transformation of Malaysian universities' governance.

For example, in the UK, the financial cuts of universities in 1979 contributed to a reformation of higher education and the development of NPM (Middlehurst, 2004). The NPM is a new form of administrative convention on how public services are run and regulated (Deem and Brehony, 2005). It is focused on less bureaucratic forms of public service by introducing quasi-market competition and is evident in the increase of management power (Davies and Thomas, 2002).

The influence of NPM is visible in the pressure for accountability and quality performance (Smeenk et al., 2009). This has encouraged heightened surveillance and regulation in universities (Smeenk et al., 2009) and cost cutting with the emphasis on value for money services (Davies and Thomas,

2002). Other evidence also observed in the western universities includes continuous monitoring and audit performance through Research Assessment Exercise (RAE); monitoring of teaching quality and overall academic standards (Brehony and Deem, 2005); introduction of performance indicators (Pollitt, 1990); and staff appraisals (Deem, 2001).

In Malaysia, NPM is evident in the corporatisation of public universities in 1998 (Mok, 2010). The corporatisation was aimed at deregulating and decentralising the decision making process by allowing autonomy, creating a competitive educational market and initiating market-like behaviour in higher education (Mok, 2010). The main intention was to make public universities more responsive to the changes in the environment and to be pro-competitive in order to promote a better university governance (Mok, 2010). As discussed in the earlier section, the market-like behaviour is evident in the diversification of income of the public universities. Other evidence includes the application of private management techniques such as strategic planning; total quality management; ISO certification; benchmarking in Malaysian public universities (Lee, 2004).

The development of NPM in Malaysia is in line with the suggestions provided by Middlehurst (2004) where it has been claimed that the response to NPM involves strengthening of the leadership structure; introduction of new faculty governance models; and a movement towards an enhanced quality control mechanism with accountability and human capital development. The NPM encourages the development of new organisational forms that strengthen senior management teams; mergers of small departments into larger schools; and the establishment of entrepreneurial interdisciplinary research centres in universities (Deem, 2004).

The elements suggested by Middlehurst (2004) can be found in the recent National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007-2010, where it has been translated as a transformational framework of five institutional pillars. The five institutional pillars include the strengthening of governance; leadership; academia; teaching and learning; and research and development. The government plans to strengthen the higher education institutions based on these five pillars (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The pillars are part of the NPM movement in Malaysia particularly in respect to the strengthening of governance and leadership of higher education. In fact, the National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007-2010 document reflects on the governance of

higher education. As suggested by Sirat (2010), the NPM movement in Malaysia can be seen in the emphasis on efficiency and accountability of its higher education. As suggested by Deem (2004), the New Public Management is introduced through narratives of strategic change in order to pursue collective understandings and actions. The narratives may come from the government, government agencies and consultants (Barry and Elmes, 1997). In the case of NPM for universities in Malaysia, the narratives come through the government. This has been evident in the government documentations such as the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020 and the National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007-2010.

Another example of NPM in Malaysia can also be seen in the set up of audit units with the purpose of providing independent assessments of higher education institutions in Malaysia. The emphasis on monitoring for quality and efficiency is similar to the practice found in the UK in respect to the use of performance indicators and quality audits, for example the RAE and the teaching quality assessment. As suggested by Deem (2004), the teaching quality assurance is embedded in the administrative mechanism of universities through practical control mechanisms, target settings, regulatory practices, quality assurance procedures for teaching and student feedback, performance indicators and appraisals.

In Malaysia, the overall monitoring of the quality and efficiency of universities is conducted through the triple A's measures (Mok, 2010). As suggested by Mok (2010), the triple A's measures of excellence which are based on autonomy, audit process and apex university (universities' ranking in Malaysia) are shaped through higher education management and governance in Malaysia.

Similarly, Brehony and Deem (2005, p.404) state that, 'Continuous monitoring and audit of performance, efficiency and quality are now omni-present in UK higher education', especially with audit cultures focusing on research following the introduction of RAE in the 1980s, and quality of teaching since the 1990s. In the UK, this has affected the resources allocations which are based on an objective performance measurement (e.g. size of research grants, number of top journal publications, number of research students) with highly graded units receiving money for research quality and quality of teaching (Brehony and Deem, 2005).

In Malaysia, the emphasis on research productivity and output has contributed to the changes in the staff performance evaluation system with priority given to research performance (Mok, 2010). This has led to intensified pressure to improve teaching and research performance among academic staff (Mok, 2010). The pressures intensified with greater emphasis on accountability being placed by the government (Mok, 2010).

As stated by Mok (2010, p.434), 'ordinary academics without any administrative positions feel academic freedom threatened as result of the recent reforms rather than feeling 'emancipated' or autonomized'. The findings made by Mok (2010) suggest that academics in Malaysia do not feel entirely empowered, but instead find themselves under far more pressure to perform, in order to compete with other universities.

This also suggests similarities with the findings made by Bryson (2004, p.53) which state that the 'pressures to be more productive have driven up workloads and most staff seem to be at (or even beyond, with outcomes for stress) the limit of their personal resources in trying to cope with this' (Bryson, 2004, p.53). The reduced control of academic staff over their working lives has resulted in the heightened stress experienced by them (Fisher, 1995). In line with this Ogbama and Harris (2004), also suggest that the control and monitoring of academics' activity through teaching quality assessments and research assessments exercises have given more power to university management, allowing it to tighten its control over the academic labour process. This has created the 'coercive working environments, combined with escalating work-loads, long hours, open-ended commitment, together with increased surveillance and control' (Morley and Walsh, 1995, pp.1-2) among academics.

Mok's findings (2010, p.429) suggest that senior administrators enjoy more decision-making power; however it is claimed that it is never a 'free gift'. This can be seen in the statement made by the Ministry of Higher Education in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007, that 'The government recognises that a greater level of autonomy and accountability is needed for HEIs' (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.19).

This has seen the process of autonomisation of universities in Malaysia actually making universities more accountable to the government through various kinds of quality assurance mechanisms (Mok, 2010). This

development is similar to the case of higher education reform in the UK, where Parker and Jary (1995, p.319) have suggested that the 'changes in the political, institutional and funding environment have produced forms of HE organization that increase the power of management and diminish the autonomy of professional academics'. According to Parker and Jary (1995), these new forms of organisation will be increasingly bureaucratic, thus will make academics increasingly instrumental in their attitudes and behaviour.

This section has discussed the influence of NPM in Malaysian higher education. The influence is derived from the changes and developments of higher education in the western countries. To a certain extent, the developments of higher education in the western countries have been a precursor to the changes in the Malaysian higher education.

3.4.3 The Outcomes of the Malaysian Higher Education Reforms

This section will continue to discuss the outcomes of the higher education reform in Malaysia.

Despite the movements towards the NPM, in many respects, public universities in Malaysia are still strictly controlled by the government (Mok, 2010). This is mainly due to the fact that all public universities are still heavily funded by the government (Mok, 2010). Ninety percent of the public universities' funding comes from the government (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). One of the reasons is due to the roles of universities. In Malaysia, universities are regarded as policy tools to fulfil the national goals of manpower training and human resources provision (Sirat, 2010). The government relies on human resource development as a means for the nation's economic growth (Sirat, 2010). As such, the government has invested heavily in higher education and human resources development in its aim to achieve a developed nation status by the year 2020 (Lee, 2004). Because of this, Malaysian higher education continues to receive strong intervention from the Malaysian government (Lee, 2004).

As a consequence, it has been argued that the corporatisation of Malaysian public universities has not really achieved its objectives (Mok, 2010). It is

claimed that the government has not had the determination to tackle the structural problems deeply embedded in its higher education (Sirat, 2010). Hence, most academics in Malaysia consider the Malaysian government as not really committed to 'neo-liberalism but has just made the reforms as 'cosmetic' and 'fashion' covering the surface without changing the fundamentals' (Mok, 2010, p.435).

The government has not withdrawn entirely from directing higher education development. According to Mok (2010, p.437), when state centralism clashes with neo-liberalism, the government is 'tactical enough to ride over the two competing ideologies by reforming their university governance with neo-liberalism labels, making the reforms as some sort of fashion rather than fundamentally altering the state-market-university relations'. Therefore, Malaysian university governance is described as 'autonomy with accountability' and is still valid to be conceptualised as a state-university relationship (Mok, 2010, p.437).

It has been argued by Norraihan and Aziah (2007 cited in Sirat, 2010, p.466) that the government tries to liberalise its higher education position but 'at the same time, it executes despotic position'. In a similar tone, it has been suggested by Lee (2000 cited in Sirat, 2010, p.466), that 'the corporatizations of public universities were supposed to minimise bureaucratic procedures but at the same time it has instituted new acts, rules and regulations which have effectively eroded university autonomy'. With that, the government is claimed to have expanded its role from being the main provider to regulator and protector of the higher education (Lee, 2004). It is stated that, as a provider it continues to allocate resources and funding for the scholarships, research, and capital expenditure (Lee, 2004). As a protector, it takes a function of customer advocacy by improving access to higher education, formulating policies to promote social equality and monitoring the quality of academic programmes (Lee, 2004). As a regulator, it monitors newly operated institutions through licensing and programme accreditation (Lee, 2004).

As such, 'autonomy without responsibility' will be unacceptable for the Malaysian government (Mok, 2010, p.437). The public universities reform in Malaysian is seen as a 'yoyo', oscillating between decentralisation and recentralisation for fear of losing control (Mok, 2010, p.437). The concern over the competitiveness of universities in a global market has contributed to the reformation of public universities in Malaysia. The reformation is aimed at

improving the efficiency of university governance. However, in Malaysia, universities are still seen as government policy tools, therefore any autonomy given will be followed by accountability. As suggested by Mok (2010), the autonomy of Malaysian universities is given by decentralising the university management policy, whilst inserting more pressures to perform and benchmark internationally.

Thus, the public universities are not experiencing full autonomy. Instead, they are given a selective autonomy subject to the grace of the state (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). As such, it is argued by Sirat (2010) that the Malaysian higher education plans were based on two ideologically incompatible models, the state-centric model and the neo-liberalism model. The state-centric model is based on the power of the government to govern the universities. The neo-liberalism model is based on a competitive market for higher education, with less direct state intervention (Sirat, 2010). It is a political view which stresses the importance of economic growth, which asserts social justice is best maintained by free market forces and minimal intervention from the government (Larner, 2000).

It is claimed that Malaysian higher education is still holding onto the state-centric model because of national interest (Sirat, 2010). But at the same time, it also likes to embrace the new public management model of the west (Sirat, 2010). As stated by Sirat (2010, p.470), 'While embracing new approach, Malaysia is also keeping to long-held traditions.' Malaysian higher education is tempted with the new fads of public management practices but the only obstacle lies in its willingness to grant a complete autonomy to these universities in order to embrace full quasi market behaviour.

The next section will introduce the current strategies of Malaysian higher education.

3.4.4 Current Strategies of Higher Education in Malaysia

The fieldwork was conducted in 2008. During this period, the publication of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020 and the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 reflected the most recent responses to the changing socio-economic and socio-political circumstances in Malaysia

(Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). Therefore, the current strategies in this discussion refer to the Malaysian higher education strategy which covers the period of 2007-2010.

According to the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, Malaysia can no longer rely on foreign direct investment in low cost labour intensive industries for future economic growth (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). The country needs to develop and attract human capital that is able to generate new knowledge to be commercialised in addressing the world's needs. In line with this recognition, seven strategic thrusts of higher education have been developed to address the country's need. These include widening access and enhancing equity; improving quality of teaching and learning; enhancing research and innovation; strengthening institutions of higher education; intensifying internationalisation; enculturation of lifelong learning; and reinforcing the Higher Education Ministry delivery system (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

In implementing the seven strategic thrusts, the Minister of Higher Education addresses five pillars in strengthening higher education. The five pillars include Governance, Leadership, Academia, Teaching and Learning, and Research and Development (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

The concept of Governance is defined as the increase in self-governance through the Board of Directors' supervision, which assumes greater responsibility for leadership, performance and funding; the Leadership concept emphasises the best candidate for higher education's leaders, with the prerequisite of good understanding of the national aspiration; Academia refers to instilling a greater professional culture among academic staff; Teaching and Learning places emphasis on critical thinking, where lecturers are expected to demonstrate scholarship in their specialised field; and Research and Development promotes the need for inculcating the right culture to ensure passion, dedication and commitment towards research (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

The seven strategy thrusts introduced by the Ministry of Higher Education require the five pillars to strengthen public universities governance in their competition in the global environment. The government acknowledges the importance of autonomy to be given to public universities in enabling them to compete in the global environment effectively and efficiently (Ministry of

Higher Education, 2007). With this acknowledgement, the public universities in Malaysia are given autonomy but only on certain matters (Sirat, 2010).

For example, the public universities are reminded that along with the autonomy given, greater responsibility and accountability will be placed upon them. This is clear in the statement made in the National Higher Education Action Plan. As quoted, 'The government recognises that a greater level of autonomy and accountability is needed for HEIs' (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.19). Furthermore, it is stated that being government funded, 'public universities must ensure that their strategic objectives are in line with those of the ministry's' (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.18). This has seen the adoption of government strategies in higher education institutions, particularly in the public universities.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the case study context without revealing its identity. This is done for the purpose of protecting the confidentiality of the case study which might be sensitive to certain parties. It provides a discussion of higher education in Malaysia in light of the changes that have taken place in universities globally.

From the review of the literature, it is found that the Malaysian higher education is slowly moving towards a similar trend of higher education reformation experienced in the western countries. This is evident in its attempt to autonomise universities through corporatisation and the emphasis towards efficiency and accountability through various performance measures. This reformation is known as the New Public Management. Even though the adoption of the New Public Management in Malaysian higher education has not been fully developed, it has started to show some similarities with the experience of higher education in the western countries.

The only difference lies in whether the government of Malaysia is willing to grant full autonomy to universities, as at the moment, universities in Malaysia are still regarded as a policy tool for the development of the nation. As a result, this has seen very much controlled universities in Malaysia as compared to the

universities in the western countries, particularly the UK which has experienced less direct state intervention. As suggested by Sirat (2010, p.471), 'if the State is serious about 'retreating' as dictated by the neo-liberal premise (and noted in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020), it has to roll back as a service provider of higher education and to act more as enabler and facilitator in this important service'. The consequence of this action is that it will downgrade the importance of the Ministry of Higher Education, which was established to monitor the Malaysian higher education institutions (Sirat, 2010). This poses a very important question as to whether higher education in Malaysia will ever be fully autonomised. Its answers will determine the future direction of higher education in Malaysia.

It is not the aim of the study to forecast the direction of higher education in Malaysia. Nevertheless, the discussions in this chapter are important in providing an understanding of the case study context and its structure. The study which explores the strategy management process from a public university experience is pertinent considering the various changes that have been encountered by universities globally. Such study will be an addition to the existing body of knowledge as it is conducted on a unique and complex setting of Malaysian higher education.

CHAPTER FOUR:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted in the research inquiry of the study. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p.602), methodology is 'The theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted'. In line with this statement, this chapter begins with a discussion on the research perspectives and philosophy of the study. This is followed by the research design which explains the design of the data collection in this study. The process involved in the data collection and data analysis is continued and further explained in Chapter Five. Also included in this chapter, are the discussions on the issues of validity, reliability, rigour, generalisability, and ethical issues that have been addressed in the study.

4.2 RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE AND PHILOSOPHY

4.2.1 Research Perspective

According to Patton (2002), humans have differing views on what they define as knowledge. This is because their perception of knowledge is embedded in their experience, and in any study this perspective is mediated through the perception of the researcher (Patton, 2002). It is claimed that the development of social science disciplines would be better served if researchers were more explicit about the nature of their beliefs (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). The nature of belief lies in the perception that is carried by a researcher into his study (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

In relation to this, Morgan and Smircich (1980, p.499) caution that the 'preoccupation with methods' obscures the link of a researcher's orientation of knowledge. As stated, the 'preoccupation with methods on their own account obscures the link between the assumptions that the researcher holds and the overall research effort, giving the illusion that it is the methods themselves rather than the orientations of the human researcher, that generate particular forms of knowledge' (Morgan and Smircich, 1980, p.499). With this in mind, it is vital that the perspectives in this study are made clear, as they influence the way findings are gathered and analysed. These perspectives validate what would be considered as knowledge, also known as epistemology (Saunders et al., 2007).

Epistemology is described as an acceptable knowledge in the field of study (Saunders et al., 2007). It reflects on the precise definition of epistemology by Burrell and Morgan (1979) as grounds of knowledge of how one understands the world, and communicates this understanding as knowledge to fellow human beings. According to Saunders et al. (2007), the epistemological positions taken by researchers in most studies are influenced by their views of reality. It establishes researchers' assumptions on how the world operates, also known as ontology (Saunders et al., 2007). In relation to this, Morgan and Smircich (1980) suggest that different assumptions create different grounds of knowledge about the social world. The epistemology (what is considered as knowledge) and ontology (views of reality) of the researchers influence the approaches of their research inquiries (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). This raises the need to explain the influences that underpin the research design of this study.

4.2.2 Research Philosophy

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), there are four key assumptions in social science that provide a powerful tool for the analysis of social theory. These assumptions identify different views that influence different approaches to social theory (Morgan, 1980). The four key assumptions - functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist - are discussed in mapping the research philosophy of this study. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), development of a research philosophy of a social

science is based on four dimensions that have dominated the social science studies. These dimensions are based on the four extreme ontological views: 'subjective vs objective', and 'radical change vs regulation' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Radical change

Radical humanist paradigm	Radical structuralist paradigm
Interpretive paradigm	Functionalist paradigm

Subjective (left) **Objective** (right)

Regulation
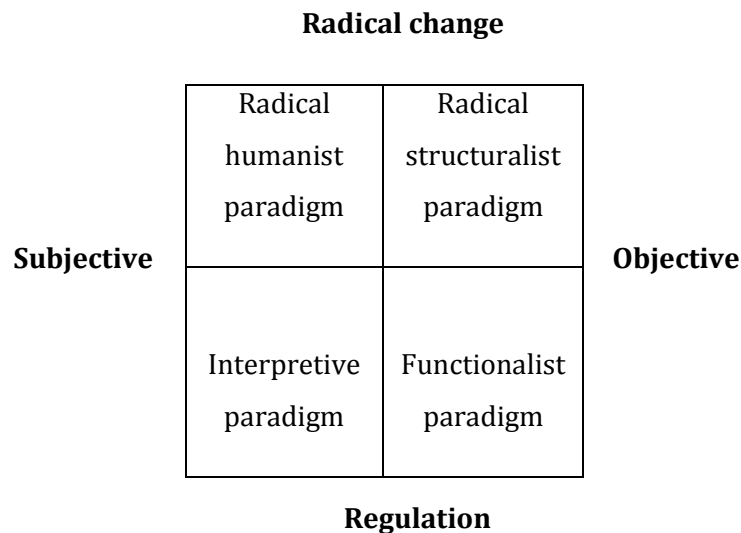
Diagram 4.1: Four Paradigms of Analysis of Social Theory adopted from Burrell and Morgan (1979).

The 'subjective' view is an ontological perspective which explains social phenomena as created from the perspectives and consequent actions of its social actors (Saunders et al., 2007). According to Saunders et al. (2007), an organisation culture results from a process of continuous social enactment. It is believed that the continuous enactment of interpreting the social world leads to adjustments of understanding and perception of social phenomena (Saunders et al., 2007). As such, this ontological perspective emphasises researchers' understanding of the social world from the participants in actions rather than as observers (Saunders et al., 2007).

The 'objective' view, on the other hand, is based on the thrust that a social entity is external to its social actors (Saunders et al., 2007). It is built on the belief that reality is stable, observable and measurable (Merriam, 1998). This ontological perspective believes that reality depends on what is external and real. As such, human beings are seen as a product of external forces in their social construct. It is therefore believed that the stimuli in the social construct condition them to behave and respond to events in predictable and determinate ways (Morgan, 1980;Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

The 'regulation' view derives from the term 'sociology of regulation', which is concerned with explaining society and lays emphasis on its underlying unity and cohesion (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This is in contrast to the 'radical change' view, which originates from 'sociology of radical change' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The basic concern of the 'radical change' view is to find explanations for radical change, and focuses on structural conflict, liberation of man from the structures that limit and inhibit potential for development (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

As shown in the diagram, the 'interpretive' and 'radical humanist' epistemology paradigms are both built on the subjective ontological position. This 'subjective' ontological position is adopted in this study. It is in contrast to the 'functionalist' and the 'radical structuralist' paradigms, which are built on the perspective of objective ontological position. Therefore, the 'functionalist' and the 'radical structuralist' paradigms will not be discussed further in this section.

This study has taken an epistemological position which is based on an 'interpretive paradigm' rather than the 'radical humanist' paradigm. Despite being similar to the 'interpretive paradigm', the 'radical humanist' is not preferred in this study, because, even though it emphasises the reality of the social construct, it attempts to imprison human beings in the reality that they create and sustain (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This is so, as it lies in the 'radical change' dimension, where a social construct is explained from the perspective which separates human beings from their inherent nature as humans (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

The 'interpretive' paradigm in this study views the social world as a precarious ontological state which does not exist in a concrete sense (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This epistemological stance corresponds with the aims of the study, which explores the strategy management process of a Malaysian university based on the experience of its social actors. The understanding of the strategy management process of this study is achieved by exploring the perspectives of the social actors in the study. It is important that the subjective reality of the social actors is understood in order to make sense of their behaviour, motives, actions and intentions in a meaningful way.

According to Saunders et al. (2007), interpretivism requires a researcher to adopt an empathic stance, thus it is vital for a researcher to understand the

research subjects from their perspectives. In this study, such understanding is enhanced through the previous involvement with the case study. Previously, I was a lecturer in the case study context. This experience has provided me with a good understanding of the context. It has enabled me to have an empathic view of its social actors, which contributes to a greater understanding of the case.

In line with the subjective ontological perspective, both symbolic interactionism and social constructivism have been applied in gaining an understanding of the social phenomena in the study. In relation to this, Guba and Lincoln (1990 cited in Patton, 2002) support the view that the constructivist perspective is based on subjective ontology. Both symbolic interactionism and social constructivism help to bring the researcher closer to the social actors, or participants, in the study.

Symbolic interactionism is based on three fundamental characteristics: 'human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them'; 'the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows'; and 'these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters' (Blumer, 1978, p.2). In other words, symbolic interactionism is focused on the meaning of interaction and communication for people when they deal with others. It is believed that an individual's sense of identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed through differing social contexts, situations and people (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). So, the quest of symbolic interactionism is about trying to understand the crux of the process by which people negotiate their understanding and behaviour as a shared sense of order with others (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). Symbolic interactionism is helpful in providing a deeper understanding of the participants' interpretations of their actions and situations.

Despite being based on the social psychological tenet, symbolic interactionism is used in this study in order to be sensitive towards the meanings of the social phenomena or human processes in the case study. It explains the way the social actors react in their social construct as a result of their own perspectives. In addition to symbolic interactionism, the social constructivism approach is also adopted to enhance the understanding of the way social actors react in their social construct. According to Berger and Luckmann

(1991), this type of inquiry is the task of the sociology of knowledge which is concerned with the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). The social construction of reality concerns the relationship between the human being and the social context within which it arises (Berger and Luckmann, 1991).

Social constructivism is about knowing how an individual identifies a generality of others, also known as society (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). It is believed that only through this generalised identification can an individual self identification obtain stability and continuity (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). So the quest of social constructivism in this study is to understand the way in which the social actors react in their social construct, and to provide answers to the questions of: 'How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, "truth", explanations, beliefs, and worldview? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and for those with whom they interact?' (Patton, 2002, p.132).

Both symbolic interactionism and social constructivism help in gaining an overall perspective of the social actors and the aspects of their behaviour. Social constructivism provides a descriptive view of the social actors in the study, and symbolic interactionism provides a deeper understanding from the perspectives of the participants in the study.

The research perspectives and philosophy have influenced the research design of this study. As suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) the perspectives and philosophy are the paradigm that forms the set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied.

The research design of this study is discussed in the following section.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This section is important to justify that the appropriate research design has been adopted in this study. A research design is an overall plan on how to answer research questions (Saunders, et al. 2007). It is important in ensuring that relevant evidence is obtained in the research inquiry (Vaus, 2003). The discussion of the research design begins with the purpose of the study. It is

then followed by the discussions of the research strategy adopted (Section 4.3.1); the type of data collected in the study (Section 4.3.2); and the participants in the study (Section 4.3.3)

Purpose

The 'purpose' is the researcher's aim for conducting a research inquiry. According to Saunders et al. (2007), there are three basic purposes for researchers to conduct a social research. These purposes are classified as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders, et al. 2007). An exploratory research seeks to investigate what is happening by exploring new insights in assessing an occurrence (Robson, 2002). It is mainly used to clarify the nature of a phenomenon, especially when there is no clear understanding of that phenomenon. A great advantage of this research inquiry lies in its flexibility. According to Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991), a researcher who conducts an exploratory research must be willing to change his direction when new insights are found. The flexibility in a research inquiry does not mean that it is lack of direction, but rather that its focus, which was initially broad, will become progressively narrower as the research progresses (Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1991).

On the other hand, descriptive research aims to reveal an accurate profile of events, situations, and people (Robson, 2002). According to Robson (2002), in spite of being dismissed for being simply descriptive, descriptive research is believed to be fundamental in providing an immeasurable body of knowledge which shapes the nature of society. A good description promotes the conduct of exploratory research (Robson, 2002). In a good description a researcher is forced to ask, why is it happening?, and before one can ask why, it is important to be certain that the inquiry is undertaken on a sound basis, which primarily depends on the quality of the descriptions provided (Robson, 2002).

Explanatory research seeks to explain a situation or problem in a form of causal relationship. The emphasis is to explain a situation based on a relationship between variables (Saunders, et al. 2007). According to Vaus (2003), three types of causal relationship exist, classified as direct causal, indirect causal, and the more complex causal model that consists of direct and indirect causal links.

This study is both descriptive and exploratory. It is descriptive as it seeks to reveal a profile of the case study context based on the participants' experience or encounter (Robson, 2002). It is also exploratory as it explores the insights behind the strategy management process of the University. This is consistent with the explanation earlier, which suggests that a good description leads to further exploratory research (Robson, 2002). The research strategy adopted in this study is determined with these purposes in mind.

4.3.1 Research Strategy

Research strategy is described as a general approach taken in a research inquiry. Examples of research strategies are experiments, surveys, case studies, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research (Saunders, et al. 2007). It is stated that these strategies should not be mutually exclusive as one could apply a survey as part of a case study (Saunders, et al. 2007).

As stated earlier, Saunders et al. (2007) suggested that the choice of research strategy depends on the research question, objective, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time, the available resources, and the philosophical underpinnings of the study. In line with this statement, two research strategies were adopted in this study, i.e. a grounded theory approach and a case study.

The choice of these strategies is in line with the research philosophy and perspective of this study which are drawn on the interpretive epistemology and subjective ontology. As discussed earlier, this philosophy and perspective require an in-depth understanding of the context. In this study, it is best achieved through a case study research and a grounded theory approach. The case study allows an in-depth understanding of the case, and the grounded theory approach enables me to enter the fieldwork without any predetermined conception. Thus, the subjective reality in this study is captured and illuminated from the case study and the grounded theory approach. These strategies are explained in Section 4.3.1.1 and Section 4.3.1.2 respectively.

4.3.1.1 Grounded Theory Approach

The adoption of the grounded theory approach which allows theory to emerge from data fits with the ontological perspective of subjectivism and epistemological view of interpretive paradigm. It views the social world as a precarious ontological state that does not exist in a concrete sense. Thus, the grounded theory approach provides the flexibility which enabled me to conduct the research inquiry without any predetermined or preconceived ideas of theory that might emerge from the data. This encourages theory to be elaborated from data without any predetermined theoretical conceptions. This reflects the subjectivism and interpretivism approach in this study.

As described by Glaser and Strauss (2006), a grounded theory approach is a process of developing theory from data which is systematically obtained from research investigation. In a grounded theory approach, theory is described as a strategy for handling data in research; it provides modes of conceptualisation for describing and understanding a particular behaviour (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). The grounded theory approach is chosen in this study for several reasons.

First, it is used as a tool for understanding the empirical world. According to Denscombe (2003), one of the distinctive characteristics of a grounded theory approach as compared to other research strategies is its emphasis on empirical fieldwork and the understanding of what happens in the real world. The grounded theory approach gives voice to the respondents in the study and represents them as accurately as possible, hence providing an opportunity to discover and acknowledge their views of reality (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). This characteristic is in line with the ontological perspective of subjectivism.

The grounded theory approach provides an opportunity for a richer understanding of the subjective reality of the social actors to be gathered. It provides the opportunity to make sense of the behaviour and to develop an understanding of their motives, actions and intentions. The strength of a grounded theory approach which values direct knowledge of the empirical world, and which inclines toward an interpretive, understanding of subjective meaning, also corresponds with the epistemological stance which seeks to explore the strategy management process from the perspectives of the actors in the case study.

Second, the characteristic of a grounded theory approach is appropriate for the exploratory research conducted, as it allowed me to begin the research inquiry without any predetermined theory prior to the fieldwork. As such, it is deemed to be the most appropriate approach in gaining valuable and unique insights into a case (Denscombe, 2003). It focuses on the process of elaborating theory, rather than on testing a particular theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Thus, the grounded theory approach allows themes to emerge from the findings.

Third, the grounded theory approach helps to guide the data collection methods. This includes the determining of the sampling procedures and the coding of data. It is also helpful in guiding the elaboration of a theoretical framework based on the empirical evidence found in the study. This is possible as the grounded theory approach emphasises the elaboration of a theoretical framework based on the emerging themes from the study. Further discussions on the application of the grounded theory approach in assisting the data collection in this study are in the data collection section (refer to Section 5.2.3 on page).

Fourth, the grounded theory approach emphasises methods that brought me closer to the case study context. This is vital in ensuring that results and findings are empirically grounded. As suggested by Blumer (1978, pp.31-32), the 'empirical social world consists of ongoing group life and one has to get close to this life to know what is going on in it'. This is achieved by having a methodological approach that allows an understanding to be obtained from the context of the study (Blumer, 1978). The grounded theory approach allowed such an understanding to be achieved in this study.

4.3.1.2 Case Study

A case study is defined as a strategy for research and involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real life context (Robson, 2002). According to Yin (2009, p.8), the choice of research method depends on the research question, the extent of control over actual behavioural events, and the focus on either the current issues or historical events. A case study is interested in answering 'how'; it requires no control over behavioural events unlike the experiment method which is usually done in a laboratory setting by

manipulating behaviour (Yin, 2009). A case study is focused on direct observations of events and therefore, it is interested in current issues rather than historical events (Yin, 2009).

These criteria fit with this study as its research question was to explore 'how' the strategy management process is being practised in the context of a public university in Malaysia. The choice to conduct a case study is also consistent with the purpose of this study which was exploratory and descriptive. As an exploratory study, it delves into what is going on in the case study context. Yin (2009) has suggested that a case study is pertinent in an exploratory research as one finds out how something happens. It is stated that case study research allows a researcher to focus on the production of meaning, pondering impressions, deliberating recollection that is local to the case context (Stake, 1998). Therefore, this study did not require any control of behavioural events, as this would affect the objective of the study, which seeks to gather as much information from the perspectives of the participants in the study.

At the same time, this study is also a descriptive study. As a descriptive study, it requires a comprehensive description of the real life context. Therefore, case study research provides the opportunity to describe the real life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2012). As suggested by Saunders et al. (2007), a case study is important in gaining a rich understanding of the context and its processes. This is an advantage of a case study where it provides a real world situation in addressing important research questions (Yin, 2012). As such, a case study provides the opportunity for direct observation of events and interviews of the individual involved in the events (Yin, 2009). In this study, it enables a descriptive elaboration of the strategy management process of the case to be obtained. This contributes to the much needed knowledge on university strategy management process (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006).

According to Yin (2009), a distinctive need for a case study arises from the desire to understand complex social phenomena. The focus on understanding the locality of the case is also consistent with the philosophical stance of subjectivism and social constructivism, which require an in-depth understanding of the case based on the participants in the study. It is suggested by Yin (2012), that the study of phenomena based on a real world context provides a much deeper understanding of the phenomena. This has made case study research suitable in this study as it is focused on the collection of data in natural settings and it does not rely on derived data which

are found in responses to variables such as in a questionnaire survey (Yin, 2012).

4.3.1.2.1 Different Types of Case Study

There are three different types of case study suggested by Stake (2000). These are known as intrinsic case study; instrumental case study; and collective case study (Stake, 1998). An intrinsic case study is conducted on a single case as one seeks to gain an understanding of a particular case (Stake, 1998). The objective of the intrinsic case study is not for abstract construction or generic phenomenon as the case itself is the subject of a particular interest (Stake, 2000). An instrumental case study is conducted on a particular case to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory (Stake, 1998). In contrast to the intrinsic case study, the case in the instrumental case study is a secondary interest (Stake, 2000). As such, the case in the instrumental case study provides a supportive and facilitating role in understanding a particular issue (Stake, 2000). This case is chosen based on its potential to advance understanding of a particular interest or issue (Stake, 2000). Hence, the focus of the study will be on the issues rather than on the case selected (Stake, 2000).

Another type of a case study is a collective case study. A collective case study is an instrumental study conducted on several cases in order to acquire an understanding of a phenomenon, population, or general condition (Stake, 1998). The choice of the individual case in the collective case study may or may not be identified in advance and they could be similar or dissimilar, redundant or vary in characteristics (Stake, 2000). These cases are chosen based on their ability to enhance the understanding about a larger group of cases (Stake, 2000).

From the definition given by Stake (2000), this study can be considered as an instrumental case study. It is an instrumental case study as the main objective of the study is to explore the strategy management process of a public university in Malaysia. Therefore, the interest of the study was on the strategy management process and the case in this study serves as a platform in providing an understanding to be gathered from the Malaysian public university context.

In addition to the various types of case study, Yin (2009) has further specified a case study design based on four types of design. According to Yin (2009) there are four types of case study design that can be chosen in deciding on a case to be studied. The four types of case study design are based on two discrete dimensions (Yin, 2003). The first dimension is based on either single or multiple cases; and the second dimension is either based on a holistic case or on embedded sub-cases within an overall holistic case (Yin, 2003). A single case is used to represent a unique case, and multiple cases represent more than one case, and are mainly used to establish a generalisation of findings (Yin, 2003).

This study was based on a single case of a public university in Malaysia. A single case was chosen based on the need to gather an in-depth understanding of a particular issue within the case (Yin, 2009). It provides the opportunity to explore the strategy management process from the single case study context and uncover prevalent phenomena within the case. As suggested by Stake (2000), in a case study research, one should choose a case that can best provide the opportunity to learn about a particular interest. The university in this study is a unique case and serves as an interesting context in providing insights into the strategy management process of a Malaysian public university. The choice of the case was mainly based on its extreme features as compared to other universities in Malaysia. This university is the largest public university with its branch campuses spread all over the states in Malaysia; it has the largest population of students and staff as compared to other universities in the country; and it is highly active in its strategy activities. The criteria of the University especially with regard to its size and its active involvement in strategy activities have made it a suitable case to learn about the strategy management process. The choice which is based on an extreme case is suggested as one of the rationales for selecting a single case study (Yin, 2009).

The selection of this University also provides new insights into the strategy management process of a Malaysian university which has previously been remote in the strategy management literature. This is also one of the rationales for selecting a single case (Yin, 2009). As suggested by Yin (2009), one of the reasons for selecting a single case is a revelatory case. The revelatory case provides the opportunity to explore a phenomenon that has been previously remote or has only been covered by a few social scientists

(Yin, 2009). So far, there has not been any known study conducted on strategy management process in a Malaysian public university context. The selection of a single case aimed to gather an in-depth understanding of its strategy management process. As suggested by Vaus (2003) a case study attempts to achieve a complex and fuller understanding of a phenomenon. As such, this study does not intervene with variables, which are usually found in quantitative studies, but aspires to explore an understanding within the case study context. This also fits with the inductive approach of the study and the grounded theory adopted, as it allows theory to be elaborated from the findings.

In addition to the new insights and the emphasis on an in-depth understanding from the context, the choice of a single case was also due to the limitation of time and cost constraints involved in the study. This is a PhD research study; therefore it has limited budget and time constraints. The prospect of having a huge amount of data from a qualitative inquiry of several cases can be time-consuming thus ineffective considering the constraints.

4.3.1.2.2 The Outcome Expected from the Case Study

As this study was based on a single case study context, the findings made from the study are not intended for scientific or statistical generalisation. This has been a criticism of case study research (Yin, 2009). Despite the criticism, it is suggested that a case study finding is generalisable to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2009). The generalisation to theory is known as an analytical generalisation (Yin, 2009). It is opposed to the statistical generalisation which is normally found in studies that generalise their findings to population or universe (Yin, 2009).

As argued by Stake (2000), a case study is not intended to represent the world but instead it represents the case. For example, this study has emphasised getting an insight into the strategy management process of a university whilst illuminating pertinent issues pertaining to this process. Hence, the study is not aimed for generalisation to populations.

A case study has also been viewed as a less rigorous, and not a serious method of inquiry (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), this is refutable as case study

research actually involves systematic data collection and analysis procedures which range from initial exploration to completion of the full authoritative study. The data collection and analysis of this study are discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Another criticism of a case study research is that it is claimed to take too long and may result in massive, unreadable documents (Yin, 2009). It is argued by Yin (2009) that this could be an issue of the past and it is no longer relevant to case study research conducted nowadays. According to Yin (2009), a case study has often been confused with ethnographies, a specific method of data collection that requires long periods of time in the field and emphasises a detailed, observational evidence. It is claimed by Yin (2009) that a case study is a form of inquiry that does not solely depend on ethnographic data as it could also be conducted via telephone or internet depending on the topic of the study.

In this study, the challenge of massive data has been minimised with the use of computer software, NVivo 8, in assisting the data analysis. This is explained in Section 5.3.1.2 of Chapter 5.

4.3.1.2.3 The Relationship with the Case Study Context

I was a lecturer at the University in the case study, where I had worked for six years before pursuing my PhD study. The experience of being in the case study context was beneficial in providing an in-depth understanding of the context. It offered the opportunity to recollect my previous experiences in the case study context and thus was beneficial in providing an in-depth understanding of the issues that emerged in the findings. This helped me to empathise with the situations in the context of the study.

Being away for a few years enabled me to approach the case study context with a fresh viewpoint. This provided the opportunity for 'empathic neutrality' to be obtained (Patton, 2002, p.50). As described by Patton (2002, p.50), 'empathic neutrality' is a middle ground between being too involved which could cloud judgement, and remaining too distant which might interfere with understanding. As stated by Patton (2002, p.49), '...closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable; distance is no guarantee of objectivity'.

As further suggested by Patton (2002, p.51), '…the neutral investigator enters the research arena with no ax to grind'; 'no theory to prove'; and 'no predetermined results to support'. According to Patton (2002, p.51), an investigator's commitment 'is to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge'. The merit of the research inquiry in this study is that it respects and stays close to the empirical domain without any 'theory to prove' or 'predetermined results to support' (Patton, 2002, p.51).

4.3.2 Data Collection Strategy

This section discusses how data were collected in addressing the research questions in the study. It covers discussions on the inductive approach adopted in the study; it draws on the importance of qualitative data to be sought in the study; it justifies the use of semi-structured interviews in the study; and it provides a general description of the participants in the study.

4.3.2.1 Inductive Approach

In line with the 'interpretive' epistemological perspective, an inductive approach has been applied in this study. An inductive approach is defined as an approach that allows theory to emerge from data (Saunders, et al. 2007). It is opposite to the deductive approach which is based on a hypothesis that is deduced from theory (Saunders, et al. 2007). As such, the deductive approach has been criticised for placing emphasis on cause and effect between variables without any clear understanding of the social world (Saunders, et al. 2007). Therefore, it is thought that the understanding of the social phenomena should be gained through inductive rather than deductive mode of inquiry (Merriam, 1998). Unlike the deductive approach, the inductive approach emphasises the context of event, thus provides a better understanding of the events.

The choice of an inductive approach in this study is also consistent with the ontological stance that is brought into the study. It is based on a belief that a

social world is 'subjective'. Hence, the study was not aimed at testing any predetermined framework or concepts and it did not restrict the findings to any of the existing concepts. This allows theory to be elaborated from findings (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988). It is the opposite of the deductive approach which is limited to preordained theoretical perspectives or propositions (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois 1988).

The inductive approach is believed to be the appropriate method for gaining an understanding of the subjectivity of the social context as it offers the opportunity to interpret the social context from the social actors' perspectives. In doing so, it requires a choice of research method that does not confine itself to narrow empirical snapshots of isolated phenomena, as is normally done with the deductive approach (Morgan, 1980; Morgan and Smircich, 1980). This is because the social world is complex and to view it as a concrete structure will not do justice to the nature of the context (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

This study has taken the challenge by embarking with the perspective of the world as 'subjective' which emphasises the importance of understanding the phenomena from the perspectives of the social actors. This requires an in-depth analysis of the case study context with an inductive approach.

4.3.2.2 Qualitative Data

In line with the inductive approach, qualitative data are collected in this study. Qualitative data are appropriate as it is consistent with the philosophical stance of the study which views reality as constructed by individuals interacting in their social world. As such, I was interested in gathering a rich understanding from the perspectives of the people in the context and to make sense through their experiences (Sherman and Webb, 1988).

This conforms to the characteristics of qualitative data which are concerned with the understanding of a phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. This is in contrast to quantitative research which draws primarily on methods of natural sciences (Patton, 2002). Quantitative research is considered as inappropriate in capturing a comprehensive view of society (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). It is argued that quantitative data are important, but only

partially especially when it comes to understanding the social process (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). It is commented that in gathering quantitative data, social scientists attempt 'to freeze the social world into structured immobility' and reveal the nature of the world by 'examining lawful relations' of elements 'for the sake of accurate definition and measurement' (Morgan and Smircich, 1980, p.498). This is thought to do injustice to the nature of the subjects (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

Qualitative data on the other hand, emphasises getting closer to people and circumstances in capturing an event (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). This requires an in-depth understanding of the context in revealing the inner perspective of the social context (Patton, 2002). Therefore, in obtaining qualitative data, a researcher is required to be personally engaged with the context. This is contradictory to the professional conduct of some fields, which suggest that a researcher should be an objective evaluator, to project an image that is external and detached from its context as the detachment is presumed to reduce bias (Patton, 2002). This stance has been questioned by the qualitative methodologists, as detachment would hinder a researcher's ability to fully appreciate the perspectives of those within the context (Patton, 2002). As stated, 'Understanding comes from trying to put oneself in the other person's shoes, from trying to discern how others think, act, and feel' (Patton, 2002, p.49).

Patton (2002) also suggests many instances where the closeness to the sources of data has made key insights possible. In this study, the previous experience in the case study context provided the opportunity to have a greater understanding of the issues that emerged in the study. This helped in gaining a good understanding of the issues that were raised by the participants in the study.

4.3.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews

According to Kvale (1996, p.105) interviewing is a craft: 'It does not follow content-and context-free rules of method, but rests on the judgements of a qualified researcher.' As such, the outcome of an interview relies on the knowledge, sensitivity and empathy of the interviewer (Kvale, 1996). Interviews focus on obtaining descriptions of the lived world of participants

(Kvale, 1996). It is a unique, sensitive and powerful way of capturing the experience and the lived meanings of participants and allows participants to convey their situations from their own perspective and in their own words (Kvale, 1996). This serves as a vital aspect for this study as it was primarily focused on gathering an understanding from the perspective of the participants. This practice is also in line with my philosophical stance of subjectivism.

As suggested by Kvale (1996), an interviewer seeks to interpret the meaning of central themes in the lived world of the subject. This is done by interpreting and registering the meanings of words that have been spoken as well as how they are spoken (Kvale, 1996). In this study, the spoken words from the interviews were captured on an audio tape recorder.

According to Kvale (1996), there are seven stages involved in an interview investigation. It comprises thematising; designing; interviewing; transcribing; analysing; verifying; and reporting (Kvale, 1996). Thematising is the formulation of the purpose of the research investigation and the topic to be investigated prior to the interviews (Kvale, 1996). The thematising in this study was directed by its research objectives, which were based on the interest to explore the strategy management process from the case study context.

Designing involves creating the plan for obtaining the intended knowledge whilst considering its moral implications (Kvale, 1996). In this study, the designing stage involves the preparations for conducting the interviews, which include the design of the interview questions and the determination of the case as well as the identification of the initial participants in the study. The interview questions prepared at this stage were used as a guide in the interviews. As this study is inductive and based on the grounded theory approach, it is important to allow flexibility in the questions asked during the interviews. This reflects the interest in appreciating the participants' views and the need to follow the trail of discoveries, in line with the philosophical stance brought into this study.

As part of the designing stage, a few pilot interviews had been conducted prior to the actual field work. These pilot interviews provided practice in interviewing. Among the pilot interviews were the interviews held with the PhD supervisor and Rob Evans, the Deputy Registrar of the University of East

Anglia**.** The interview with the Deputy Registrar was observed by the PhD supervisor. The supervisor had given comments based on the observations. This provided the opportunity for improving the interviewing skills based on the feedback given by the supervisor. The pilot interviews were vital prior to the real interviews. As suggested by Robson (2002), skills in interviewing have to come with practice under low risk conditions with the opportunity to receive feedback on performance. This practice was useful in providing the confidence in conducting the real interviews. It also provided a good practice in developing the skills for choosing the right questions to follow and focusing on the pertinent themes during the interviews.

During the designing stage, the Malaysian University had been contacted for permission to conduct the case study. Once the permission was granted, the initial participants in the study were identified and contacted. The process of gaining access to the research site is explained in Section 5.2.1.1 in Chapter Five. The participants in the study were selected based on their roles and involvement with the strategy management process of the University. A further explanation on participants in the study is discussed in Section 4.3.3 of this chapter.

The third stage identified by Kvale (1996) is the interviewing process. Interviewing is the process involved in the interview sessions. According to Kvale (1996), it is important that the interviews are conducted with the awareness of the interpersonal relations involved in the interview situation (Kvale, 1996). It is suggested by Kvale (1996) that the interview process should start with the initial briefing about the purpose of the interviews and end with debriefing after the interviews (Kvale, 1996). The interview sessions in this study were audio taped. A tape provides a permanent record and allows the researcher to focus on the interview process (Robson, 2002). The interview process is thoroughly discussed in Section 5.2.2 of Chapter 5. The 'interviews story' has also been included to provide an insight of the interview experience. This can be found in Section 5.2.5 of Chapter 5.

Transcribing is a process of preparing a transcription from the oral speech to a written text (Kvale, 1996). As such, a transcription is prepared based on the interview data collected, i.e. from the audio tape recorded. A transcript is a tool for the interpretation of what is said during the interviews (Kvale, 1996). In this study, I have done the transcriptions myself. This practice helped to refresh my memory of the experience during the interviews. In the

preparation of the transcriptions, I had to listen to the audio tape repeatedly. This was found to be enriching as it enhanced the understanding and helped to recollect the memory of the relevant issues discussed during the interviews. This was useful in providing a clear picture and understanding of the issues particularly in the data analysis stage.

Analysing is a stage where one decides a suitable method of analysis for the interview data collected (Kvale, 1996). The data analysis in this study is fully described in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5.

Verifying refers to a stage where the interviewer ascertains the generalisability, reliability and validity of the interview findings (Kvale, 1996). According to Kvale (1996), reliability refers to consistencies of the research findings; validity involves the question on whether the observations reflect the truth and knowledge; and generalisability refers to the question of whether the results from the interview studies are generalisable (Kvale, 1996). The validity, reliability, and rigour are further discussed in Section 4.4; and generalisability, and ethical issues are discussed in Section 4.5 of this chapter.

The last stage suggested by Kvale (1996) is reporting. Reporting involves the communication of findings and method in the study (Kvale, 1996). The reporting of this study is presented in this thesis.

Basically, there are three types of interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview (Robson, 2002). A structured interview comprises predetermined questions with fixed wording which are normally arranged in a pre-set order (Robson, 2002). An unstructured interview is an open interview where the interviewer has a general area of interest and the interviewer will let this interest develop during the conversation (Robson, 2002).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A semi-structured interview has predetermined questions which can be modified based on the interviewer's judgement (Robson, 2002). According to Robson (2002), the wording of a question can be changed, and a question can be omitted when it is felt inappropriate, and a new question can be added during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews are referred as qualitative research interviews and are widely used in flexible qualitative

designs (King, 1994). They are mainly appropriate in a study which focuses on the meaning of particular phenomena to the participants and especially in an exploratory study (King, 1994).

The advantages of conducting a semi-structured interview in this study are discussed.

First, the semi-structured interview provides the opportunity to delve into a more detailed issue that might not be apparent through superficial research (Denscombe, 2003). It is an important method for providing an understanding from the perspective of various participants in the study.

The semi-structured interview is appropriate for the purpose of generating ideas in addressing the research objectives. It provided me with the opportunity to explore the strategy management process based on the explanations given by the participants. As suggested by Denscombe (2003), a semi-structured qualitative interview is best applied in an investigation that requires detailed information based on the perspectives and experiences of participants.

Second, it is consistent with my philosophical stance which emphasises the need to seek a better understanding of the social world as interpreted by the participants. The semi-structured interview allows the participants freedom to state their opinions based on the questions in the interview. As mentioned by Patton (2002), a semi-structured interview used in the research inquiry yields direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge.

Third, the grounded theory approach applied in the study is best served by a semi-structured interview. The approach which emphasises the emergence of theory from empirical research is the best way of gathering issues from the fieldwork. A grounded theory approach, which accounts for variations, is flexible as it allows researchers to modify their emerging analyses as conditions change, or when further data are gathered (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). This requires some flexibility in the data collection process, and the choice of a semi-structured interview provides room for such flexibility in the questions raised. According to Glaser and Strauss (2006), semi-structured interview is not fixed, it will change as more findings are made in the research inquiry. As mentioned by Charmaz (1990), the grounded theory approach moves each step of the analytical process toward development, refinement,

and interrelation of concepts (Charmaz, 1990). The use of a semi-structured interview allows such flexibility to be practised at the data collection stage (Charmaz, 1993).

Fourth, the choice of a semi-structured interview is also consistent with the inductive approach applied in the study as it is not aimed at hypothesis testing. It seeks to gather as much information as possible from the participants. This also allows a better understanding of the way the social world is interpreted by participants and enables alternative explanations of the phenomena to be accomplished (Robson, 2002).

Fifth, the semi-structured interview, which is conducted 'face to face' and 'one to one' with the participants provides the opportunity for modifying the line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives which is not possible with other methods of enquiry (Robson, 2002). The close encounter provides the opportunity to observe the body language of the participants in the study. The non-verbal cues give a message that can help in understanding the verbal response which can sometimes have a different meaning (Robson, 2002).

In contrast to the semi-structured interview, the structured interview and the unstructured interview were not chosen in the research inquiry as they are inappropriate and inconsistent with the research objectives of the study. The structured interview which requires questions to be developed from the existing theory will hinder the richness of the case study from being explored. It is not flexible as the questions in the structured interview are fixed and intended to deduce a hypothesis. This does not provide flexibility in the research inquiry and therefore is not suitable for this type of study.

The unstructured interview is not used in this study as it could lead to a lack of focus in the feedback given by the participants. This is because an unstructured interview provides total freedom for participants to talk freely about an event without any specific directions (Saunders, et al. 2007). Thus, it is felt that there is a need for a minimal degree of structure in the interview questions to provide some focus in the research inquiry. The use of the semi-structured interview in this study enabled discussions to be made within the research objectives of the study. It enabled some control over the conversations and at the same time allowed the respondents to communicate freely within the key issues raised in the interviews. A further discussion of

the interview process conducted in this study is explained in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2.

4.3.3 Participants in the Study

Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study. A summary of the participants is presented in Table 5.3 which can be found in Chapter 5. This summary provides information pertaining to the schedule of the interviews including the time, the date, the location, and the participants involved.

It was my aim to select a fair representation of accounts from the case study context. Hence, the participants in the study were selected from various backgrounds. These participants are highlighted in the organisational chart shown in Appendix 4-1. The participants comprised the Deputy Vice Chancellors; the Registrar; the Assistant Vice Chancellors; the Deans; the Head of Departments; the Director of a Branch Campus; the Head of Programmes; and the lecturers of the University.

These participants were mainly selected because of their involvement in the strategy management process of the University. They are either involved with the formulation, implementation, or monitoring of the University strategy. For the purpose of identifying the participants in the study, I have categorised the participants into three levels of positions: the Executive Management Team; the Operation and Management Team; and the Academic Staff. The distribution of the participants in the study is shown in the table below.

Participants	Number of Participants
Executive Management Team	4
Operation and Management Team	16
Academic Staff	10

Table: 4.1: Number of Participants

The Executive Management Team interviewed consists of three Deputy Vice Chancellors and a Registrar. In the chart (refer to Appendix 4-1), they are shown under the Operation and Management Team. This is mainly because they are involved with the operation and management activities of the university on a daily basis, whilst at the same time holding the Executive Management Team position in the University. As explained in Chapter 3, the Executive Management Team is responsible for the general planning, monitoring, and implementation of decisions in achieving the University's goals.

The three Deputy Vice Chancellor interviewed were the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International (DVC1); the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Alumni (DVC2); and the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation (DVC3). The Registrar interviewed is the Head of the Registry in the University. The general administration of the University is carried out by the Registry. The duties of the Registry include the recruitment of University staff and its development; the handling of students' records; and other administrative duties involving University activities as a whole.

The participants from the Executive Management Team had been identified prior to the start of the fieldwork. They were selected based on their direct involvement with the strategy management process of the University especially in the planning of the University's strategy. It was my intention to interview all of the University's Deputy Vice Chancellors. However, due to unexpected circumstances, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Industrial and Community Networking (DVC4) was not able to be interviewed. A further explanation of this can be found in the discussions of 'Reflection from the fieldwork' in Section 5.5.1 of Chapter 5.

The Operation and Management Team interviewed comprises three Assistant Vice Chancellors (Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (inQKA), Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Leadership and Quality Management (ilQam)); a Director of Office of International Affairs (OIA); a Manager in the Strategic Planning Centre; a Director of International Education College (INTEC) campus; six Deans of Faculties (three deans from the Science and Technology, one dean from the Social Science and Humanities, and two deans from the Management and Business); a Head of Programme of a faculty; a

Head of Graduate School; a Head of MBA programme; and a Director of an Academic Centre.

The Operation and Management Team are responsible for the implementation of the University's fundamental activities. All of the participants from the Operation and Management Team were mainly selected because of their direct involvement with the University strategy management process; and the main activities of the University, i.e. teaching and research. In addition to this, I also selected participants who are involved with staff development (Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (inQKA); Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Leadership and Quality Management (ilQam)). This provided the opportunity to bring to light issues in relation to academic staff.

It is important to note that not all of the Operation and Management Team are directly involved with the University strategy formulation. Only some of them had been involved in the planning of the University strategy. Occasionally, they would be called to a senate meeting by the Vice Chancellor of the University. The senate meeting involves University's stakeholders, including the technocrats from the industries, and one of its purposes is to determine the strategic directions of the University.

Hence, I prioritised the selection of participants from the Operation and Management group based on their involvement with the University strategy planning as well as strategy implementation and strategy monitoring. The aim was to gather comprehensive views from the participants' involved in all aspects of the University strategy management process. As a result, fifteen participants from this group had been identified prior to the fieldwork. On top of the participants identified, another participant had been suggested by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research Innovation to be interviewed.

Ten Academic Staff were interviewed in this study. These included lecturers from Business Management Faculty; Engineering Faculty; Hotel and Tourism Management; Administrative Science and Policy Studies; and Medicine Faculty. The lecturers were selected based on the reputation of their faculties; and their faculties' active involvement in carrying out the University strategy. Their reputations are classified based on the number of students, and their role in contributing towards the human resource development of the country. At the same time, I also selected lecturers from a faculty which does not fall

into the category of a reputable faculty. This was done for the purpose of identifying any contradictory experiences between the faculties.

The Academic Staff interviewed were senior lecturers, with a minimum of 20 years of experience. These participants had not been identified prior to the interviews. They were named by their Deans based on seniority and involvement in the University strategy management process. Their experience allowed a greater insight into the strategy management issues of the case study context. The results from the trail of discovery led to ten academic staff members being interviewed. After the ten interviews, I found that the information provided by the participants had reached a saturation point, the point where no additional knowledge could be obtained if the interviews were continued further.

There were other people who were not included in the interviews. This was determined based on saturation points; their lack of knowledge and involvement in the university strategy management process; and subject to availability.

For example, as shown in Appendix 4-1, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Industrial and Community Networking (DVC4) was not interviewed because he was not available throughout the fieldwork. His subunits were not interviewed since I considered that I had enough information gathered from other participants at this level. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was not interviewed due to his role which is to support the recording of financial matters. He is not directly involved with the main business of the University that is teaching and research, or the strategy management process of the University. Thus, he had not been identified as a participant in the study.

A discussion on the participants interviewed is continued in Section 5.2.3 of Chapter 5. It explains the sampling technique applied in this study and shows how the interview process evolved.

4.4 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY, AND RIGOUR

This section addresses the issues of validity, reliability, and rigour in the study. It is important to understand that the treatment of validity and

reliability in a qualitative study is different from a quantitative study. This is mainly due to the separate natures of a qualitative and a quantitative study. The qualitative study requires flexibility in its research inquiry. Therefore, the data collected in a qualitative study is open-ended, and may vary from interviews to observations (Yin, 2012). The quantitative study, on the other hand, is close to the experimental analysis, which normally uses questionnaires and surveys in its research inquiry (Yin, 2009). It is mainly aimed at logically deducing a hypothesis.

It has been suggested by Firestone (1987, p.19) that, 'The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion 'makes sense' ' whereas the quantitative study 'portrays a world of variables and static states...By contrast the qualitative study describes people acting in events'. The statement made by Firestone (1987), presents the divisive lines of two separate natures of research findings which require different approaches in addressing their issues of validity and reliability. The issues of validity and reliability in this study are explained in the sections that follow.

4.4.1 Validity

Validity 'deals with the question of how research findings match reality. How congruent are the findings with reality?' (Merriam, 1998, p.201). As suggested by Merriam (1998), validity in a qualitative research cannot be precisely measured as in quantitative research. This is because reality is argued as 'holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing, it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research' (Merriam, 1998, p.202).

In relation to this, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.295) define reality as 'a multiple set of mental constructions ... made by humans; their constructions are in their minds, and they are, in the main, accessible to the humans who make them'. This clearly suggests the important role of a researcher in understanding the reality from its context. As suggested by Merriam (1998, p.203), 'it is important to understand the perspective of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening'.

This assumption has made a researcher the main tool in interpreting the reality of a qualitative research. In line with the suggestion made by Malinowski (1922), the reality in this study is presented by understanding the participants' point of view, their interpretation of life and to realise their vision. Therefore, the main focus of validity in a qualitative research is to give an account and clarify the researcher's experience and ideas in the conduct of the research inquiry (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). According to Hemmersley (1992, cited in Altheide and Johnson, 1998) an account is valid if it represents the phenomena it aims to describe, explain and theorise as accurately as possible. However, this suggestion is still open to criticism, as validity in a qualitative research is subject to the interpretation of communities or audience (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). Hence, it has been suggested that researchers should substantiate their interpretations and findings with a reflexive account of themselves and the process of their research (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). A reflexive account of this study can be found in Section 5.4 of Chapter 5.

In this study, the issue of validity is addressed by:

1. Repeating the question that had contributed to the earlier finding by raising the question to a different participant in the subsequent interviews. The verification against other participants increases the validity of the findings (Merriam, 1998). It helps to capture the reality based on the all-inclusive data obtained and analysed from all of the participants in the study (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the verifications are done through a process known as the trail of discovery. The trail of discovery was repeated until a saturation point was achieved. A point of saturation is achieved when repeated questions no longer contribute any new discoveries. The process provides the basis of validity of the findings gathered in the study. A detailed explanation of the process can be found in Section 5.2.3 and Section 5.2.4 of Chapter 5.

2. The information gathered from the perspectives of various groups ensures the validity of the findings. By interviewing the various groups in the case study, i.e. the Executive Management Team, the Operation and Management Team, and the Academic Staff, it helped to gather a comprehensive view thus enhancing the validity of the findings.

3. Verification of sources is conducted by confirming some of the findings against available documentation. According to Yin (2009), multiple sources of evidence are useful in enhancing the validity of the findings. This involves checking interview findings against written evidence which can be used to support the interview report (Patton, 2002). As suggested by Merriam (1998), multiple sources of data can be used to confirm the emerging findings. In this study, I have made reference to available documentation for the purpose of verifying the emerging findings. This documentation was revealed by the participants and disclosed by them as evidence of their claims. For example, the information regarding the University strategy was validated against the University strategy documentation, namely the University strategy planning document, Rancangan Malaysia Ke-9 (RMK9) and the Vice Chancellor New Year's Speech booklet. The documentation, RMK9, confirmed the current University strategy and the Vice Chancellor New Year's Speech provides justification of the efforts taken by the University in communicating and implementing its strategy (refer to Section 6.2.4).

4. The previous experience of being in the case study context was useful in achieving an understanding of the context. As suggested by LeCompte et al. (1993, p.342), 'living among participants' ensures a match between the researcher's interpretation and participants' reality. The understanding of the context is important for intelligibility and comprehension (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). The significance of context for interpretation and understanding offers a qualitative researcher additional resources for their authority (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). Having the experience in the case study context allows me to have an in-depth understanding and awareness which provide the knowledge for the meaning of the context. As suggested by Altheide and Johnson (1998), the knowledge of the work, language, situations, typical, routine and unique render a valid sociological account. It is also claimed that the meanings of things are not always contained in the communicated text but rather in the context, awareness and experience (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). The experience in the case study context has provided me with the tacit knowledge of the context. It had given me the position to understand the case study context very well.

The participants in the study were also aware that I had experience of being in the case study context. This helped to minimise the issue of misleading information given by participants. As suggested by Merriam (1998), there is a possibility for participants to mislead a researcher by giving false information.

5. By disclosing biases at the outset of the study, according to Merriam (1998), the validity of the research can be enhanced by clarifying the assumptions and the philosophical stance in conducting the study. Altheide and Johnson (1998), also suggest that qualitative researchers are concerned with producing text that explicates how they claim to know what they know. Therefore, it is claimed that the difficulty of intersubjective understanding demands social scientists to be clear and precise in delineating their claims (Altheide and Johnson, 1998). The assumptions and the philosophical stance in this study have been discussed in Section 4.2 of this chapter.

4.4.2 Reliability

Reliability implies the extent to which a research finding can be replicated (Merriam, 1998). It is claimed that the traditional view of reliability, which deals with issues of whether the same results can be achieved if the study is repeated, is thought to be inappropriate in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). This statement is made based on the argument that, 'human behavior is never static' (Merriam, 1998, p.205). As stated by Merriam (1998, p.205), qualitative research is not conducted by isolating human behaviour. 'Rather, researchers seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it. Since there are many interpretations of what is happening, there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense.' Therefore, the approach to reliability for a qualitative study is different from the traditional sense.

It is worth noting that the reliability in this study does not depend on whether the same results can be achieved if the study is repeated, but rather it is focusing on the consistencies of the results with the data collected (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the question is not whether findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent

with the data collected. According to Merriam (1998), this can be achieved by being explicit about the researcher's position and by providing an audit trail. As such the issues of reliability in this study have been addressed as follows:

1. As suggested by Yin (2009), a prerequisite for reliability to be achieved is by providing a document of procedures. In this study, the document of procedures is provided in the thesis. This includes specific chapters to discuss the methodology applied in the study, Chapter 4, and data collection and data analysis which is presented in Chapter 5.

2. Reliability can be achieved by being explicit about the researcher's position (LeCompte et al., 1993). It is suggested that reliability of results is assured by being explicit about the researcher's position in relation to the context, the assumptions behind the story, and the description about the context (LeCompte et al., 1993). In this study, the perspective and philosophical stance have been explained in the research philosophy section (Section 4.2) of this chapter. The relationship with the case study context has been explained in Section 4.3.1.2.3, and the case study context has been discussed in Chapter Three.

3. Consistent data analysis, coding, and sorting. In this study, coding and sorting of data were mainly done with the NVivo software. The data collection and data analysis are explained in Chapter Five.

4. An audit trail can be conducted by having consistent data analysis, coding and sorting, and interviews that were fully recoded and transcribed (Merriam, 1998). As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), an audit trail is similar to the work of an auditor: where an auditor authenticates accounts, findings can be authenticated by following the trail of the researcher. As stated by Dey (1993, p.251), 'If we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is explain how we arrived at our results'. In response to these views, I have described in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the research inquiry. This has been fully discussed in Chapter Five.

4.4.3 Rigour

The credibility of a qualitative research depends on the rigorous methods 'that yield high- quality data that are systematically analyzed with attention to issues of credibility' in the conduct of the fieldwork (Patton, 2002, p.552).

The rigour in this study is reflected in the data collection and data analysis conducted. For example, in the data collection process, the rigour is reflected in:

1. The semi-structured interview questions which were not verbally prompted but allowed the participants to explore the answers based on their own understanding of the context. This encouraged themes to emerge from the findings and thus provided the opportunity for me to bring out issues based on the participants' experiences. An example of this can be found in Section 5.2.2.4, under the Question Variations section.

2. The active roles in the research inquiry. In the research inquiry, I closely monitored the interview process and the emerging themes from the findings. This is vital in order not to miss any issues that could be followed up for verification in the subsequent interviews.

3. The verification of emerging themes by following the trail of discovery. The emerging themes reflect on the views of participants which are important as they allow a rich understanding based on the participants' experiences. These views are verified with other participants in order to gather a comprehensive understanding of the views and the participants involved. This reflects on the symbolic interactionism and the social constructivism perspectives applied in this study. An example of the trail of discovery conducted in the study can be found in Section 5.2.4, under the Illustration of the Data Collection Process section.

The rigour of the data analysis is reflected in:

1. I transcribed the interviews solely by myself. This provided the opportunity to familiarise myself with the data and to refresh my memory of the events during the interviews. This was beneficial to recapture the understanding of the context for the purpose of data analysis.

2. A focus on implicit responses obtained from the interviews reflects the rigour of the data collection and data analysis in the study. In understanding the data in the study, I not only focused on the spoken word, but also observed the body language and the type of responses received from the participants, particularly the act of deflecting in addressing the real issues raised in the interviews. This helped in gathering a greater understanding of the reality in the case study. It helped to reveal issues on open communication and honest communication in the University. A further explanation of the implicit response is discussed in Section 5.3.1.1.2, under the Selection of Text based on Richness of Explanations section.

3. According to Patton (2002), rigour in data analysis can be achieved by generating and assessing rival conclusions. Basically, there were two types of responses obtained from the participants in the study. The common responses were regarding the formal structure of the University strategy management process, which were mainly about the participants' tasks in relation to the University strategy management process. Another response, which is identified as an alternative view, was the analytical views provided on the University strategy management process. Particular attention had been paid to this type of view. This view is considered as a unique and an alternative view, as only a few of the participants were willing to engage in this type of conversation.

4. The particular attention paid to this view reflects on the credibility of the data analysis in this study. As suggested by Patton (2002, p.553), credibility of data analysis can be enhanced by 'a systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns, and rival explanations'. An interest in this view also reflects on symbolic interactionism and social constructivism perspectives in this study. In doing so, I focused on the importance of capturing the reality from the participants' understanding of their context. A further discussion on this can be found in Section 5.3.1.1.2, under the Selection of Text based on Richness of Explanations section.

4.5 GENERALISABILITY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

4.5.1 Generalisability

Generalisability refers to the extent of one study, to be applied in other situations (Merriam, 1998). Yin (2009) has identified two types of generalisability, i.e. the statistical generalisation, and the analytical generalisation. The statistical generalisation is based on the generalisation of a sample to a population (Yin, 2009). An analytical generalisation is the generalisation to theory (Yin, 2009).

This study is based on qualitative data of a single case study. Therefore, it is not aimed at achieving any statistical generalisation. As suggested by Yin (2009), the goal of qualitative case study research is not for enumerating frequencies but rather to expand the generalised theories. The generalisation in this study is focused on providing enough detailed descriptions of the case study to enable readers to compare the suitability with their situations (Merriam, 1998). As described by Walker (1980, p.34), 'It is the reader who has to ask, what is there in this study that I can apply to my own situation, and what clearly does not apply?' It is suggested by Charmaz (1993) that a study on social constructivism does not approach some level of generalisable truth; instead it provides the opportunity to produce a concept for other researchers to extend to other similar research problems in other substantive fields.

In this study, a rich and thick description of the case study is given to enable readers to determine how closely their situations match the case study, and to decide whether the findings can also be applied to their situation. The rich, thick descriptions of the case study are provided throughout this thesis, where Chapter 3 explains the context of the case study; Chapter 4 explains the research methodology adopted in this study; Chapter 5 presents the data collection and analysis of the study; Chapter 6 presents the findings; and Chapter 7 provides the discussions of the findings.

4.5.2 Ethical Issues

According to Merriam (1998), ethical issues in qualitative research emerge in two situations, i.e. during data collection, and dissemination of findings. In this study, the ethical issues during the data collection have been addressed by providing the Participant Information Sheet to potential participants prior to their consent to be involved in the study. Among the information included in the Participant Information Sheet are: the title of the study, the purpose of conducting the study, background of the study, the conduct of data collection, the rights of participants to withdraw from interviews, the rights to confidentiality and anonymity, the contact details, and the consent of participants. An example of the Participant Information Sheet can be found in Appendix 4-2. The consent to be involved as a participant in the study was indicated by a signature provided in the 'Consent Section' of the Participant Information Sheet.

In the 'Withdrawal from Research Section', the participants were given the freedom to withdraw from answering questions with which they were not comfortable, and they were also given the freedom to completely withdraw themselves at any point during the interviews. This condition was provided to safeguard the participants' interests. As suggested by Merriam (1998), an interview carries risks and benefits to informants, for example participants may feel their privacy is being invaded, they may be embarrassed with certain questions, and they may tell things that they had never intended to reveal.

The 'Confidentiality and Anonymity Section' provides the assurances that the participants' identity would not be disclosed, and all of the information gathered from the interviews would be treated in such a manner as not to compromise the personal dignity of the participants or infringe their rights to privacy.

In addition to the Participant Information Sheet, the practice of filling up the ethical clearance at the Norwich Business School helps to address any ethical issues that may arise during the research inquiry. An example of the ethical clearance form can be found in the Appendix 4-3.

Another situation which gives rise to ethical issues is during the data analysis (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998), since the researcher is the primary instrument for the data collection, the data have been filtered based

on the researcher's decisions and perspectives. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to be as clear and honest as possible in the analyses. Diener and Crandall (1978, p.216) state that 'There is simply no ethical alternative to being as nonbiased, accurate, honest as is humanly possible in all phases of research. In planning, conducting, analyzing and reporting his work the scientist should strive for accuracy and whenever possible, methodological controls should be built in to help...Biases that cannot be controlled should be discussed in the written report'.

In this study, the ethical issues in the data analysis have been addressed by keeping the validity and reliability issues in check in order to avoid any misrepresentation in the findings. For example, the findings made in this study were purely constructed from the opinions of the participants in the study. Even though I had a considerable experience of being in the case study context, my own experience has never been used to draw the findings in the study. Nevertheless, the experience which I had, was helpful in empathising and provided the opportunity to have a good understanding of the context. As stated by Merriam (1998), one of the traits required to conduct qualitative research is sensitivity. The sensitivity in this study is inherited from my previous experience of being in the context. As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.149), the role of a qualitative researcher is to 'describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images, and create for the reader or listener, the sense of having been there'.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the overall research methodology applied in this study. It includes a discussion on the perspectives and philosophy which have influenced the design of data collection in this study. As stated by Patton (2002, p.14), 'In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument'. This clearly describes the important role played by a researcher in determining the conduct of the research inquiry. This conduct is influenced by the researcher's perspective and philosophy.

In this study, the conduct of the research inquiry is drawn on my perspective which is based on the epistemological stance of interpretivism which requires

an understanding from the perspectives of the research subject, and the ontological stance of subjectivism which views the social world as precarious. These perspectives have influenced the choice of research methodology adopted in this study. The grounded theory approach which is an inductive approach fits with this epistemological and ontological stance. The data which were gathered based on semi-structured interviews also reflect on the quest for flexibility in a grounded theory research. The choice of a single case study reflects on the pursuit of a greater and in-depth understanding of the data. This has given the opportunity to interpret in greater depth of subjectivism within the context.

It is also important to note that the treatment of validity, reliability, and generalisability of qualitative research is different from the quantitative research which can be objectively measured. This also reflects on the subjectivity of the data which are captured based on the researcher's perspective and philosophy which may differ from other researchers. It is important to note that the findings made in this study are not aimed at statistical generalisation. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the study can provide an avenue for other researchers to compare and conclude whether the findings in this study are comparable with their findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the actual process involved in carrying out the research inquiry. It comprises two main sections, i.e. data collection and data analysis. The data collection section explains how data were gathered in the study. It explains the research site, the process of gaining access to the research site, the interview process, the sampling technique applied in the research inquiry, and the interview story.

The data analysis presents the process of developing emerging themes, progression of thoughts throughout the analysis, and explains the process of lifting the themes for a conceptual discussion to take place.

Included in the discussions of this chapter are the reflexivity and reflections from the study.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION

5.2.1 Research Site

The fieldwork was conducted on the University's main campus. This was undertaken for two reasons. First, the main campus is the centre of administration where the University's strategy is initiated. A study conducted on the main campus provided the opportunity to gather a great deal of information on issues pertaining to the University strategy management process from the experience of various participants, right from the Executive Management Team to the Academic Staff. This provided a rich and comprehensive perspective of the case study.

Secondly, it was not feasible for the study to cover other campuses as they are geographically scattered and it would have consumed more time and cost. Nonetheless, I had interviewed a Director of Campus, who was located within the vicinity of the main campus. This was done for the purpose of seeking any unique issues that were not found in the interviews with other participants in the main campus. The results from the findings had revealed similar issues raised by the Director of Campus and other participants from the main campus.

The following section explains the process of gaining access to the research site.

5.2.1.1 Access

The previous relationship with the University had made it easier to gain access to the University. Permission to conduct the case study was obtained via email communication with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International (DVC1) of the University. Within a week of the request, I had obtained access to the site.

Upon the permission given, I personally contacted the potential participants to gain their consent to be interviewed. The Executive Management Team and a number of Operation and Management Team members were contacted for their consent at this stage. The Academic Staff were only contacted and identified during the fieldwork. This is because the Academic Staff were identified based on the information gathered from the interviews with the Deans of respective faculties.

The process of gaining consent from potential participants was done via email communication. Participant Information sheets were given to the potential participants to explain the research topic and the objectives of the study. It also explained the ethical issues in the conduct of the research inquiry and contained information pertaining to the participants' rights.

The Participant Information sheets were given to the potential participants during the first email sent. The first email was for the purpose of gaining consent for the interview to be conducted and the Participant Information

sheet helped the potential participant to decide whether to participate in the interview.

I arranged the appointment dates for the interview session based on the consent given by the participants. Two weeks before the actual interview session, the participants were contacted for the purpose of confirming the dates and times for the interviews. During this communication, tentative interview questions were also sent to the participants. This was done in order to give a rough idea of the questions that would be raised during the interviews.

It is normal practice for the interview questions to be sent to the participants prior to the actual interviews in a Malaysian formal working culture. Thus, it is a custom that questions should be given prior to the interview sessions. This is seen as an act of respect towards the participants, where it ensures that the participants are comfortable with the questions. Although the questions in the interview tended to vary and did not strictly follow the prepared questions, at least it had provided some ideas and information as to what would generally be covered in the interviews. This ensured that the participants were better prepared and mentally ready for the interviews. It is also believed that by doing so it ensures a smooth conduct of the interviews where the participants are more comfortable and confident with the questions.

5.2.2 The Interviews

As stated in Section 4.3.3, thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded using a digital voice recorder. Most of the interview sessions ranged from 40 to 60 minutes. The interview questions were asked in the English language and the participants responded in a mix of English and Malay language. The Malay language is an official language in Malaysia and it is very common for Malaysians to use both languages in their conversations. This is due to the fact that English language is taught in all secondary and primary schools in Malaysia, therefore, most Malaysians are capable of speaking both languages, resulting in a mix of English and Malay language (also known as Manglish among the locals), in their conversations.

Examples of these bilingual conversations are evident in the interview transcriptions where I had to translate the Malay words into English. The participants were not restricted to answering in full English as it was felt that this could potentially affect the meaning of what they were trying to say. This is important to avoid any loss in meaning, which can be contributed by the language barrier (Patton, 2002).

5.2.2.1 The Design of Interview Questions

Examples of the interview questions are shown in Appendices 5-1 and 5-2. It is worth noting that the questions prepared were used only as a guide during the interview sessions. At the same time, this allowed some degree of freedom for participants to lead the discussions further, based on their experience of being involved in the University strategy management process. In relation to this, Glaser and Strauss (2006) warn about forcing data into preconceived categories by having fixed questions that can distort the development of theory from the data. Hence, the questions that were used in the interview had to be flexible, thus providing freedom to individual participants. Nonetheless, it is also important to note that the semi-structured questions used in the interviews required some focus to answer the objectives of the study.

5.2.2.2 Questions in the Interviews

The questions raised in the interviews were designed to address the research objectives of the study. They were focused on exploring the strategy management process in the case study context. Basically, the questions were focused on three areas of the strategy management process, i.e. the strategy formulation, the strategy implementation, and the strategy monitoring, in identifying any issues within it.

There were two dimensions of perspectives gathered from the interviews, i.e. perspectives on the formal structure and the informal structure of the strategy management process, which recognises the human aspects of the strategy management process. The recognition of the informal structure is in line with

the social constructivist perspective which requires an understanding to be developed from the social actors within the University (Charmaz, 1990).

5.2.2.3 Flow of Questions

Each of the interviews began with some broad questions on University strategy. This is consistent with the suggestions provided by Charmaz (1993) where she had suggested five structures in designing an interview question. According to Charmaz (1993), the interview questions should start with neutral and factual questions and should be limited to necessary questions. An example of this can be seen in the first question raised in the interview with the Executive Management Team, i.e. *"What is your role in relation to the University's strategy?"*

The second stage of the questions should move on to 'informational' questions once a degree of information has been gathered from the interviews (Charmaz, 1993). This type of question brings participants further into the interview and establishes chronology (Charmaz, 1993). For example, a question such as, *"Can you explain how the University strategy is being formulated?"* was asked to probe further into the University strategy process.

Reflective types of questions were asked in the next stage of interviews. These types of questions serve as a transition to address direct issues about self (Charmaz, 1993). According to Charmaz (1990), a researcher may bring a reflective approach and offer questions about feelings once a rapport is developed. "*How do these challenges affect your department?*" is an example of a reflective question that was asked in the interviews. This question was raised after the second half of the interview session. This was aimed to allow participants to build some trust and to feel comfortable in sharing their experiences.

Once rapport had been built, questions regarding personal feelings were asked in the interviews. According to Charmaz (1990), this type of question is similar to the reflective question as it often directly elicits data about self. An example of the type of question used in the interviews is *"From your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?"*

This was meant to open up participants to share their personal opinions on the University strategy process.

According to Charmaz (1990), it is also important to end the interview sessions on a positive note. Such questions elicit interesting data on symbolic meanings of self and serve as a positive way to end the interviews (Charmaz, 1993). A question like "*If you were to improve on the University strategy process, what would be the areas for improvements?*" encourages participants to provide interesting personal views about their context.

The table below presents an example of the flow of questions that evolved throughout an interview session with a member of the Executive Management Team.

Example of Questions	Flow of Stages
1. *What is your role in relation to the University's strategy?*	Short face
2. *Can you describe the current University strategy?* 3. *Can you explain how the University strategy is being formulated?* 4. *How is the University strategy communicated?* 5. *How is the University strategy being carried out?*	Informational
6. *What are the challenges that have been encountered in managing the University's strategy?* 7. *How do these challenges affect your department?*	Reflective
8. *In general, what is your opinion on the University strategy formulated?* 9. *What is your opinion on the University strategy monitoring?* 10. *From your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*	Feeling
11. *If you were to improve on the University strategy process, what would be the areas for improvements?*	Ending

Table 5.1: Example of Questions Progression

The interview questions in the example above can be found in Appendix 5-1. These questions were used to guide the interviews with all of the members of the Executive Management Team, except for the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation who also holds a position as the Head of Strategic Planning Centre. The interview questions found in Appendix 5-3 were specifically used to guide the interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation. The reason for different questions being prepared

was due to the inclusion of specific questions with regard to his role as the Head of the Strategic Planning Centre of the University.

5.2.2.4 Question Variations

The interview questions varied from one interview to another to reflect new issues that were discovered. The questions used in the first interview session took shape as more information was gathered from the interview. For example, the initial questions prepared to guide the interviews with the Operation and Management Team had transformed gradually, as I followed the trail of discovery. The findings made in the earlier interviews had contributed to the changes in the questions. As shown in Appendix 5-4, there was an additional question to the initial interview question as a result of the earlier findings made in the interviews with the Executive Management Team and several Academic Staff members. In this example, the question *"What do you think about the support given by the management in implementing the University strategy?"* was included in the subsequent interviews with the other members of the Operation and Management Team. Basically, the difference in the interview questions can be explained based on three reasons.

First, they differ between different groups; for example, the questions raised to the Executive Management Team are different from the questions raised to the Operation and Management Team and the Academic Staff. This is because each individual group's role contributes differently towards the University strategy management process. By doing so, I was able to discover issues pertaining to the strategy management process from the perspectives of various participants. This was aimed to provide comprehensive multidimensional perspectives on the strategy management process of the University.

Second, the questions that were raised also varied due to the point of saturation determined from the interviews conducted. In a grounded theory approach, a researcher is expected to continue with the theoretical sampling until it reaches a point of theoretical saturation, where additional analysis will no longer contribute to discovering anything new about the category (Glaser and Strauss, 2006; Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988). The point of saturation was identified when further inquiry did not lead to any new discoveries of the

issues raised. This was when I stopped pursuing the questions, which had also resulted in different questions asked in the subsequent interviews.

For example, a question such as *"How is the strategy of the University formulated?"* had reached a point of saturation when the question no longer contributed to any new discoveries in its finding. An example of the answers which had contributed to a point of saturation is shown below.

Participants	Quotations from Participants
Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation (DVC3)	*"the strategy is developed based on government planning documentation …."*
Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International (DVC1)	*"we are directly under Ministry of Education, so whatever policy changes happen at the central agencies, will have the direct impact to the universities' planning"*
Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Alumni (DVC2)	*"another main policy will be an instruction from the government"*
Head of Graduate School	*"The directive given by the... the government,"*
Manager of Strategic Planning Centre	*"because most of the changes come from government directive"*
Academic 4	*"actually comes from the ministry,"*

Table 5.2: Examples of Point of Saturation (specific question on "how is the strategy of the University formulated", leads to similar findings)

In this table, the question of "How is the strategy of the University formulated" addressed to the Executive Management Team had led to similar themes, i.e. *"government planning documentation"; "we are directly under Ministry of Education";* and *"instruction from the government".* As shown in the table above, other participants like the Head of Graduate School; the manager in the Strategic Planning Centre; and the Academic 4 had also stated the government's influence on the University strategy even though they were not directly asked the question, "How is the strategy of the University formulated". Statements like *"the directive given by the government; "changes come from government directive"; and "from the ministry",* produced similar themes which indicate the government influence on the University's strategy formulation. These themes had emerged from the interviews without even being verbally prompted.

From the statements given by the participants, I was able to determine that there would not be any more new discoveries that could be made from the

question. This indicated the point of saturation. At this point, I stopped pursuing the question of *"How is the strategy of the University formulated?"*

Third, the questions also differed with the trail of discovery (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). The trail of discovery influenced the questions raised as I moved along with the interviews. As a result, the interview questions went through several changes and evolved as new discoveries were made. It is stated earlier that some of the questions prepared to guide the Operation and Management Team interviews had to be changed as a result of the new findings made in the prior interviews (refer to Appendices 5-2 and 5-4).

In this study, the interview questions for Academic Staff were not prepared until enough information had been gathered from the Executive Management Team and the Operation and Management Team interviews. The interview questions for the Academic Staff were only prepared after the Executive Management Team and a number of the Operation and Management Team interviews had been completed. This had provided the opportunity to gather enough ideas about the University's strategy process before pursuing it with the Academic Staff. The findings made from the earlier interviews had triggered ideas of what needed to be discussed in the subsequent interviews. This is an example of the trail of discovery and the theoretical sampling that had taken place in the study.

For instance, as found in one of the interviews, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation had led to the themes related to *"workload"* and *"infrastructure constraints".* These two aspects were teased further in the subsequent interviews with the Operation and Management Team and the Academic Staff. Note that the word 'teased' is used to explain that I did not specifically use the words *"workload"* or *"infrastructure constraints"* in the subsequent interview questions. Instead, a general question was asked. By doing so, I was able to follow the trail of discovery without prompting the themes on the participants' responses. This ensures that any themes which emerged from the findings were purely brought to light from the participants' own understanding and interpretations of their social world and were not influenced by other participants from the previous interviews. At the same time, this had provided the opportunity to verify statements which were gathered from the previous interviews.

An example of the interview questions prepared for the Academic Staff can be found in Appendix 5-5, and the changes made to reflect the trail of discovery are found in Appendix 5-6. In Appendix 5-6, the question *"How well do you think the management is looking into the aspects of employees well being in meeting the challenges in relation to University strategy implementation?"* is an example of how I had teased out the perspective that could potentially lead to the themes *"workload"* and *"infrastructure constraints"*, which could also create an avenue for differing opinions from the earlier interviews. Any differing opinions contribute to new discoveries. This needs to be followed through until it reaches the point of saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). This is an example of the trail of discovery, which resulted in a variation to the questions pursued in the subsequent interviews.

In this study, the semi-structured questions in the interviews moved along as new discoveries were made. The adoption of semi-structured questions in this study is consistent with the requirement of flexibility of a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). In a grounded theory approach, interview questions are expected to evolve along with the investigations in allowing the researcher to take advantage of flexible data collection (Eisenhardt, 1989). The questions, which were not fixed, had given the opportunity to further investigate discoveries that emerged from the interviews. Therefore, the interview questions used in this study had evolved during the data collection process. This is claimed to be the key feature of theory elaboration case research, where it allows the flexibility to make necessary adjustments during the data collection process (Eisenhardt, 1989).

5.2.3 Sampling Technique

There was no specific number of samples determined at the beginning of the research inquiry. This complies with the grounded theory approach, where the number of samples is determined based on theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). Theoretical sampling is a unique process of a grounded theory approach where the selection of people to be included in the research reflects on the developing nature of the theory, which cannot be predicted at the beginning of the research (Glaser and Strauss, 2006; Denscombe, 2003).

According to Glaser (1978, p.45), theoretical sampling is 'the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory.' Theoretical sampling differs from statistical sampling. Theoretical sampling is conducted to discover categories and properties, whereas statistical sampling is normally used in the hypothesis-testing approach to obtain accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories (Glaser and Strauss, 2006).

Theoretical sampling is one of the strategies for data collection under purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). 'Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study' (Patton, 2002, p.230). According to Patton (2002, p.238), a 'researcher samples incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs.'

As stated in Section 4.3.3., three groups of participants had been identified in the study. These groups comprised the Executive Management Team, the Operation and Management Team, and the Academic Staff consisting of lecturers from various faculties in the University. They were chosen based on their roles and involvements in the University's strategy process, thus were able to assist in addressing the research questions of the study. The Executive Management Team was selected based on their direct involvement in the overall University strategy management process. The Operation and Management Team was selected based on their responsibility to ensure the implementation of the University strategy. The Academic Staff were selected based on their involvement in implementing the University strategy.

The research inquiry started with the Executive Management Team of the University. The decision to start with this group is consistent with Goulding (2002) where it is suggested that, in the initial stage, the researcher should seek the most obvious place with the most likely informants in search of information. The Executive Management Team was an obvious place to start with the research inquiry as they have the overall knowledge of the University strategy management process.

The first interview was conducted with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3), who is also the Head of the Strategic Planning Centre

of the University. I had started the interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation (DVC3) as he is directly involved in the University strategy management process, thus was an obvious place to start with the interview. As a result, I was able to gather as much information as possible pertaining to the strategy management process of the University from this interview. It also provided the opportunity to identify the current key issues relating to the University strategy management process.

The interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3) had led to an interview with the Manager of the Strategic Planning Centre. At the end of the interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3), I was introduced to the Manager of the Strategic Planning Centre. The interview with the Manager of the Strategic Planning Centre had provided the opportunity to follow up and verify some of the earlier issues discussed with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation (DVC3).

This is an example of theoretical sampling applied in this study, where it builds on the findings made in the prior interviews to be followed through in the subsequent interviews (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). The interviews moved along as I followed the trail of discovery, which was based on the theoretical sampling conducted. The theoretical sampling in this study is also reflected in the selection of people from the developing nature of the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2006; Denscombe, 2003). The developing nature of the theory in this study was derived from the emerging theme in the interviews. According to Goulding (2002), when concepts are identified and the theory develops, then further individuals will be incorporated in order to strengthen the findings.

For example, in order to gather well-rounded information, I had selected the Operation and Management Team from various administrative positions such as Assistant Vice Chancellor in Institute of Leadership and Quality Management (ilQam), Assistant Vice Chancellor in Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA), Director of Campus, Deans of various faculties, Heads of Programmes, and Heads of Departments. The determination of these participants was done by following the advice to seek out respondents at obvious places (Goulding, 2002). The interviews with the Operation and Management Team had granted me the opportunity to illuminate the strategy management process in respect of the various departments, faculties and programmes. On completion of the interview

process, 16 participants from the Operation and Management Team had been interviewed. I had stopped at 16 when it reached the point of saturation. This was when similar issues had been raised by the Operation and Management Team thus had not contributed to any new discoveries.

As the trail of discovery continued, I had actively sought participants and issues to be followed up. For example, the Academic Staff were selected based on the information gathered from the Deans of faculties who had suggested their names to be interviewed. These names were given based on the participants' involvement in the University strategy process and the length of service of the Academic Staff. The basis of these criteria was to ensure that the Academic Staff were fully aware of the issues that would be raised in the interviews. From the interviews conducted, it was found that the Academic Staff had similar issues pertaining to the strategy management process of the University. It was discovered that the point of saturation in the Academic Staff interviews was achieved within 10 interviews. As a result, 10 Academic Staff were interviewed.

A summary of the interview schedule can be found in the following table (Table 5.3).

Number	Appointment Dates	Times	Place	Participant
1	17-Jun	8:30	Chancellery Building (DVC3 Office)	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3)
2	17-Jun	10:30	Chancellery Building Conference Room	Manager in Strategic Planning Centre
3	17-Jun	14:30	Chancellery Building (Registrar Office)	Registrar
4	18-Jun	8:30	Chancellery Building (DVC1 Office)	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International (DVC1)
5	18-Jun	11:30	Chancellery Building (DVC2 Office)	Deputy Vice Chancellor Students Affairs and Alumni (DVC2)
6	19-Jun	11:00	Director of International Affairs Office	Director of International Affairs (OIA)
7	20-Jun	10:00	Dean Office	Dean 3
8	23-Jun	10:30	Director of International Education College Office	Director of International Education College (INTEC)
9	24-Jun	16:30	Dean Office	Dean 1
10	25-Jun	9:30	Head of Programme Office	Head of Programme
11	26-Jun	10:00	Dean Office	Dean 4
12	26-Jun	14:30	Assistant Vice Chancellor Research Office	Assistant Vice Chancellor Research
13	26-Jun	16:30	Office	Director of Academic Centre
14	27-Jun	10:00	Academic 4 Room	Academic 4
15	30-Jun	10:30	Academic 8 Room	Academic 8

16	30-Jun	14:15	Dean Office	Dean 2
17	01-Jul	18:00	Dean Office	Dean 5
18	02-Jul	14:30	Head of Graduate School Office	Head of Graduate School
19	04-Jul	15:00	Dean Office	Dean 6
20	07-Jul	10:00	Assistant Vice Chancellor (ilQam) Office	Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Leadership and Quality Management (ilQam)
21	08-Jul	9:30	Academic 2 Room	Academic 2
22	08-Jul	12:00	Academic 3 Room	Academic 3
23	09-Jul	10:00	Head of MBA Programme Office	Head of MBA Programme
24	09-Jul	15:30	Academic 10 Room	Academic 10
25	10-Jul	10:00	Academic 5 Room	Academic 5
26	11-Jul	15:00	Assistant Vice Chancellor (InQKA) Office	Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA)
27	14-Jul	15:00	Academic 6 Room	Academic 6
28	15-Jul	10:00	Academic 1 Room	Academic 1
29	21-Jul	10:30	Academic 9 Room	Academic 9
30	4-Aug	10:30	Academic 7 Room	Academic 7

Table 5.3: Interview Schedule

5.2.4 Illustration of the Data Collection Process

The following diagram (Diagram 5.1) illustrates an example of the data collection process in the study. It explains the three important elements in the data collection which consisted of theoretical sampling, trail of discovery, and point of saturation. The elaboration of the diagram is explained in Section 5.2.4.1 on the following page.

Academic 2 (Faculty B)

'trail of discovery'

verify

"Workload"

"As it is right now we are having a tough time to balance, because we are talking about those days we use to have students 20 in a group, of course we weren't research oriented back then, now the number of students has gone like triple then you know and and yet we are to do research alright, our ATA [Allocated Teaching Hours] used to be 12, use to be 12, now it's 18 alright,.."

Interviewee

Academic 3 (Faculty B)

Head of MBA Programme (Faculty B)

Academic 10 (Faculty C)

Academic 5 (Faculty D)

Assistant Vice Chancellor InQKA

Academic 6 (Faculty D)

Theoretical Sampling: this is an example of theoretical sampling conducted where the theme workload was verified against other participants. The verification process is carried out through a process known as the 'trail of discovery'.

The trail of discovery continues with other participants until it reaches a point of theoretical saturation.

Saturation Point: a point where no additional knowledge is gained from the trail of discovery conducted. The trail of discovery stops once saturation point is achieved.

Diagram 5.1: Data Collection Process from the fieldwork (author's own)

5.2.4.1 Elaboration of Diagram 5.1

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling depends on the findings made during the interviews. As suggested by Glaser (1978), theoretical sampling is a process of data collection where the researcher decides what data are to be collected and where to find it based on the findings made during the research inquiry.

As exemplified in the diagram, a theme *"workload"* had emerged from the findings. Issues surrounding workload were teased out and verified against other participants (Academic 3, Head of MBA programme, Academic 10, Academic 5, Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA), and Academic 6) in the study. The decision to follow up on the theme "*workload"*, and which participants to verify against, is an example of theoretical sampling applied in this study (Glaser and Strauss, 2006). All of the participants in the study represent the most likely informants in the research inquiry. This is because they had been selected based on their knowledge and direct involvements in the University strategy management process.

Trail of Discovery

The discoveries made from the prior interviews were carried further and verified with other participants in the subsequent interviews. In this example, the theme *"workload"* had been elicited from interview with the Academic Staff 2 in Faculty B. This emerging theme was then teased in interviews conducted with Academic Staff 3 of the same Faculty B, and other Academic Staff from different faculties; Academic Staff 10 from Faculty C, Academic Staff 5 from Faculty D, and Academic Staff 6 from Faculty D.

This theme was also teased in the interview with the Operation and Management Team of the same faculty; Head of MBA programme of Faculty B and other Operation and Management Team from a different department; Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement (InQKA). This is an example of the trail of discovery conducted in this study. The trail of discovery was conducted with various participants in the study.

This was to ensure that well-rounded views were gathered from all possible informants.

The trail of discovery conducted from the theoretical sampling provided the opportunity to form an opinion on whether the issues that had been raised before were valid. This contributes to some threads of themes that can be developed as emerging themes from the findings. The trail of discovery was continued until it reached the point of saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 2006).

Point of Saturation

The trail of discovery provides the verification of data collected. This process was continued with other participants until it reached a point of saturation. At this point, the research inquiry had not contributed any additional knowledge on the issues that had been followed up. In the example provided, the theme workload had saturated after it was raised by 16 participants in the study.

This section has illustrated the data collection process in the study. The following will provide insights of the research inquiry.

5.2.5 Interview Story

The interview sessions start with initial briefing and end with debriefing (Kvale, 1996). I started the interview sessions by introducing myself and explaining the purpose and nature of the study to the participants. At this stage, I also explained the ethical code of conduct and the participants' rights by going through the Participant Information Sheet. The permission to use the audio tape was gathered before the start of the interview sessions. All of the participants gave their permission for the use of an audio tape during the interview sessions.

The interviews were successfully conducted. In general, all of the participants in the interviews were helpful and supportive. They tried their best to answer the interview questions. Some of them shared supporting documents to verify their statements in the interviews. This included documentation such as the 'Strategi Merentas Jabatan dan Strategi Pembangunan Mengikut Lapan

Keutamaan Operasi University' [Operation and Development Strategy in accordance with the Eight University's Priorities]; 'Perlaksanaan Rancangan Malaysia Ke-9' [Implementation of 9th Malaysian Plan]; 'National Higher Action Plan 2007-2010'; and the 'Amanat Tahun Baru' [New Year Speech].

One of the interviews had to be cancelled due to the change in schedule, and the participant was not available to be interviewed during my stay in Malaysia. This was an interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor Industrial and Community Networking (DVC4). The other interviews had gone smoothly as scheduled.

It was noticed from the interviews that most of the participants with administrative positions such as the Executive Management Team and the Operation and Management Team had been careful with their answers. They had been careful in order not to reveal any unnecessary information that would be against the University strategy. It appeared that they had been protective of the University strategy. For instance, one of the Deans had deflected from addressing the real issues of the discussions. I had tried to repeat and rephrase some of the questions raised in the interview in order to make it clearer but he had obviously attempted to deflect from addressing the questions. In fact, he had shifted the whole conversation into focusing on his achievement and positive outcome of his work.

In another example, a Head of programme had only provided positive comments and had not given any critical comments in relation to the questions asked. For example, this can be seen from the statement, *"..so I think ..there is.. there is no problem because eer... when the government asked the University X [name of the University] to increase the students to 200,000, what I can see is that that is not so.... that is not a big deal.. for University X [name of the University]..."*

Conversely, most of the academics interviewed had been more open in their views and were critical of the University strategy management process. For example, one academic staff member had stated that *"Ok, alright, I think eer... University X [name of the University] policy, strategy ni [this] changes most of the time [laughing] kita punya [our] strategy ni [this] ...actually the way I look at it, actually comes from the Ministry, so very much so Ministry kata [says] 200,000, 200,000lah, kita bagai nak rak lah nak buat [we tried our best to do it] 200,000 even though we don't really see whether we ...do we have the capacity to*

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do it or not,". The various views had given invaluable insights into the University strategy management process.

It is also suggested by Kvale (1996) that there may be some tension and anxiety at the end of the interview sessions. This is a result of being open about feelings and emotional experiences (Kvale, 1996). I encountered a slight anxiety in the interview with one of the Operation and Management Team. On this occasion, I provided assurance to her that all of the participants in the study would be anonymous. I explained that the ethical code of conduct of the study was established partly to protect the interests of the participants in the study. This is in line with the suggestion made by Kvale (1996) that anxiety can be dealt with by providing assurance of the ethical conduct in the study.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The primary source of data was obtained from conducting thirty semi-structured interviews. These interviews were audio taped and fully transcribed. A total of 22 hours of interview sessions were recorded. These amounts to 288 single spaced pages of transcriptions. The transcriptions are verbatim transcriptions, a word-by-word transcription that represents raw data as it was spoken in the interviews (Patton, 2002). I transcribed the data myself and this experience increased the familiarity and understanding of the data gathered. As suggested by Patton (2002), transcribing offers a point of transition between data collection and analysis. 'Doing all or some of your own interview transcriptions (instead of having them done by a transcriber), for example, provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights' (Patton, 2002, p.441).

Details of the data collected in the study are shown in the following table.

Number of interviews conducted	30
Hours of interviews	22
Pages of transcript	288

Table 5.4: Details of Data Collected

The transcriptions from the interviews are raw data. Patton (2002) describes it as undigested reality that requires sensemaking and interpretation in order to give a meaningful expression of the research inquiry.

The data analysis in this study involves two main processes, the development of themes and the sensemaking of data. The development of themes which explains how themes were developed in the study is discussed in Section 5.3.1, while the sensemaking of data is explained in Section 5.3.2. The sensemaking process involves the reference to literature for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the emerging themes that had developed during the first stage.

5.3.1 Development of Themes

There are two stages in the development of themes in this study. The first stage involves selection of themes using the line by line text analysis (refer to Section 5.3.1.1); and the second stage is populating the themes using the NVivo (refer to Section 5.3.1.2). The criteria for the development of themes are further discussed in Section 5.3.1.1.1 and Section 5.3.1.1.2.

Due to the huge amount of data collected, the themes in this study were developed using the NVivo software. The use of NVivo software in this study was particularly helpful in organising and easily retrieval of data (Bazeley, 2007). The use of NVivo in this study is discussed in Section 5.3.1.2 of this chapter.

5.3.1.1 Selection of Themes Using Line By Line Text Analysis

The line by line text analysis was done to capture important themes that emerged from the data. This attentiveness is important in gathering a rich understanding from the participants' perspectives (Charmaz, 1990).

The development of the themes in the study was guided by the research questions. Therefore, I had been selective in developing the themes, as not all of the data gathered answered the research questions of the study. Mainly, the development of themes in this study was based on two criteria, i.e. common

key words and the richness of explanations. These are explained in Section 5.3.1.1.1 and Section 5.3.1.1.2.

It is important to note that, at this stage the themes were developed without any reference to the literature. This was done in order to elicit emerging themes purely from the participants' perspectives. As such, during the development of themes I had approached the data by a close reading of the text. It is suggested by Gibbs (2004) that in developing themes, data should be approached with an open mind and without preconceptions of any analytical framework. Once the themes had been developed, a reference to the literature was made in order to gather a further understanding of the issues raised by the participants and to provide further explanation of the emerging themes. This is when the sensemaking of data was made. The sensemaking is discussed in Section 5.3.2.

5.3.1.1.1 Selection of Themes Based on Common Words

The selection of themes based on common words was gathered from the common perspectives that emerge from the study. A repeated word by various participants indicates a common idea on a particular issue (Bazeley, 2007). This was captured to present views that were felt pertinent by the participants in the study. The focus on common words reflects the effort to understand issues based on the participants' perspectives. As suggested by Bazeley (2007), people repeat ideas that are significant to them. Thus, repetitions in words signify useful concepts to be used as a basis for the theme development (Bazeley, 2007). This is especially true for this study, as participants were given the freedom to express their opinions within the discussions in the interviews. The themes developed on this basis are believed to have a significant importance, as they are developed based on the participants' own understanding of their social context (Bazeley, 2007). The themes would be less significant if a researcher had asked a structured questions in the interviews (Bazeley, 2007).

In developing the themes, I had carefully read the transcripts and tried to look for common words that emerged from the data. It is important to note that the selections of these common words were not limited to the same exact word, but in fact extend to other words that carry the same meaning. This is because

not all of the participants used the same common words even though they meant the same thing. For example, as found in the data, the phrase *"heavy workload"*, stated by one participant, carries the same meaning as the phrase "*long teaching hours"*, as stated by another. Therefore, it was vital for me to be sensitive to this condition as the interviews were based on semi-structured questions and these had contributed to various responses obtained from the participants.

Equally, it was also important to read the text line by line, as on several occasions it was found that not all of the same words had the same meaning. Hence, I had to be careful in selecting the words in developing the themes in the study. For instance, the word "*resources"*, as stated by a participant, which referred to the lack of resources in the University, may not carry the same meaning as the word "*resources"* stated by another participant, as this participant was talking about the means to expedite the supply of resources in the University. Even though the bottom line of the conversation relates to the lack of resources, the main issue of the discussion was focused on the efforts taken to overcome the lack of resources in order for the University's strategy to be implemented. This is an example of the same word which carried a different meaning used by the participants in the interviews.

5.3.1.1.2 Selection of Themes Based on Richness of Explanations

Whilst analysing the text, I tried to gather thoughts and understanding of the underlying meanings of responses obtained from the participants. This agrees with the social constructivism and symbolic interactionism perspectives of this study.

Based on my experience, there had been some cases where participants had used metaphor to explain a scenario in the University and in some cases participants had also refrained from using words that could indicate a negative perspective on a specific issue that was raised. Therefore, in addition to the identification of key words, it was equally important to capture the underlying meanings of various responses obtained from the participants. The acknowledgement of the meanings is identified as the richness of explanation in this study. This acknowledgement was important in ensuring that data are fairly presented.

The richness of explanations had been encountered during the data analysis and it is explained in the following categories:

1. Implicit Response

    The implicit response in this study was focused on the hidden response of the participants. It may be in the form of spoken and unspoken responses. The spoken implicit response was observed in the avoidance from addressing the real issues raised in the questions. For example, this had resulted in giving an out of context discussion, therefore leaving the questions unanswered.

    In the study, it was observed that some of the participants had deflected from addressing or revealing the real issues of the discussions. This had been observed especially in the responses given by the participants holding administrative positions. In this instance, these participants had avoided saying anything that might contradict the rationale of having a specific strategy. In other words, they had not been critical of the University's strategy. For example, it was told by the Head of Programme that there had not been any problems in the University strategy, in increasing students' enrolment. As stated:

    > *"...so I think there is there is no problem because eer when the government asked the University to increase the students to 200,000, what I can see is that that is not so that is not a big deal for the University ..."*

    I had pursued his opinion on the effect of the current University strategy (increasing students' enrolment) on the allocation of work. He had also commented that there had not been any problem in terms of workload allocation. As stated:

    > *"In terms of workload, ok I'm happy with the workload, I'm happy with the workload ..."*;

    He continued saying that:

    > *"...whatever your head of programs ask to do ok so don't don't don't make a lot of complaining because it's part of job and that's it, I think I think workload is not a big problem problem..."*

    An example of deflection can be seen in the Dean's response with

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regard to opinion on University strategy. In this case, the Dean was found to be self promoting of his achievements, instead of answering the issue raised in the interview. It was stated:

> *"Alright I think the medical school has been very well advance comparing to its first existence in 2004....."*

He continued by saying that he had received a comment from a friend that his faculty is better than the other university's faculty. As stated:

> *"I thought it's good because I've got a comment from a friend saying that, why not UM and then they said that UM going down and the University is gaining...."*

It is obvious that the responses given had not contributed to the development of the themes in the study, as they did not address the real issue of the study, i.e. to explore the issues within the strategy management process of the University. Nonetheless, the implicit response contributes to the richness of the data gathered. Sometimes it provides a much stronger underlying evidence or representation of the case study.

For instance, in this case, it points to the issue of open communication, honest communication, and open mindedness in the case study context, which reflect the culture of the University. In this occasion, the tacit knowledge of the case study context is useful in gathering an understanding of the implicit response. This also suggests the complexity in dealing with the data in this study.

In addition to the spoken response, the unspoken response had also been the focus in analysing the data in this study. This was mainly gathered from the body language of the participants. The unspoken response in this study had been observed from the intensity of the voice of participants; the body language of participants which indicated 'like', 'dislike', 'easiness' or 'uneasiness' with the questions raised; and the detailed response given which indicated enthusiasm and seriousness of the issues discussed. I was able to tell when a participant 'liked', 'disliked', or became uneasy with the question raised, from the eye contact, and from the body movements. For example, a participant was found to be using a lot of hand gestures,

which indicated the seriousness of the matters discussed. An intense voice also indicates enthusiasm and seriousness of the issues discussed. At the same time, a low key voice may also indicate frustration transpired from the conversation. These are some of the examples that have been obtained from the interviews conducted.

2. Unique Perspective

Particular interest was also paid to a unique perspective given by participants. The attention on the unique perspective reflects the integrity of the data analysis in this study. As suggested by Patton (2002), this will enhance the rigour and the quality of the analysis. In doing so, I 'engaged in a systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations' (Patton, 2002, p.553).

In this study, the unique perspective was derived from the willingness of the participants to be engaged in a conversation that could provide an analytical view of the underlying problem. In the case study culture, not many would be critical of their work place environment. Most of the time, they will follow and adhere to any instructions given. For example, they may complain about their predicament among themselves, but will not raise it with their superiors. As such, most of the participants in the study had not been open in their views during the conversations. They did not have the courage to speak or present their views openly, especially when it was recorded.

As a result, only a small number of participants had been engaged in this type of conversation. In this study, their views are identified as a unique perspective, as it is rarely found considering the case study setting. Most of these views are presented in Chapter Six to exemplify the findings in the study. These views are selected for the discussions of the chapter because they have been thorough and have presented the analytical perspective eloquently.

The unique perspective also contributed to a relatively small number of participants captured in the study. For example, the theme 'politicised' only counts as 4, (refer to Appendix 5-7, Number of participants - Opinion on University Strategy), which is relatively small when compared to the total number of participants in the study. This

reflects the development of the themes in this study, which was not only restricted to the common words, but also extended to words that are unique and rich in providing an overall understanding of the case study context.

Some examples of the analytical views include;

"...in operational sense how is it make a ..a difference, how University behave differently,...";

"if you want to encourage research, then you must change your approach to teaching, you 'cakap sahaja tapi' [only talk but] teaching 'masih' [still] 18 hours workload, 20 hour workload, how are you going to approach teachers eer.. I mean eer.. research style of teaching and your classes size never 20 and how can you do that"(Academic from the Medical Faculty).

"If you want to go towards research we have to be practical, okay, 200 students, meaning to say more ATA (teaching hours), okay now you want the lecturers to be into research, okay how can you balance that you tell me, we cannot..." (Academic from the Business and Management Faculty)

"I think sometimes we... we.. we.. implement strategies based on what others are doing probably, on who's at the top, so we want to be in a good book, or... we want to go with the flow and not knowing what is really the need, you know what is going on, with our own ... own people" (Academic 1 from the Business and Management Faculty)

5.3.1.2 Populating the Themes Using NVivo 8

The development of themes in this study was conducted with the assistance of NVivo software. The NVivo software was used to assist the analysis of a rich text-based information (Bazeley, 2007). It is helpful in a systematic analysis of data (Saunders et al., 2007). In this study, it was particularly used in the 'coding' and 'categorising' of themes from the data using the nodes function. This is explained in the following section.

The Use of Nodes

In Nvivo, the coding process is done by connecting the passage of text to a 'node'. In other words, a node serves as a storage device that contains passages of text (Bazeley, 2007;Gibbs, 2004). The developed themes in this study are represented by the nodes. Each of the individual nodes created in this study contains passages of text that exhibit the themes captured from the data. It is important to note that the nodes are not merely a simple categorisation of passage of text. As stated by Gibbs (2004), it forms a focus for thinking about the text and its interpretations. The link between coding and nodes is illustrated in Diagram 5.2.
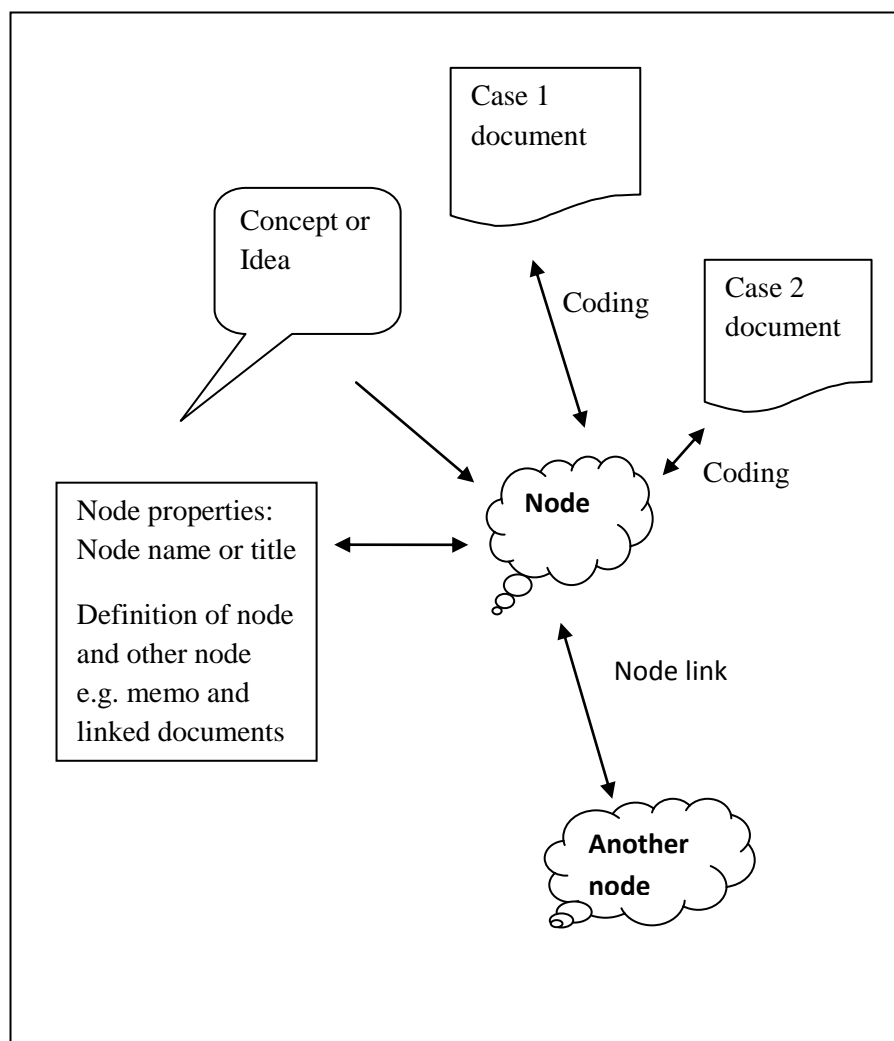
Diagram 5.2: A Node and Its Link (Gibbs, 2004)

Nodes represent categories of ideas and characteristics of data (Gibbs, 2004). As seen in the diagram, nodes can be linked to other nodes, either directly or

by position in a node tree, and by being linked to documents. There are two types of nodes used in this study, i.e. the free node and the tree node. The free node is used during the coding process while the tree node is used in the categorising process. Each of these nodes is explained under the coding and categorising processes respectively. This can be found in Section 5.3.1.2.1 which illustrates the process of populating themes conducted in this study using the NVivo software.

5.3.1.2.1 Illustration of the Process

It is suggested that the first documents handled may influence the determination of the categories and ideas that are carried out throughout the analysis (Bazeley, 2007). According to Bazeley (2007), a researcher should choose a group of data that is typical or contributed by someone who is representative of the sample; and another that is interesting or being rich in details. In line with this statement, I chose the first group of participants to analyse based on the richness of the information provided; representativeness; and the unique opinions when compared to the other participants. This follows the importance to maximise the different types of data in the early stage of analysis (Bazeley, 2007).

The participants in the first group comprised the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3) who is also the Head of Strategic Planning Unit of the University; Head of Programme in the Business Faculty; and the Academic Staff from the Administration and Policy faculty. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3) was chosen due to his in depth knowledge of the University strategy management; the Head of Programmes in the Business Faculty was chosen based on his perspective that was representative and provided a typical perspective of the University staff; and the Academic Staff from the Administration and Policy faculty was chosen based on his unique and critical perspective of the University strategy management.

The initial process had assisted in sensitising with the issues discussed in the interviews (Richards, 2006). It had provided a general idea of the directions of data in the study. After going through the initial process, I was able to continue

the analysis with the rest of the data with some informed ideas of the directions it was taking.

Basically, there are two main steps involved in the development of themes using NVivo in this study. The first step is coding, and the second step is categorising. The process of coding and categorising is a beneficial way of organising categories of thoughts on data (Bazeley, 2007). According to Charmaz (1990), codes and categories reflect on the emerging ideas. 'By grounding the categories in the data as specifically yet analytically as possible, the grounded theorist can then sharpen the category, suggest its parameters, begin to outline the conditions under which the category develops and start to look for consequences of it' (Charmaz, 1990, pp.1167-1168). Both of these processes: 1. The First Step: Coding; 2. The Second Step: Categorising are explained in the following pages:

1. The First Step: Coding

The transcribed data were transferred to the NVivo 8 software to be coded and analysed. The data were coded based on common words and the richness of explanation. This has been discussed in Section 5.3.1.

The coding in qualitative research is a way of classifying and tagging text with codes or indexing in order to facilitate later retrieval (Richards, 2006). According to Richards (2006), by coding, text can be viewed by category and it assists in the conceptualisation process, where data are seen afresh, and this helps to move from documentation analysis to theorising (Richards, 2006).

Similarly, Gibbs (2004) describes coding as an action of identifying a passage of text in a document that exemplifies some ideas or concepts, which is then connected to a node to represent those ideas or concepts. The coding process undertaken at the beginning stage is described by Goulding (2002) as open coding. According to Goulding (2002), open coding involves a process of breaking down interviews into distinct units of meaning. It is a search for key words, which give some insights into the behaviour of the context (Goulding, 2002). In this study, free nodes are used to assist the coding process at this stage.

Free Nodes

Free nodes serve as dropping off points for data on ideas that can be classified later (Bazeley, 2007). At this stage, coding is largely unfocused and open. Bazeley (2007) states that free nodes do not presume any relationships or connections. They are simply dropping off points for data on ideas that one would hang on to (Bazeley, 2007). Gibbs (2004) suggests that free nodes may be moved to a tree node when required. This enables nodes to be created immediately without worrying about how they relate to other nodes (Gibbs, 2004). The table below (Table 5.5) shows some of the free nodes created at the beginning of the coding process. As seen in the table, there is no connection between the nodes created at this stage. It is simply an uplifting of passages from text without any specific directions or connections. At this stage, I had not decided on the significance of the coded text in answering the research questions. As a result, a total of 296 free nodes were created from the data. These free nodes can be found in Appendix 5-8.

• admit the challenge of balancing between government bureaucracy and the need for improvement • bureaucracy being hard to break – must find other ways to speed up the work process • challenges to implementation of time management as a result of other commitments • challenges when working with people and to make people work with you • challenges in managing strategic change

Table 5.5: Examples of Free Nodes

It is important to note that not all of the coded themes in the free nodes are relevant to the study. Therefore, only relevant themes that explain the research questions were further developed in the analysis of the findings. This was decided upon the emergence of a pattern of ideas (Bazeley, 2007). The coding of text was continued until some patterns of ideas began to emerge. These patterns of ideas had become more organised and formed into specific categories (Bazeley, 2007). This is the stage when free nodes are ready to be transferred to the tree node, also known as categorising, in this study.

2. The Second Step: Categorising

Categorising is the grouping of themes in order to get a description of the overall findings. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), categories have more descriptive powers. Richards (2006) describes this process as a stage where researchers gather materials and seek a dimension of category by grouping data and seeking meaningful groups and patterns to challenge syntheses, as well as searching for counter instances, i.e. finding what does not fit in the theme, and identifying categories that have been left out. In this study, the focus on counter instances is held by paying particular attention to alternative findings. For example, in this study, efforts have been taken to bring to the surface the unique and analytical perspectives given by the participants.

The categorising of data in this study was conducted with the assistance of tree nodes available in NVivo software.

Tree Nodes

According to Bazeley (2007), in tree nodes, ideas are organised hierarchically with branching of structures where parent nodes serve as connecting points for categories. With tree nodes, coded texts are clustered into groups to indicate relationships of certain behaviour (Bazeley, 2007). This clustered group provides descriptive categories of data (Goulding, 2002).

Examples of tree nodes created in the study are shown in the table below.

Opinion on University strategy
o   Top down
o   Strategy not reflected at the operational level
o   Attempts to communicate University strategy
▪ Seen as compilation of document
▪ Not communicating

Table 5.6: Examples of Tree Nodes

The table shows the categorisation of coded text and the ideas that run through the data. In the table, the opinion on University strategy represents the parent node. Based on the line by line text analysis conducted, the University strategy was claimed by the participants as being 'top down'; 'not reflected at the operational level'; and had seen the 'attempts to communicate'

where the University strategy had been regarded as 'not actually being communicated' effectively and therefore regarded as 'a compilation of documentation'. These themes were categorised based on the emerging themes identified and coded using the free node earlier. A full example of the tree nodes created in this study can be found in Appendix 5-9.

It is important to note that the tree node presented in Appendix 5-9 is a result of various levels of sifting that had taken place. The earlier tree nodes constructed had many more nodes in them. Examples of the earlier developed tree nodes can be found in Appendix 5-10. After going through the tree nodes several times, I was able to lift the specific, important, and relevant themes which would then be further elaborated and discussed in this study.

5.3.1.3 Example of the Theme Developed

An example of the developed theme is shown below. It is important to note that the development of themes in this study was guided by the objectives of the study. This study was aimed at exploring the strategy management process of the University. The strategy management process of this study has been identified as the strategy formulation; strategy implementation; and strategy monitoring. Examples of excerpts that have surfaced from the interviews are presented in Appendix 5-11. This is presented based on the three strategy management process identified.

For the purpose of explaining the themes developed in the study, an example of excerpts from the theme, Top Down, is shown in the following table (Table 5.7: Excerpts of the Theme, 'Top down').

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3)	*"All strategic plans will begin from our planning office, PPS. I'm the head of the PPS and this is one of my portfolios as deputy VC, so we will churn, have everything, we will have the ideas and the concepts of everything. We will pass to the VC, and then discuss at the JKE, if agreeable we will endorse it at the 'Jabatan lembaga' [the Board Meeting] and then will pass over to the Dean, faculties, the road show and everything...."*
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International (DVC1)	*"So he will deliberate what he wants to deliberate and he will tell what is expected of the whole university"*
Director of Academic Centre	*"We sort of receive input or we get some other indication from the VC of the university especially during the VC's New Year address and also some of the strategic meetings that we have attended"*
DEAN 4	*"So we have never been... I've been never been called to sit together for any strategic... of the University X (name of the University) but listening to the strategic planning of the university and also for the faculty it's ok. I mean I do get involved... but if you are talking about University X (name of the University) yeah I guess most of the things that University X (name of the University) does was to actually get us to give input to them..."*
Head of MBA Programme	*"These whole blocks are supposed to be our premises but then again suddenly we have to relocate ourselves without a Director... so these are the kind of things that happen where decisions can be made up there without really getting the input from the tactical people"*
Academic 1	*"Not all of us are privileged to all this... to this session where the thinking behind it becomes actually articulated by very few..." "They said this is the strategy, this is the way forward and things like that, but what was the thinking behind in moving forward, what assumptions people made about us in the future, it's never articulated"*

Table 5.7: Excerpts of the Theme, 'Top down'

From the example of excerpts above, the participants did not specifically use the word 'top down' in their conversations. This reflects the interview question which had not been verbally prompted, and thus had contributed to various responses. In this example, the responses alluded to 'top down' strategy approach of the University. I had not verbally prompted the phrase

'top down' in the interview questions. Instead, general questions like "*What is your opinion on the University strategy?*" and "*From your opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*" were put to the participants. As a result, 19 participants had contributed towards the development of this theme.

For example, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3) who is also the Head of Strategic Planning Centre had stated that; "*All strategic plans will begin from our planning office, PPS. I'm the head of the PPS and this is one of my portfolios as deputy VC, so we will churn, have everything, we will have the ideas and the concepts of everything. We will pass to the VC, and then discuss at the JKE, if agreeable we will endorse it at the 'Jabatan lembaga' [the Board Meeting] and then will pass over to the Dean, faculties, the road show and everything....*"

The Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (DVC3) explained that the University strategy had been formulated and initiated from his department. He explained that the strategy was then communicated to the rest of faculties and other departments in the University. This suggests the top down approach in the University strategy formulation. It is top down as it had been formulated from the highest level of the University management. From the organisation structure, the Deputy Vice Chancellor is a part of the Executive Management Team, thus represents the highest level of management in the University (refer to Appendix 4-1).

The phrases such as "*he will deliberate*", "*he will tell what is expected of the whole university*", which was stated by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International (DVC1) also exemplifies the University strategy which has been a 'top down' strategy. Here, it was told by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International (DVC1), that once the strategy has been formulated, the Vice Chancellor of the University delivers the University strategy and its expectations, to the rest of its staff.

Examples from the participants of Operation and Management Team also suggest the top down approach of the University strategy. This can be seen in the statements made by the Director of Academic Centre; DEAN 4; and Head of MBA Programme. For instance, the Director of Academic Centre had stated; "*We sort of receive input*". The word 'input' indicates the University strategy which was delivered by the top management of the University. As stated by

the DEAN 4, *"never been called to sit together you know for any strategic …of the University X (name of the University) but listening to the strategic planning of the university".* Here, it was told by the Dean that she had never been called to discuss the University strategy. In a way, it suggests the University strategy that had been formulated and decided among the Executive Management Team of the University. It was also stated by the Head of MBA Programme that a *"decision can be made up there without really getting the input from the tactical people".* This suggests the top down approach of the University strategy, where its formulation is rarely consulted with the member of staff.

An Academic had stated that *"not all of us are privilege to all this… to this session where the thinking behind becomes is actually articulated … very few ….".* Here, it was explained by the Academic that, occasionally the Executive Management Team would seek for feedback from a certain group of staff, and according to him this was not open to everybody. At the same time, it was also claimed that the formulation of the University strategy had never been justified: *"they said this is the strategic, this is the way forward and things like that, but what was the thinking behind in moving forward, what assumptions people made about us in the future, it's never articulated".* As claimed by the Academic, most of the University staff was not involved in the University strategy formulation and the strategy had never been justified by the University Executive Management Team.

From the findings gathered, it is clear that the University strategy had been formulated at the highest level of the University management team. This strategy was then communicated by the Executive Management Team which is the Vice Chancellor of the University to the rest of its staff. At the top level, statements such as, *"All strategic plans will begin from our planning office"*, *"we will endorse it at the 'Jabatan lembaga' [the Board Meeting] and then will pass over to the Dean, faculties, the road show and everything…."* had emerged; while at the middle management level, statements like, *"We sort of receive input"*; *"listening to the strategic planning of the university"* had surfaced.

The findings indicate the strategy formulation process of the University which can be considered as top down where it had started from the top level of management and deliberated to the lower level of staff in the University.

The examples given in the table are only part of the excerpts gathered from the line by line text analysis which had contributed to the development of the

theme 'top down' in the study. The outcome from the line by line text analysis had found nineteen participants who suggested the University strategy as being top down.

It is important to note that the number of participants presented in this study (refer to Appendix 5-7) reflects the intensity of the matters discussed. As suggested by Bazeley (2007), people repeat ideas that are significant to them. The number of participants in this study was based on 'source', which represents the number of participants rather than the number of 'words', where the themes could have been mentioned several times in the interviews. It is important to note that the number of participants presented in this study is not meant for generalisation. It is only for the purpose of describing the number of respondents in relation to the themes developed.

In the study, it is strongly felt that the number of participants alone does not justify the importance of the matters discussed in the interviews (Patton, 2002). Equally, it is important that the underlying message is captured. For instance, not every participant was open to discussing issues that could lead to a possible negative impression of the case. This had contributed to only a few participants being engaged in this type of conversation, giving a small number of participants captured. At the same time, the type of questions asked had also contributed to a small number of participants. In this study, this is mostly found in questions related to the structure or mechanism applied in the University strategy management process. For example, a question on the strategy monitoring mechanism in the University was easily saturated as it sought the formal structure available in the University. An example of this can be found in the 'Monitoring initiatives and feedback' theme in Appendix 5-7 where it has been represented by five participants.

The inclusion of this theme reflects the development of the themes based on two criteria, i.e. the common words which suggest the intensity of the matters discussed; and the unique perspective which elaborates a deeper understanding of the issues that emerge in the case study context. This has been discussed in Section 5.3.1.

5.3.2 Sensemaking of Data

As at this point, the developed themes had been purely descriptive. Therefore they needed to be further analysed in order to provide the underlying understanding of the themes. This was achieved by the sensemaking process which represents the second stage of the data analysis process in the study.

Sensemaking means 'the making of sense' (Weick, 1995, p.4). The central interest of sensemaking is to ask questions such as: how do people construct what they construct? why? and what effects does it have? (Weick, 1995). According to Weick (1995) it is about compilations of understanding into frameworks; construction of meaning; and patterning which is aimed to structure the unknown (Weick, 1995).

As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) the concept of sensemaking is valuable as it implies a higher level of engagement by the researcher. The sensemaking process in this study compares the findings with the existing literature. This is useful to sharpen insights and understanding of the emerging themes found from the research inquiry. This represents an essential feature of theory elaboration which continuously compares the emergent concepts and theory with the extant literature (Eisenhardt, 1989). This process involves trying to answer specific questions on what is available in the literature that can be used to support the findings; to find out whether there are any other literatures that contradict the findings; and to find out reasons for the contradictions (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The sensemaking process is also known as the abstraction process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This process begins with categorisations and moves from mere descriptions to provide a better understanding of the developed themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). It is a process of lifting the analysis of data from the descriptive level to a conceptual or theoretical interpretation that offers elaboration of the phenomenon in the study (Goulding, 2002).

In relation to this, Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose that a researcher should ask theoretically relevant questions of data during this process. Examples of theoretical questions are: what are the conditions involved? what kind of theoretically derived comparisons would be useful here? (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). These questions were beneficial in positioning the data based on the

theoretical explanations available. It is through the abstraction process that a researcher collapses more empirically grounded categories into a higher order of conceptual constructs (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). According to Spiggle (1994), the process of abstraction requires the integration of theoretical concepts into a conceptually complex integrated theory.

According to Charmaz (1993), this is a stage where the researcher intends to treat the developed themes as a conceptual category rather than a descriptive topic or code. A conceptual category is part of the researcher's larger theoretical framework in which conditions are specified to offer a greater understanding of the data (Charmaz, 1993). When treating a term as a conceptual category, the researcher is advised to specify its property, note its condition, relate how it changes, describe its consequences and ultimately specify its relationship to the other conceptual categories (Charmaz, 1993).

The sensemaking process in this study is continued in the Discussion Chapter, Chapter 7. In this chapter, the findings in the study were analysed and compared with the existing literature in order to provide a better understanding of the findings. This represents the process of raising terms to concepts which assists in providing a greater understanding of the findings made (Charmaz, 1993). The writing and rewriting process that had been undertaken in the preparation of the Discussions Chapter had enhanced the sensemaking process. As suggested by Charmaz (1990), the sensemaking process, which is described as raising a term to concept, can be achieved through 'writing and rewriting' (Charmaz, 1990, p.1169). The process of 'writing and rewriting' provided a clear ideas about the data and became a crucial phase in the analytic process (Charmaz, 1990). As suggested by Charmaz (1990), the benefits of 'writing and rewriting' process are:

1. It fosters analytic clarity. It prompts 'theoretical comprehensiveness and precision as the researcher grapples with increasingly more abstract theoretical questions and hones his or her responses to them' (Charmaz, 1990, p.1170). This process gives the opportunity to link the findings with other theories by integrating them into the discussions and analysis. It requires a review of literature in the field in order to frame the study within that literature and to see where and how it fits.

2. '..the researcher can bring out implicit arguments, provide a context

for them, make links to the literature, critically examine the categories and concepts, and present the data cogently' (Charmaz, 1990, p.1170). Through writing and rewriting, I was able to identify arguments and problems, make assumptions explicit, and sharpen the concepts.

The sensemaking in this study is reflected in the writing and rewriting process involved in the preparation of the Discussion Chapter (Chapter 7). Hence, the result of the sensemaking process in this study is presented in Chapter 7. The following will discuss the reflexivity in the study.

5.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an explicit recognition of how the researcher has impacted the research situation. It is defined by Guba and Lincoln (2000) as a process of reflecting the researcher as a self within the research process. It focuses on understanding the relationship of the researcher and the researched. Reflexivity questions the researchers' relationship with their social world and the ways by which they account for their experience (Cunliffe, 2003). Cunliffe (2003), suggests a radical-reflexivity which builds on ethnographic and phenomenological work. Radical-reflexivity advocates that researchers should question how they make claims and construct meaning (Cunliffe, 2003). Even though this study is neither ethnography nor phenomenology, there is a need for me to state my impact on the research situations and findings. In doing so, I have been explicit on how my views and understanding of the case study have impacted on the conduct of the research and its findings. This is known as self reflexivity, which recognises the influence of the researcher's values and assumptions on the process of inquiry (Cunliffe, 2003). At the same time, this does not mean that I lose sight of my subjectivity in conducting the research. Disclosing my values and assumptions on the research inquiry gives a better understanding on how findings have been developed in this study.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the epistemological and the ontological perspectives of a researcher will inevitably have an impact on how the research is conducted. As suggested in Chapter 4, the ontological perspective adopted in this study was based on the subjective and interpretive ontological stance. These perspectives had influenced my approach in the data collection

and my understanding of the participants and their issues in the study. Based on the subjective ontological perspective, I had focused my effort on understanding the social world from the participants' views. With the interpretive ontological stance, I had also viewed the social world as a precarious ontological state that does not exist in a concrete sense. This had influenced my approach in following up a trail of discoveries of the findings made in the interviews. This was for the purpose of gathering representative views of the participants in the study.

The subjective and interpretive ontological perspectives aim to give voice to the participants and try to bring out the social construct based on the social occurrence. This had influenced the choice of methodological approach in this study, which comprised an inductive study; conducted on a single case study; based on a grounded theory approach; and the findings which were gathered from the semi-structured interviews. The use of a grounded theory approach allowed flexibility in bringing out the findings based on the emergent themes during the research inquiry. The case study conducted on a single case study provided the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the case.

In the conduct of this methodological approach, the ontological perspectives had influenced the adoption of symbolic interactionism and social constructivism in arriving at an understanding of the social world in this study. For example, the interpretive paradigm emphasises that a researcher should take an empathic stance which requires an understanding of the research subject from their perspectives. In doing so, there is a need to understand the subjectivity of reality from the research subject. In this study, such understanding had been approached with social constructivism and symbolic interactionism.

Social constructivism allows an understanding of how the social actors have constructed their reality (Patton, 2002). Symbolic interactionism helps in understanding the reaction of the social actors in their social construct as a result of their own perspective (Patton, 2002). This also requires a researcher to explore deeper into the reasoning of certain actions. In other words, social constructivism provided the descriptive views of the social actors in the study whilst symbolic interactionism enhanced the understanding and explanation from the perspective of the participants.

In addition to the ontological perspectives, my previous experience of being in the case study had produced some degree of knowledge of the case study context. I am aware of their culture, language, body language, the way they talk, what they actually mean when they say something which is symbolic, their sarcasms, during the interviews and throughout the research inquiry. This awareness was beneficial in the analysis of the data and the sensemaking of the findings. This sense of understanding was an added advantage for me, as the researcher in the field. Without this awareness and knowledge, it would not be possible to capture the underlying meanings of the messages that were conveyed during the interviews. For example, on some occasions participants had said something which did not represent what they meant. They were sarcastic in their statements and this had been apparent in their expressions and body language. It was not difficult for me to capture the underlying meanings of these instances as I was well aware of their culture and their expressions of body language. This understanding influenced the way data were analysed in the study, as the seriousness and the intensity of the statement could only be captured by a person who has had an experience being in the context.

The understanding of the formal working culture in the case study had influenced the choice of dress during the interviews. I had dressed in a formal national 'baju kurung' that is commonly worn in the working environment of the case study. The choice of dress and the participants' awareness of my previous working experience in the University granted me with the trust required in gaining honest answers from the participants. I was not seen as an outside researcher and this encouraged the participants to feel comfortable and helped them to be more open and honest in their conversations with me. As suggested by Wright and Ehnert (2010), trust is shaped by contexts and histories. In my case, trust developed based on the awareness that I have come from a similar background to the participants, and my presence there was to understand and to make sense of their social world from their point of view.

The interview questions had also been posted via email prior to the interviews. This was done as an act of respect and can also be considered as customary in any interviews conducted in a Malaysian formal working culture. It is an act of respect in ensuring that participants would not be caught off guard with unexpected questions. Although the interview questions did not strictly follow the questions prepared earlier, this however was helpful in

providing some ideas of the topic areas that would be coved in the interviews. By doing so, it helped the participants to be better prepared and mentally ready for the interviews. This ensured smooth conduct of the interview sessions when the participants were comfortable with the questions raised. It also demonstrates the formal working culture in Malaysia where interviews are taken seriously by the participants involved.

During the interviews, I was cautious not to influence any perspective on the participants. This was done by keeping a calm and steady tone in my voice, facial and body expressions during the interview sessions. This was aimed to avoid any projection of preference or influence on a certain topic of discussion.

During the interview sessions, I raised questions based on the discoveries made in the earlier interviews. Hence, not all of the interview questions prepared prior to the interviews were raised in the interview sessions. It was crucial for me to pay full attention to the answers given by the participants as this would determine the next questions to ask in the current interview and to be followed up in the subsequent interviews. As such, the determination of what question to follow up in the interview was very much dependant on the judgement made during the interview sessions. In relation to this, it is not claimed that the data collection process was free from bias as it depends on the judgements of the researcher (Chau, 2006). Basically, the judgement was made based on my knowledge of the University; the information that had been gathered up to that stage; and the research objectives and questions of the study. In addition to deciding the type of question to raise, I also had to decide on which participants to follow up for the trail of discovery, and the number of participants to be followed up after each of the interview sessions. Again, this was dependant on my judgement. In guiding which participants to ask, I had followed the same criterion based on the obvious place to seek for information. This has been detailed in the discussions in Section 5.2.2 and Section 5.2.3.

It is also worth noting that the experience of being in the context did not mean that I was influenced by my past experience in representing the findings in this study. The past experience helped me to empathise with the case study context. I was always cautious not to include my past experience in representing the findings. As suggested in Section 4.3.1.2.3 of Chapter 4, in positioning myself in the case study context, I had taken the middle ground

between being too involved which could cloud judgement, and being too distant which might interfere with understanding (Patton, 2002). This position has been accurately described by Patton as entering into the research field without 'ax to grind', 'no theory to prove', and 'no predetermined results to support' (Patton, 2002, p.51).

This section has provided the reflexivity of the study. The following will present the reflections from the study.

5.5 Reflections From The Study

In this section I will discuss the reflection gathered from the study. This includes discussions on the reflection from the fieldwork; as well as the reflection from the data analysis.

5.5.1 Reflections from the Field Work

One of the most important preparations prior to the interviews was to be mentally prepared. This was beneficial in ensuring the focus during the interview sessions. As suggested by Breuer at al. (2002) and Guillemin and Gillam (2004), the researcher's feelings and emotions influence the conduct of the research. Having a clear mind before and during the interview sessions was important in focusing on the subsequent questions to be explored in the next interview.

I had also made sure that I dressed appropriately and professionally for the interviews. This was important especially in a formal working culture in Malaysia. Other preparations that were taken prior to the interviews include checking that I had the right equipment for the interviews. This involved having guided interview questions; an audio tape recorder that was fully charged; and ensuring that each of the interview tapes had backup copies. I also made sure that I knew the direction to the interview locations to avoid being late for the interviews; that the car had enough fuel; that I had allocated

enough time to arrive at the interview locations; and that I had arranged for parking the car as parking space can be an issue in the University.

During the research inquiry, I had developed a good relationship with the participants in the study. The participants had been supportive and helpful. They were aware that I had experience working in the University and was there to conduct PhD research. Having gone through the PhD process themselves, most of them were very helpful as they understood the challenge of PhD research.

The earlier communication in explaining the purpose of the study and the interview questions which were sent prior to the interview sessions were vital in helping the participants themselves to be mentally prepared for the interviews. As such, they had been fully informed of the purpose of the interview and were truly willing to be involved. In fact, most of them had found it to be interesting and enjoyed talking about their work and condition of their work as I had been an attentive listener and genuinely interested to listen to their views. In a way, it took the stress off them and at the same time I gained invaluable insights into the participants' world. The good understanding was beneficial in ensuring the quality of the data analysis.

The initial communication also helped in ensuring less distraction and interruption during the interviews. In fact, there were no apparent distractions during the interview sessions because the interviews had been scheduled within the participants' allocated time. Nevertheless, some minor distractions such as incoming calls were observed during the interviews with the Executive Management Team. Despite the preparations and the scheduling of the interview sessions, one of Deans had cancelled the interview in the last minute. This happened when I was already in his office and had waited for about 50 minutes. After the long wait, he had eventually appointed one of his staff to take his place for the interview. It was typical in the culture of the case study for a higher positioned person to delegate their staff to handle an ad-hoc situation like this. Before I carried out the interview, I had ensured that the staff member was willing to be interviewed. This is part of the ethical conduct of this study. He was very helpful and stated his willingness to be interviewed and assured me that he would answer all questions raised at his very best.

The interview with the Dean was never conducted thus his views and perspectives were never gathered in the study. It was not necessary for me to

follow up on another appointment with him, as I had already gathered enough information from his staff and the other Deans, where it had reached to the point of saturation.

All of the interviews had been conducted in a good office environment and the recording had been straightforward. This is because all of the interviews were carried out in a calm office environment. The condition of the room and the use of microphone in the audio recorder had helped in producing excellent recording which is beneficial for a good quality transcription.

At the end of the interviews, it appeared that most of the participants, especially the academic staff, had enjoyed the interview sessions and had experienced a sense of relief from the sessions. As suggested by Kvale (1996), a good contact is established by attentive listening, a show of interest, understanding and respect for participants' opinions during the interviews. Thus, it is common for participants to find the interviews genuinely enriching as they enjoy talking freely to an attentive listener who tries to obtain new insights into their world (Kvale, 1996).

It occurred that some of the participants continued the conversation after the tape had been switched off. Kvale (1996) suggests that this normally happens when participants continue discussing issues that are thought as not being safe to be discussed when the recorder is switched on. In my experience, most of this events happened as a recap of what had been stated by the participants during the interviews. This was normally pertaining to the participants' feelings as they tried to rationalise the feeling that was developed within their social context. Examples of the feelings that were brought up were expressions of demoralisation and frustration. The important points arising from such conversations were noted and this was important for gaining a deeper understanding of the participants' social context.

During the field work I had also made observations of the University environment. I had noticed that there was an increase in the number of students in the University as compared to a few years ago, when I was still working at the University. The increase in the number of students was also apparent with the limited car parking space available. This indicated that most of these students had stayed outside the University campus, thus had to travel by car to the University. This also suggested that there was not enough accommodation provided within the University campus.

This observation also indicated the effect of the University strategy in increasing the number of students. This had been an immediate effect of the University strategy to increase the number of students. In achieving the 200,000 students' target, the enrolment had to start then, and this had not been supported by a parallel increase in infrastructure.

5.5.2 Reflections from the Data Analysis

The high volume of work involved in the process of data analysis had been particularly challenging for a sole researcher, given the research time span. I had prepared verbatim transcriptions in a Microsoft word document. Since I am not a professional transcriber, it had led to long hours of transcribing process. This involved listening to the audio tape a number of times before a full transcription of a sentence could be completed.

Whilst it has been suggested that it is ideal for the interview transcription to be completed before the next interviews, this however was not possible in my case. Basically, this was due to the close intervals of the interview sessions due to the availability of the participants and the limited time of my stay in Malaysia. Nevertheless, the key points gathered from the interviews had been jotted down for the trail of discovery purposes. As suggested by Yin (2012), this is known as jottings. It may involve complete sentences and may be written in peculiar scrawl, brief tallies or hand written sketches that are legible to the writer (Yin, 2012).

As such, there was no proper note-taking during the interview process. During the interviews, only some remarks were made to jot down the observation from the interview process. This included certain interesting points; strong impression of body language showed by participants to support the seriousness of the matters discussed; participants' deflection from addressing the real issues; uncommon comments where participants had prompted issues to be followed up in the subsequent interviews. In this study, I had jotted down these points on the interview questions. This was done in order not to miss the important idea gathered from the interview. As suggested by Kvale (1996), in a live interview situation, the interviewee's voice, and facial

and bodily expressions, accompanying the statement provide richer access to the participants' meanings than the transcribed text.

According to Chau (2006), a supplementary note made on the margins of an interview schedule helps in formulating questions during interviews. In my case, this practice helped me in constructing questions to be followed up in the interview sessions.

Where necessary, I had also written a few notes for my understanding of the outcome from the interview process. An example of this can be found in Appendix (5-12). This was not done during the interview sessions but rather conducted after the interviews for the purpose of gathering thoughts. It is in line with the suggestion made by Kvale, that it is worthwhile for a researcher to set aside a quiet time after each interview to recall and reflect on what has been learned from each interview (Kvale, 1996). These immediate impressions are based on the interviewer's empathic access to the meanings obtained from the interviews (Kvale, 1996). It may be written in simple notes or simply recorded onto the interview tape and this would provide a valuable context for the later analysis of transcripts (Kvale, 1996).

The prepared interview transcripts were then transferred to the Nvivo software. The software was particularly beneficial for data storage and management. Using the software, I was able to manage the transcribed data in a more organised manner. The software enabled me to go through the transcribed data in detail for the purpose of coding and categorising. This involved going through the transcribed data and the audio tape several times. In doing so, I was also able to recollect the interview events in my mind and this kept it fresh which was particularly beneficial in the sensemaking process and the discussions of the findings.

Generally, I have gained invaluable experience conducting this research. It has inspired me to conduct more research using similar methods. It is an interesting research conducted on an interesting setting, which took place during the University's progressive efforts in meeting its strategy. This has provided insights into strategy management process from a university context which has not been widely researched (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006). As such, it is recommended that any opportunity to extend the research in the future should engage in similar methodology, in a wider range of contexts which could include other universities in Malaysia. This would provide the

opportunity to extend the findings in this study to the context of other universities in Malaysia.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the process involved in the data collection and data analysis of the study. The data collection discussions have covered the issues on how data had been collected; with detailed explanations on the design of the interview questions; the interview process; and the sampling technique undertaken in this study. The important elements of the data analysis have been explained. This includes the discussions on how key themes were developed; the coding and categorising process that have contributed to the development of the themes; and the explanation of the sensemaking process involved in the study. Also included in this chapter is a discussion on the reflexivity and reflection from the research study. The developed themes are further discussed and presented in the Findings Chapter, Chapter Six. The outcomes of the sensemaking process from these developed themes are presented in the Discussion Chapter, Chapter 7 of the thesis.

CHAPTER SIX: THE FINDINGS - Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, and Strategy Monitoring

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the emerging themes that had been developed from the interviews. The themes were grouped into the three main areas of strategy management process: strategy formulation; strategy implementation; and strategy monitoring. Each of the emerging themes is explained in this chapter in the following sections: the University strategy formulation (Section 6.2); strategy implementation (Section 6.3); and strategy monitoring (Section 6.4).

Some of the excerpts from the interviews are highlighted for the purpose of discussions in this chapter. Even though all of the participants' excerpts had been analysed in developing the themes in the study (refer to Section 5.3.1), it can be found that some of the participants' excerpts are included more than the others in this chapter. This is because they had been eloquent and thorough in their explanations. As suggested by Patton (2002), perspectives built on these criteria provide critical information about the study.

An example of this is the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation's excerpts. His excerpts are frequently presented in explaining the University strategy formulation. This is because he is also the Head of the Strategy Planning Centre of the University. As Head of the Strategy Planning Centre, he is directly involved with the University strategy management process. Therefore, the inclusion of his excerpts provides a better explanation and a comprehensive view of the overall University strategy process.

Other participants whose excerpts are frequently cited in this chapter include the Head of MBA Programme, and the Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty. Their excerpts are selected because, in addition to being eloquent and thorough, they were also able to provide a unique,

analytical perspective on the matters discussed. According to Patton (2002), a focus on this perspective enhances the credibility of the findings.

From my experience, I was also able to sense that a number of participants were also trying to refrain from discussing sensitive issues that would expose the weaknesses of the University. This had also contributed to the lack of in-depth information given by the participants in the study. Therefore, only elaborative and in-depth perspectives are presented for the discussions of the findings in this chapter.

The following will present the themes in relation to the University strategy formulation.

6.2 THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGY FORMULATION

Themes such as *'government led', 'top down approach', 'increased control', 'University strategy communication', 'multiple strategy directions', and 'politicised',* had emerged in the discussions relating to the University strategy formulations. It was found that the strategy of the University was formulated in line with the government strategy. This had been considered as a top down strategy; it was claimed that the top down strategy had encouraged increased control behaviour over the academic staff in ensuring its implementation. It was found that the government led strategy had also resulted in multiple strategy directions adopted by the University at the same time. The strategy was claimed to be politicised, where the effort to adhere to the government led strategy was apparent in the University strategy communication. The following sections will further explain each of the themes discovered in the study:

6.2.1 Government Led Strategy

The findings suggest that the University strategy formulation was based on government led strategy. This had surfaced from the interviews conducted with seven Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager at the Strategy

Planning Centre, three Deans of Faculties, Director of Academic Centre, Head of Graduate School, Director of International Education College, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International, and the Registrar. For example, it was explained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation:

> *"Yes we are very much guided, whatever cost we are taking is very much related to the government, because it is always the government led things,..."* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

The phrase *"government led things"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation) was apparent in the University strategy that had been formulated based on government strategy. This had led to the claim of University strategy as being *"very much guided"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation) by the government.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation also explained that the reason for this was the dependency of the University on the government for financial resources. As related by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, *"...the government is the main funder, 95% of our project come from the government..."* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation). Here, it was explained that the University had depended on government funding for its activities. It had appeared that the dependency on government for funding had created the pressure to conform to the government plans.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor continued by saying:

> *"the University eer...can only operate in term of say introducing a new Academic program will be based on what will be the need for the country in 5 years time, the development of the infrastructure development, of the university in 5 years time, the capacity of a how much students enrolment can we take in, it all depends on the central planning by the government."* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

The interview affirmed that the University had closely followed the government's planning, especially in tasks related to new academic programmes, infrastructure development, and student enrolment.

The decision to align the University strategy with government plans was apparent from the references made to government strategy documentation in

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the formulation of the University strategy. As explained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, the government documents had always been used as a guideline in the University strategy formulation. As stated:

> *"The strategy of the university is based on number one a few significant and important documents, one is in relation to the Malaysian plan. At the moment for example, it is based on the 9th Malaysian plan so I think that is the reference point,"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

The finding confirmed that the University had made reference to government documentation in formulating its own strategy. It was apparent that the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation was confident that the references to the government documents had provided a justification for the University strategy formulation. It appeared that he was confident that this was the right way to formulate the University strategy.

I had verified the statement made by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation against the available documentation. The University strategy planning document, RMK9, was compared to the government document, the Ninth Malaysia Plan, 'RMK9'. It was discovered that the University had used a similar name, 'RMK9', for its strategic planning document. This suggests the University's efforts to adhere closely to the government plans.

6.2.2 Top Down Approach

It was discovered that the University strategy, which followed the government plans, had also contributed to the claim of a very much "top down" approach in its formulation. Nineteen participants including seven Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager at the Strategy Planning Centre, three Deans of Faculties, Director of Academic Centre, Head of Graduate School, Director of International Education College, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International, Deputy Vice Chancellor Students Affairs and Alumni and the Registrar had indicated that the University strategy was "top down".

As explained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, the University strategy formulation had started in the Strategic Planning Centre, where it had been discussed among the University Executive Management Team. The University Executive Management Team comprises the Vice Chancellor, four Assistant Vice Chancellors, the Bursar, the Legal Advisor and the Registrar. It was explained that, once the strategy had been decided, it was then conveyed to the Deans; the Heads of Departments and the entire staff across the University. As related by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation:

> *"All strategic plan will begin from our planning office, PPS, I'm the head of the PPS this is one of my portfolio as deputy VC, so we will churn, have a everything so we will have the ideas, the concepts of everything, and we will passed to the VC, and then discuss at the JKE (Executive Committee), if agreeable we will endorse it at the 'Jabatan Lembaga' [The Board Department] and then will pass over to the dean, faculties, the road show and everything...."* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

The formulation of the University strategy, which had started from the Strategic Planning Centre and later delivered to the Deans; Heads of Departments; and the staff across the University, indicates the University strategy formulation which was top down.

When asked whether University strategy formulation involves discussions with other University staff, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation said that they would occasionally invite Deans, Directors of Campus, and Professors to provide feedback on certain strategic issues. As stated, *"... at the same time we need feedback...we will also ask from the ground we will have small group discussion,"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

According to the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, the University strategy formulation had occasionally been discussed within a small group of staff, appointed by the Vice Chancellor for the purpose of providing feedback on certain strategic issues. A similar statement was surfaced in the interview with an Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty. According to him, the feedback was only gathered during the initial stage of the strategy formulation. However, it was stated that there

had not been any negotiations or consultations with the University staff, during the strategy formulation process. It was told that they were only informed of the University strategy once it had been decided. At this stage, they were expected to implement the strategy without any further discussions. As found in the interview:

> *"And eer…there's no..discussion, discussion will have to come before decision, if discussion comes after the decision, decision has got power, right? So decision, which means it is formalised, and it is almost sound like mandatory, everybody has to follow"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

He had also suggested that the reason for this was due to the requirement to adhere to government strategy. Hence, there is a need to protect the strategy from being questioned and challenged by the University staff at large. It was stated that: *"you do not want to actually articulate the strategic thinking so publicly or so clearly, because it might eer…lend itself to scrutiny,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

Three participants, including the Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty, the Head of MBA Programme and the Dean from the Business Management Faculty had suggested that the Dean's meeting with the Executive Management team was basically for the purpose of "dissemination of information" (Head of MBA Programme):

> *"Just for dissemination of information same thing like ok right she just came back from eem JKE [Executive Committee] meeting or Senate meeting and these's has been disseminated …"* (Head of MBA Programme)

This claim had also emerged in the interview conducted with the Dean of Business and Management Faculty. She had admitted that:

> *"…I've been never been called to sit together you know for any strategic aa…of the 'X University' [name of the University] but listening to the strategic planning of the university and also for the faculty it's okay, I mean I do get involve…"* (Dean of Business and Management Faculty)

According to the Dean, she had only been invited to listen to the University strategy. She said that she had not been involved with the strategy

formulation, as this was claimed to be conducted by *'the body up there'* (Dean of Business and Management Faculty). The *'the body up there'* refers to the Executive Management Team and the Strategic Planning Centre of the University. As stated:

> *"...most of the thing that 'X University' [name of the University] does was to actually aa.. get us to give input to them. You see they have the body up there who will be doing all this...."* (Dean of Business and Management Faculty)

The explanations given by the participants illustrate the 'top down' approach in the University strategy formulation. According to the Head of MBA Programme, the Deans simply followed all the directives given by the Executive Management team. It was stated: *"...they will tend to follow okay whatever top management want okay.."* (Head of MBA Programme). This suggests the culture of the University, which is hierarchical where the lower level staff are expected to acquiesce without questioning any given tasks by the higher positioned staff.

It was stated that some discussions had taken place in the Executive Committee Meeting (a meeting attended by the Executive Management Team) and the Senate meeting (a meeting attended by the Senior Management Team). Apparently, it was claimed that most of the people who attended the meetings tended to agree and follow all that was being said by the Vice Chancellor. As stated by the Head of MBA Programme:

> *"...if you have a chance to just sit at JKE [Executive Committee] or sit at Senate you will understand you know because ultimately you will hear them agreeing to most of the things that have been said by the leader"*(Head of MBA Programme)

The phrase "*you will hear them agreeing to most of the things that have been said by the leader*" (Head of MBA Programme), indicates the existence of influence by a powerful individual in the University strategy formulation.

It occurs that the strategy which follows the government had led to the top down approach in the University strategy formulation. The top down approach is evident in the strategy formulation that had only involved the University top management team. It is also discovered that the Vice Chancellor

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had played an important role in ensuring that the strategy which followed the government was implemented. In doing so, he had exercised his power to control decisions which relate to University strategy. In a way, the top down approach in the University strategy formulation can be considered as embedded in the University culture. This is evident in the culture that emphasises hierarchical positions whereby lower level staffs are expected to adhere to the requirements of the higher positioned staff. This has been apparent in the discussions presented in this section.

6.2.3 Increased Control

The participants claimed that there had been a trend of increased control over the University staff. This had been pointed out by fifteen participants, comprising four Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager at the Strategic Planning Centre, the Dean of a Business and Management Faculty, Assistant Vice Chancellor of the Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Leadership and Quality Management, Head of Graduate School, Director of Academic Centre, a Head of Department, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Alumni, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, and the Registrar.

Phrases such as "*there is a general trend towards more controlled...*"; *"you've got to put them together and manage them, in a very tight network"*; *"they said we need good managers in the university so eem...eem...and err..which means to organize,"* (Academic 1 from Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) indicate the trend of an increased control over the University staff particularly the academic staff. As explained by the Academic, this is believed to be an efficient way of managing the University. It was suggested by the Academic that there had been a growing trend to manage the autonomous groups within the University in a "*tight network*" (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). The phrase, "tight network" implies the control over the University staff. This claim had also transpired in the interview with the Head of MBA Programme:

> *".. 'kadang-kadang' [sometimes], they said.... actually they said well... like it or not this is a directive, lecturers yeah when lecturers are concern*

they can't say they don't want to go, when, they have to go they have to go" (Head of MBA Programme)

In the interview, it was explained that her department had been requested to be relocated to another part of the town due to the infrastructure constraints in the University. It was told that the decision was made without prior discussions with the staff involved. According to the Head of MBA Programme, they had not been given much choice as they were expected to follow the University management plan. The statements made by the Head of MBA Programme provide the evidence of an increased control over the University staff. It was claimed by the Head of MBA Programme that the decision made by the University management had failed to consider the *"day to day"* (Head of MBA Programme) issues faced by its staff. As stated:

"...so there's a lot of loose ends, yeah so planning at that level has not incorporated the day to day kind of thing you know, the knitty gritty of relocations, lecturers 'nak pergi ke tidak' [want to go or not], ...you know ," (Head of MBA Programme)

According to her, this had caused the feeling of stress among them. Another example of the increased control over the University staff was evident from the statement made by the Head of Graduate School. It was stated that *".... you see in life sometimes you can't pick and choose, you know, like what the management is telling us, you know.., you don't tell us how to run this University, we ask you to move you move alright,"* (Head of Graduate School).

The phrase, "*you don't tell us how to run this University, we ask you to move you move alright,"* (Head of Graduate School) suggests a strong statement on the increased control trend in the University. This indicates the power of the University management in controlling and managing its staff.

From the interview, it was apparent that the increased control trend had cascaded from the University top management to the Deans, Heads of Departments, other management teams, and to the academic staff at large. For example, it was explained by the Head of Graduate School that they too had followed the University management style in managing their faculty. This is evident in the statement made by the Head of Graduate School, in relation to workload allocations in the faculty. The statement, *"they will still have to take, you know because it's a directive, the directive...., the dean issue the letter, so*

there's no way they can say no" (Head of Graduate School) had surfaced from the interview.

Here, it was explained that the faculty staff would have to accept the workload allocated to them even if this required them to teach at night. According to the Head of Graduate School, any disobedience or opposition would result in a punitive action taken against them. It was also found that the workload allocation had been used as a punitive action against staff that disagree with the management plans. For example, the faculty management would ensure that those who had resisted would be given a much heavier workload as a consequence of their actions. This was clearly evident in the following statement:

> *"Yeah we have one or two like that so ok, we will you know eer ...we take note of their you know oppositions whatever they don't like, so if you don't like teaching this course, we will make sure that at the undergraduate level, there's a coordinator who assign workload, she's a management coordinator, so we will tell the coordinator load that person as many hours as possible"* (Head of Graduate School)

Similar evidence of the increased control had been observed in other interviews. For example, the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Leadership and Management stated that, "*we need to be cruel in order to be kind, so sometimes we need to force it, impose it on people*" (Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Leadership and Management). According to her, they had imposed research on academic staff, as this is part of the University strategy in becoming a research university. This was imposed by including research as part of the staff performance evaluations.

The Academic interviewed suggested the increase in control currently experienced in the University is due to the pressure placed upon the University management. As stated, *"I think there's growing impatient with the University's ability to quickly do things and the heat is on the key managers, get the University to do things quickly,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative and Science Policy).

This also explained why there were no discussions relating to the University strategy formulation. The academic interviewed explained that the discussions with autonomous groups were perceived as *"time consuming"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty), thus were

considered inefficient in managing the University, especially when there was a pressing need for tasks to be delivered quickly. This was reflected in the statement made by the academic:

> *"…is the culture of the University, it tends to be very eem…like these responsibilities are of the top management, they …they eer.. they have to make them, they have to make this decision, then..emm.. they make them,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

It appears that the effort to conform to the government had also led to the increase in control over the University staff. The University management had exercised their power to ensure the implementation of the University strategy which was led by the government. The increased control over the University staff is evident in the punitive action taken against staff with different opinions from the management and the use of staff performance evaluation as a means to ensure that the university strategy is implemented.

6.2.4 University Strategy Communication

Responses from 14 participants comprising two Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager of the Strategic Planning Centre, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Leadership and Quality Management, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research, two Deans of Faculties, Director of International Education College, Head of Department, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International Affairs, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, and the Registrar, had brought to light issues relating to the communication of University strategy. Interestingly, the findings revealed two extreme responses that were received from three different groups of participants. The Executive Management Team responses were focused on their efforts in communicating the University strategy. On the other hand, the academics and some of the Operation and Management Team were critical about the effectiveness of the University strategy that had been communicated.

For example, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation stated that they had always tried to communicate the University strategy at all

possible opportunities. This suggests the university management's efforts to ensure that the University strategy is communicated to all of its members. As stated, *"... so we have to keep on saying and communicating it in whatever forum we can..",* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation).

It was explained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International that they had used various methods in communicating the University strategy. Among the methods used were written documentations, meetings, and the 'New Year Speech' made by the Vice Chancellor of the University:

> *"so we have to plan in such a way that, okay whatever that, that...if it is a policy, okay, number one memos must be out, number 2 written documents must be there, number 3 during meetings it must be eer....informed and they are suppose to re-informed the others and 'perutusan' [message], 'Amanat Tahun Baru' [New Year Speech] and all those"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International)

The huge amount of effort taken by the University management was acknowledged by an academic staff member, who stated: *"....the strategy that is been sort of delivered in a very alive, I mean people are talking, people who are responsible to make the strategy then talk"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

However, the effectiveness of the University strategy communication was criticised by four Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute Of Leadership and Management, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research, Dean, Head of Department and the Registrar, where it was claimed that the University strategy had not been effectively communicated.

For example, the University strategy was claimed to be too broad. This can be seen in the statement made by the academic staff member: *"to become 'Innovative', 'Entrepreneurial' University, just in broad term, I mean what does it mean?"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

The academic staff member also claimed that there had been a great deal of strategy communicated at the same time, and in "*bits and pieces"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). It was claimed that this had been confusing, as they were getting *"all kind of mixed messages,"*

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(Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy) without any clear guidelines on how to implement or prioritise the strategies. According to the Academic, "*because so much of plans that have been communicated and you don't know how to organize them*" (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). The Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty had also indicated a similar concern:

> "*Eem... eer... eer as the Dean, I think eem .., one challenge before I can proceed and communicate to the staffs is to understand what the top management wants. It comes in very general terms, so you really have to...... read between the lines, get further information, get further evidence and to be sure that you are really on the right track otherwise you are going to put your staffs in very difficult positions*" (Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

According to the Dean, the University strategy was difficult to understand as it was broad and had been communicated in general. The phrase "*to understand*" (Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) suggests the difficulty in understanding the University strategy that had been communicated. And the phrases, "*it comes in very general terms*" and "*to read between the lines*" (Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) suggest the ambiguity of the University strategy.

On the other hand, it was claimed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, that there had been various types of strategy documentation produced in an effort to communicate the University strategy. It was explained that the University strategy had been presented across the University through various documents:

> "*We produce the blueprint, a master copy of RMK9 for example, that would be the direction that the University is heading on various field Academic, human resource, ICT, you can have a copy we can give it to you and from time to time Dato' come out with monograph that is his 'Amanat Tahun Baru' [New Year Speech] document in a form of hard copy and also CD*" (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

As explained by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, the University strategy documentation includes the production of a master copy of RMK9 (9th Malaysian Plan), which is a document that reflects the

government strategy, and the Vice Chancellor's speech, which had been transformed into a printed document and soft copy.

It was discovered that the University Registry had also produced a strategy document which was similar to the University strategy documentations for its own department. The department's strategy document was a tailored version of the University strategy. As stated: *"Now as Registrar of the University, I would take the same mm.. template, in that sense and get it translated to the operational at Registrar's Office"* (Registrar).

The existence of the University strategy documentation which followed the government strategy, and the adaptation of this strategy documentation into various departments, suggest the efforts to institutionalise the University strategy.

Yet, efforts to institutionalise the University strategy were seen as meaningless by some of the participants interviewed. As stated by an academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty: "*to tell you honestly, I do not know what is the strategy planning of University X [name of the University]?*" (Academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty).

Four Academics, Head of MBA Programme, and the Manager of the Strategic Planning Centre claimed that the University strategy was merely a compilation of documents. As stated: *"... The documents, I always have the belief that there is a compilation of planning documents..."* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

The impression gathered from another interview also revealed that there had been a lot of documentation requirements in relation to University strategy. As stated:

> *"'Nampak benda tu ada,' [see.., the thing is there], and now we didn't have a problem, when they come, to see this you want to see that,"* (Academic from the Hotel and Tourism Faculty)

Here, it was explained that the faculty would not have any problem with the University audit committee as long as its strategy documentation was in place. It was discovered from the interview that faculties' strategy implementations were occasionally reviewed and audited by the audit committee appointed among the University staff. Apparently, this practice had been treated as a matter of fulfilling documentation purposes.

It occurs that the University strategy had been perceived as meaningless due to its lack of substantive content. In the explanation by the academic staff member, he said that he was confused by the terms *"'Innovative'; 'Entrepreneurial University'; 'Apex University'; 'Research University;"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) which had been stated as the University strategy. According to him, all these terms did not make any sense and hence, were difficult to be carried out in practice. As stated: *"...in operational sense how is it make a ..a difference, how University behave differently,..."* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). This had clearly shown the doubt of the academic on the University strategy which had led to the claim of not having a substantive meaning.

In relation to this, another academic had also stated that the University strategy was contradictory to its current practice. For example, it was stated that the University strategy of moving towards a research university was contradictory to the current practice which required academic staff to conform to various guidelines. As stated: *"research never allows me to conform, research allows me to think, explore,"* (Academic from the Medical Faculty). This had been argued as not contributing towards the innovativeness of the academic in doing research, in teaching and in imparting knowledge to students. As stated: *"you got all kind of these and that, guidelines towards this, guidelines towards that, then you're not encouraging a lecturer's own initiative of what's the best way to teach the subject matter..."* (Academic from the Medical Faculty).

It was claimed that the lack of substantive meanings in University strategy was also reflected in the heavy workload and the large class size given to each individual academic. As stated by the Academic, *"if you want to encourage research, then you must change your approach to teaching, you 'cakap sahaja tapi' [only talk but] teaching 'masih' [still] 18 hours workload, 20 hour workload, how are you going to approach teachers eer.. I mean eer.. research style of teaching and your classes size never 20 and how can you do that"*(Academic from the Medical Faculty).

The findings from the interviews indicate the efforts taken by the University management to institutionalise the University strategy which followed the government plans. This had contributed to the feeling among staff that the University strategy was merely for the purpose of institutionalising the University's expectations which accord with the government expectations.

6.2.5 Multiple Strategy Directions

In the interviews, seven Academics, Head of MBA Programme, and the Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty, explained that there had been various strategies adopted at the same time. As stated by an Academic: *"'Strategy ni' [the strategy] changes most of the time (laugh)"* (Academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty).

It was told by another Academic that the current University strategy is to become a research university as well as to increase the student enrolment to 200,000:

> *"...the latest we get is we want to become er.. er ... research university, the fifth Research University, the latest 'halatuju' [strategy direction] University X [name of the university], we already have 4 research university and we also want to be the fifth one, and we want to compete....in that, how are we going to compete in that, by research and so on... and we also want to become the 200,000 number of students university,"* (Academic 2 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

The phrase, *"the latest"* (Academic 2 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) suggests there had been successive strategies in the University. In this case, it was told that the University was pursuing two strategies at the same time, i.e. to increase student numbers and to become a research university.

It was claimed that the various University strategies were *"confusing"* (Academic 3 from the Business and Management Faculty) as they had promoted *"all kind of mix messages,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). This had raised themes such as the ability to *"read between the lines"* (Dean from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty), which had emerged from the interviews. The multiple strategies had also led to the ambiguity in the strategy that had been communicated. For example, it was claimed that the University had used various terminologies such as 'Innovative'; 'Entrepreneurial University'; 'Apex University'; and 'Research University'; without any clear meaning or directions on how these can be put into practice.

It was claimed that, these multiple strategies were not only felt as "confusing", but were also considered as "*conflicting*" by the Academic. As stated:

> *"If you want to go towards research we have to be practical, okay, 200 students, meaning to say more ATA (teaching hours), okay now you want the lecturers to be into research, okay how can you balance that you tell me, we cannot..."* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

Here, it was stated that she was unable to deliver both strategy demands, which had required her to teach a large number of students and at the same time to be involved in research projects.

It was discovered that the multiple strategies adopted in the University were a result of its continuous efforts to conform to the government. As such, the University had been progressively active in responding to the various governmental plans. It occurs that there had been continuous and simultaneous plans communicated by the government. Responding to these various plans had resulted in the multiple strategies held in the University. Inevitably, these multiple strategies, which was being adopted at the same time had caused confusion, and were perceived as conflicting by the University staff. This suggests that in reality, the multiple strategies were actually difficult to be implemented.

6.2.6 Politicised

Four participants, consisting of three Academics, and Head of MBA Programme described the University strategy as being political. It was stated by an Academic that the various strategies in the University, were merely *"corporate poetry,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). As stated:

> *"...'Innovative', 'Entrepreneurial University', 'Apex University', 'Research University', is not, no in operational sense how is it make a ..a difference, how university behave differently, from this thing you know my personal opinion is that it is all corporate poetry, [laughing]"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

It was claimed that there had been successive major strategies without any real significance in their implementation. According to the Academic, it had been difficult to implement such strategies. Therefore, the strategies were only perceived as *"terminologies"; "slogan"; or a "tag line",* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) which were claimed to be *"interchangeable"* and had been used for gaining *"political"* advantage (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)*. As stated by the Academic:

> *"I only know that the slogan has changed, and to me that is the tag line that should.. sort of signal major or significant strategy movements, right?, well I have not seen, okay 'Innovative', 'Entrepreneurial University', how this different from the fact that we are vying to become a 'Research University', we are even vying to become an 'Apex university',"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

According to the Academic, he had not seen how these strategies contributed any differences in the University's approach and behaviour. As stated: "*I have not seen,"; "a difference, how university behave differently,"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

According to the Head of MBA Programme, the University management was merely "*interested in telling the world"* (Head of MBA Programme) of their achievements. Therefore, it was doubtful whether the University had actually been able to deliver its strategy. As told: "*I do not know whether they really do it you know"* (Head of MBA Programme). Another Academic had also stated that:

> *"I think sometimes we... we.. we.. implement strategies based on what others are doing probably, on who's at the top, so we want to be in a good book, or... we want to go with the flow and not knowing what is really the need, you know what is going on, with our own ... own people"* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

The phrase; "*want to be in a good book, or... we want to go with the flow"* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty) suggests the University efforts to maintain a good relationship with the government. This was carried out by adopting strategy that followed the government plans. The

finding suggests that the University had followed the government plans without considering its own resources and capabilities.

It was discovered that, in maintaining a good relationship with the government, there was a *"hurry to show"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) attitude among the University management, especially the Vice Chancellor that the strategy could be delivered in a short period of time. An example of this can be seen in the strategy of increasing student enrolment. It was told by the Academic: *"...when the 200,000 was given eer... we were given time frame of 2015, the VC said no I'll do it in 2010"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

This had been described as an act to please the government. As stated: *"they like to satisfy those people, that's all, they want to satisfy, that means ye..we can do it , that's it, but whether we can really do it or not, that is another thing,"*(Academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty). From the interview, it was apparent that the University management had not only adopted the strategy which conformed to the government plans, but also indicated that the strategy could be delivered earlier than expected. This commitment was made in spite of being aware that the University infrastructure was not ready to accommodate the increasing number of students, especially in a short period of time. As claimed by the Academic, the infrastructure could not be made ready in a short period of time, thus doubling the number of students within such a short period would affect the present infrastructure.

Interestingly, this awareness had also surfaced in the interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation himself. As told: *"Number one time, we are against the time, for example we are given the mandate to increase the enrolment to 200,000 by 2010"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation). He had continued by saying "*..these are actually challenges and very short period of time you're converting this university or branch campuses from what we are suppose to say the capacity is 11,000, now we have to increase to 200,000. In a very short of time, ..*" (Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation).

The interview clearly showed the awareness of the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation with regard to the constraints that could be faced by the University in their commitment to implement the University strategy in

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such a short time. This awareness was also reflected in the following interview with the Registrar. It was stated: *"And this is ...you know it cannot happen quickly"* (Registrar).

The findings in this section reveal the use of strategy as a tool to please the government. This is clear by the act of following the government plans without considering the University's own resources and capabilities. Hence, this strategy was claimed to carry a political purpose.

6.2.7 Section Summary

The themes, **'**government led', 'top down', 'increase in control', 'the University strategy communication', 'multiple strategies', and 'politicised', which had emerged from the interviews described the nature of the University strategy formulation. It was discovered that the government is the main constituent of the University. This is so, as the government provides the funding for the University. This relationship had influenced the University to devise its strategy in accordance to the government plans. This is evident in the University strategy which was led by the government. This had contributed to the top down approach in the University strategy formulation. The effort to conform to the governmental plans is reflected in the attempt to institutionalise the government led strategy into the University strategy. This had contributed to the exercise of power by the University management which had led to the increased in control over its staff.

The evidence also suggests that there had been **'multiple strategies'** pursued by the University within the same period of time. This indicates the continuous efforts taken by the University in conforming to the government. As a result, the University strategy had been described as confusing and conflicting. Hence, the University strategy was claimed as being politicised and used as a tool in winning the governmental support. The findings presented in this section provide a general idea of the University strategy formulation.

The next section is focused on the themes discovered in relation to the University strategy implementation.

6.3 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

It was discovered that the University strategy which was formulated based on the government strategy and without prior consideration of its resources and constraints had contributed to the challenges in its implementation. This is apparent in the themes; *'lack of resources', 'time constraints',* and *'intensification of work'*, which had emerged in the discussions of University strategy implementation. The following sections will present each of the themes discovered in relation to the strategy implementation of the University.

6.3.1 Limited Resources

Six Academics, Head of MBA Programme, three Deans, Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement, Director of Academic Centre, Head of Graduate School, Head of Department, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation, Registrar and Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International Affairs, had raised the issues on 'lack of resources' in the University strategy implementation. It was discovered that the University was currently faced with a constraint in the number of classrooms to support its strategy in increasing the student enrolment.

As claimed by an Academic, there had not been enough classrooms to cater for the increasing students in the faculty. It was told that she was allocated "*60 over students for a class that is suitable for 30 students*" (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty). This had contributed to the overflow of students in classes. As suggested by the Head of MBA Programme: *"...the lack of classrooms as well which means that sometimes they can have, you can have students that are overflowing,"* (Head of MBA Programme).

According to the Head of MBA Programme, some of the academics had to turn students away due to the *"overflowing"* of students in their classes (Head of MBA Programme). It was stated that the action had led to the tension between the faculty management and the academics concerned. It was apparent that the management was not happy with the action of the academics. On the other

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hand, the academics could not accept an overflowing number of students in their classes due to the limited classrooms size.

It was stated by the Head of MBA Programme that: "*in fact we just got an email from our 'Timbalan Dekan' [Deputy Dean] saying that some lecturers are turning away students which eer... the management is not happy ...*" (Head of MBA Programme).

From the interviews, it became apparent that the academics were compelled to accept the overflowing students in their classes. In relation to this, an Academic spoke of her frustrations over the lack of infrastructure to support the University strategy. As stated: *"How can you give your best, you know ....the infrastructure is not ready, it's not ready for 200,000 students,"* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty). The Academic emphasised that the infrastructure such as classrooms was not ready to support the University strategy in increasing the student enrolment.

The issues on the lack of resources required to support the University strategy had emerged throughout the fieldwork. As claimed by the Head of MBA Programme, the University strategy was not supported by any significant increase in resources. It was stated: "*but is there significant corresponding increase in facilities ?... is not is not...*" (Head of MBA Programme).

It was found that the University had decided to conduct night classes as a way to overcome the inadequate number of classrooms. As explained by an Academic, the inadequate number of classrooms had forced some of the academics to conduct classes at night. As stated: "*...classroom can go up to 10 o'clock, full time classroom go up to 10 o'clock*" (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

The study also reveals the growing interest towards research among the academics as a result of the University strategy to become a research university. It was suggested by the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research that, *"more and more people are into research, so I guess the success rate is eer ..quite high , yeah"* (Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research).

However, despite this trend, there had been a concern that there were not enough research grants available to fund the research projects. According to one of the academic staff, they did not have access to the research grants and it was difficult for them to get funding for their research. It was told that the

University management had talked *"...about 'Dana Kecemerlangan' [name of grant- Excellence Grant],"* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty) as being an available research grant for the academic staff to fund their research. This however was no longer available for them as they were just being told that *"no, we cannot apply anymore"* (Academic 3 from the Business and Management Faculty)*.* From the interview, it appeared that the Academic was frustrated with the fact that they can no longer have access to this grant. This was reflected in the following statement:

> *"we have been contributing for so many years and we found out some eer.... there were million but we are not able to use those funds"* (Academic 3 from the Business and Management Faculty).

The Academic was found to be disappointed by the lack of resources available to them. It was observed from the interviews that they were stressed by all the tasks given to them, and regretted that they were not given enough resources in carrying out the University strategy, even if they wanted to.

6.3.2 Time Constraints

An interview with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation had revealed the reason for the lack of resources, particularly the infrastructure, for implementing the University strategy. It was explained that the inability to make the infrastructure ready within a specified time was one of the factors that had led to the inadequate classrooms in faculties. It was stated that the contractors were not able to deliver the project on time. As stated: *"we are worried about the completion of the project and most of the time they are not able to conform you know to our time"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation).

The issue of time constraints was also elicited in the interviews with four other participants, including the Head of MBA Programme, Dean from the Hotel and Tourism Faculty, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation, and the Registrar. These participants had related that the University had made a commitment to increase the number of students to 200,000 in three years' time. According to Dean, the target was far too short for them to react. As

stated: *"target too short to achieve for example, 200,000 students by 2010, not given enough time for the faculty to react"* (Dean from the Hotel and Tourism Faculty).

In achieving the target, the enrolment of students had to be increased immediately. This had created the challenge for the University staff, particularly the academics, as there had not been enough classrooms to accommodate the increasing students. As stated by the Head of MBA Programme: *"you know students have started, classes but not completed fully it's really.. it's really disturbing you know.."* (Head of MBA Programme).

It was obvious that the Head of MBA Programme was frustrated over the renovations of classrooms that had not been fully completed on time. During the fieldwork, it was discovered that classrooms renovations were still in progress at the beginning of the new semester.

Some had blamed this on the bureaucratic procedures in the University. Seven participants, including two Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Head of Graduate School, Director of Academic Centre, Deans, and the Registrar had alluded to this theme. For example, the Head of MBA Programme stated:

> *"Even things like taking money out, money that actually has been contributed to the students , because it has gone into the University so we have certain procedures that we have to follow yeah so ...its bureaucracy actually that is limiting us to do quite a lot of things with regards to the implementation of certain plans that we have developed."* (Head of MBA Programme)

Another example of bureaucracy in the University was explained by the Registrar. It was told that appointments of new academics had to be done according to the budget allocated by the government. According to her, the University cannot simply make new appointments if the budget allocation for that year has been utilised. It was emphasised that new academic appointments could not be carried out, even if there was a sudden need to increase the number of academics in faculties. Under this circumstance, the University is required to wait for the following year's budget. This also explained the constraint on academic staff to support the increasing numbers of students. As stated:

"...and if you were to ask an additional post it has to go back to the government or central agency and once the budget exercise is done for a year, there is no way that you can get additional post. It's not until next year." (Registrar)

Despite the bureaucratisation, the Head of MBA Programme suggested that the University management had tried to meet the resources requirement of the University strategy. However, it was explained by the Head of MBA Programme that the resources had "*..not flowing down quickly enough"* (Head of MBA Programme). As such, this was claimed to have contributed to the insufficient support available to enable the University staff to deliver the University strategy. As stated:

"...so what I can see is that there's a mismatch , on one hand you got an idea that you want University X [name of the university] 200,000 and that is the directive from the government which is fine you know but then again things are not flowing down quickly enough"(Head of MBA Programme)

This also suggests a mismatch between the University strategy and its implementation, which indicates the existence of conflicts in the University strategy implementation.

6.3.3 Intensification of Work

The inability to provide a timely response to new strategy demands had also led to the intensification of work experienced by the University staff. In relation to this, nine Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager of Strategic Planning Centre, the Dean of the Pharmacy Faculty, Dean of the Business and Management Faculty, Head of Department, Registrar, and the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Alumni, had described the intensification of work experienced by them.

The University strategy had been perceived as an "*additional thing"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). This was based on an argument that the strategy had not been supported with enough resources for it to be implemented. As claimed: "*You don't give people any resources,... but*

you make available now more and also different type of work," (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). This statement also reflects the claim of multiple strategies in the University.

The phrase, *"additional thing"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty) suggests the intensification of work among the University staff, especially the academic staff. A similar finding had emerged from this study. The Head of MBA Programme claimed that, *"The burden of work is actually increasing"* (Head of MBA Programme). Besides teaching, academics were also engaged in other activities, such as administrative duties and the requirement to do research, and this had consequently intensified the amount of work demanded from them. As stated by the Head of MBA Programme: *"...many of them do teaching, administrative, eer.. load is there and then eem.. research and things like that, comparatively speaking the work is increasing the load is increasing eem ..."* (Head of MBA Programme).

The intensification of work among academics was evident from the number of teaching hours and other additional tasks that were required of them. An Academic claimed that, despite the University strategy to become a research university, they were still being allocated as heavy a workload as they were 10 years ago. As stated by the Academic:

> *"...the system does not change, for example the administrator, they still have to teach 18 hours a week just like 10 years ago, and now they are still doing 18 hours a week when at the same time they are required to do research."* (Academic 3 from the Business and Management Faculty)

Another Academic described the situation faced by them as being "*bogged down with the lectures*", (Academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty), which refers to the long teaching hours. It was explained that teachings, involvement in administrative duties, and research projects have become prerequisites for promotion. The incorporation of such commitments in the appraisals of academics also suggests the efforts to make academics compliant with the University strategy.

This had contributed to the feeling of stress observed among the academics. For example, this was transparent in the following statement:

> *"so when you said about having 200,000 students, let's say we take that number , 200,000 students to come in, so we have to do like double,*

triple, later on and doing that, it is going to be a constraints on our part, 'kita nak mengajar' [we want to teach]... we have to teach, we have to do research , we have to also make our self renounce person in that sense and we have to also make collaboration so and so, how are we going to do that?" (Academic from the Mechanical Engineering Faculty)

There had been repeated themes related to teaching hours, intensification of work, and how the academic staff were made to comply with these requirements. This had also signalled the level of stress and the intensification of work among the academic staff. It was discovered that academic staff had not only been allocated heavy workloads but were also required to comply with the various rules and regulations that were imposed on them:

"I think so yeah, it goes way back as I was saying earlier on 'lah' [yeah], if you want to be a research university, you can't be talking about 18, 20 hours workload, that kind of a thing 'lah' [yeah], I mean by talking about... they are govern by too much rules and regulations here and there, and then burden with, not just workload but other responsibility which are not suppose to be..." (Academic from the Pharmacy Faculty)

For example, an Academic had stated that they were having a tough time to balance the increasing tasks and it had been especially difficult when they had to complete the tasks considering all the constraints. As stated:

"As it is right now we are having a tough time to balance, because we are talking about those days we use to have students 20 in a group, of course we weren't research oriented back then, now the number of students has gone like triple then you know and and yet we are to do research alright, our ATA [Allocated Teaching Hours] used to be 12, use to be 12, now it's 18 alright,.." (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

It was also found that the intensification of work had forced academics to work outside their normal working hours. For example, it was explained that, due to the amount of work required,   they could only carry out their research projects during the holidays. However, it was also stated that this had been the time when they were normally sent on courses. It was explained that they had a tough time to balance all of the tasks as the holidays were also the only time for them to have their break. As explained by the Academic:

> *"it's... we're finding difficulty trying to .... balance, during the holidays that's when we're try to write as much as possible, but that that is also the time we ...we take leave, that's the time we have to attend courses, ..."*
> (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

It was apparent that most of the academics interviewed seemed to be demoralised by the intensification of work and the existence of the constraints in their work.

6.3.4 Section Summary

The themes, *'lack of resources', 'time constraints',* and *'intensification of work'* had emerged from the discussions on the University strategy implementation. These themes provide evidence of the conflicts that exist in the University strategy implementation.

The *'lack of resources'* was apparent in the lack of classrooms to support the University strategy in increasing the student numbers and the lack of grants available to support the University strategy towards research. There is further evidence to suggest that *'time constraints'* had affected the timely supply of resources to support the University strategy. This is particularly apparent in the time taken in providing adequate classrooms to support the increasing number of students. It appears that the *'lack of resources'* and the *'time constraints'* had contributed to the *'intensification of work'* experienced by the University staff, especially the academics. This presents the conflicts experienced in the University strategy implementation.

The discussion that follows will focus on the University strategy monitoring, which was explored by gathering an understanding of its role in the University strategy management process. The themes that emerged from the findings are discussed in the following section.

6.4 STRATEGY MONITORING

The themes, *'assessments as political', 'strategy monitoring reflects in documentations',* and the *'ISO Certification'* had emerged in the discussions of University strategy monitoring. It was discovered that the strategy monitoring of the University was not actually held for the purpose of providing feedback for improvements, thus it was claimed as a political exercise. A lot of the focus of strategy monitoring had been on documentation. This had created the feeling among the participants that the University strategy monitoring was only for the purpose of documentation. The findings also discovered the heightened emphasis on ISO certification in the University. The ISO certification was deemed as assurance of the quality tasks delivered by the University staff. This had contributed to the argument of its relevancy as a mechanism of the University strategy monitoring. The following section will present the themes that emerged in the study.

6.4.1 Assessments as Political

Generally, the University strategy monitoring had been described as *"impressionistic"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). As stated by the Academic:

> *"...monitoring is done sort of eer... you know.. haphazard manner sometimes impressionistic yeah it is implemented quite well and things like that ...it is very...the general impression of how it's being implemented.."* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

It was also suggested by the Head of MBA programme that the University strategy was never been actually measured. It was stated: *"...never been measured, nobody really knows whether it has really achieved, what it really supposed to be achieving"* (Head of MBA Programme).

From the findings, it had appeared that the University strategy monitoring was held mainly for the purpose of justifying the University strategy, rather than for acknowledging challenges faced in its implementation. It appeared

that the strategy monitoring in the University had been used as a mechanism to support the University strategy and this had led to the claim that the University strategy had been political.

Five participants including four Academics and the Head of MBA Programme had suggested that the University strategy was held for political motives. As stated by the Academic, *"...whether the strategy has work, the assessment is a very political exercise.."* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty).

The finding also gathers that the University strategy monitoring was not for assessing the actual outcome of its strategy. This was discovered to be contributed by the pressure to comply with the government. According to the Academic, the pressure to comply with the government was evident in the strategy evaluation criteria which were used for the University strategy monitoring. It was explained that the evaluation criteria had only included elements that would support the University strategy implementation.

For example, it was revealed by the Academic that the ratio of 'students to lecturers' had been taken out because this ratio did not support the University strategy in increasing student enrolment. As stated: *"...they have to say this because it was a job that has to be done in order to stay consistent and to make sure that their numbers would not be undermined"* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)*.

It was clear from the interview that criteria which were not consistent with the University strategy were removed from the evaluation. This was done mainly to justify the implementation of the University strategy. It was apparent that the University had been trying hard to implement strategies that were consistent with the government plans. For example, the strategy to increase the student numbers had been implemented in the University despite the awareness that it would strain the present infrastructure and human resources. There is clear evidence that the management had used evaluation elements as a means to justify the University strategy. This was done by ignoring facts that could prove otherwise.

This actually indicates the University's effort to conform to the government. The University's conformity to government strategy had surfaced in the interview conducted with the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and

Innovation. When asked about the strategy monitoring in the University, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation had stated that the University strategy monitoring evaluation criteria had been designed to follow the criteria found in the government strategy document, RMK9 [9th Malaysian Plan]. It was also explained that the University Strategic Planning Centre ensures that each individual faculty and department implements the University strategy which conforms to the government. This transpired in the following statement:

> *"We have our own officers to monitor but you have your people down there to ensure that the initiatives are being carried out, what is the progress line, if it is not being carried out, why is it not, we have a periodical,..."* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

The phrase *"to ensure that the initiatives are being carried out,"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation), and the reference made to the government documentation, i.e. the RMK9 (9th Malaysian Plan), demonstrate the University's conformity to the government. This conformity had resulted in the strategy monitoring that was developed for this purpose.

6.4.2 Strategy Monitoring Reflects in Documentations

In addition to being regarded as political, the strategy monitoring of the University had also been perceived as a matter of documentation. Twelve participants including four Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager at the Strategic Planning Centre, Dean of Business and Management Faculty, Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge Advancement, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, Registrar, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and International Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Alumni, had claimed that the University strategy monitoring had been carried out for this purpose. As stated by the Head of MBA Programme:

> *"... it's just on paper on paper it looks good nothing ....monitoring but if you ask them have they come over to the faculty, if they have, how many*

times, have they come over to look at each faculty, they have not," (Head of MBA Programme)

According to the Head of MBA Programme, the University strategy monitoring was used as a means to present the achievements that had been made through the University strategy implementation rather than to focus on areas of improvements.

This trend was also evident in the adoption of ISO certification as the quality management assurance of the University. It was gathered from the interview that the management of the University relied heavily on the ISO certification as a means to ensure the quality of tasks delivered in the University. As told:

> *"... you are struggling to maintain quality and.. and.. eer... they say no we have a quality management system that will serious deviation...If you really believe that...that what they are saying oh.. we have quality management system is certified by ISO, so the process will actually prevents this from happening ..."*(Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

The claim made by the Academic had also transpired in the interview with the Registrar. The latter noted: *"So, by streamlining our works processors, having them got ISO. Then we are saying that we have a quality management system"* (Registrar).

It was argued by an Academic that the University management had ignored the fact that the University was faced with a real challenge. The challenge can be seen in the intensification of work faced by the academic staff and the limited classrooms available to accommodate the increasing students. Despite these challenges, and the arguments of quality deliverables, it was discovered that the University management had at the same time relied on the ISO certification as a show of commitment to quality. This had led to the strong emphasis on ISO certification related activities found in the University.

6.4.3 ISO Certification

Six Academics, Head of MBA Programme, Manager at the Strategic Planning Centre, Assistant Vice Chancellor Institute of Quality and Knowledge

Advancement, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation, two Deans, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research, Director of Academic Centre, and the Registrar had suggested the theme. It appeared that the University management supports the application of ISO in the University. For example, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation had stated that ISO had improved the documentation system in the University:

> *"ISO, because there is a need for ISO, for example now things are becoming easier at the faculty, you have a teaching portfolio, you have the course work, the syllabus now are documented, the process are now transparent, so I thought that is something that has been done and it is great...that the documentation are intact"* (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation)

Similarly, the Director of Academic Centre also supported the use of ISO as a means for monitoring the quality of work:

> *" ..we monitoring of the quality of the lecturer, the students, the paper, the exams, okay, that's ...it's, so all these things if we combine together I think it becomes eer becomes eer... becomes a good monitoring the performance of the whole system..."* (Director of Academic Centre)

Four Academics and the Head of MBA Programme argued that the ISO certification did not actually improve the quality of their work. The participants argued that the ISO certification had not changed or improved their teaching and learning experience, but instead had further contributed to the intensification of their work. It was said that, as part of the ISO certification requirement, every member of academic staff was requested to prepare five sets of examination questions together with the answer schemes. According to the Academic, they were informed of this with two weeks' notice. It was clear that the Academic was frustrated with the requirement, especially when they were given a short time to comply:

> *"5 sets of exams questions to prepare, Zetty,... it's really killing me you know because classes and we just got the message about 2 weeks ago"* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

Thus, she had doubted the quality of the examination paper prepared, as it was produced within a limited time. As stated: *".... how much can I give, how*

much or how much can I produce quality exam questions if you ask me with answer scheme," (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty).

It was told that, in the preparation of the examination questions, a great deal of paper had been wasted due to the tedious ISO requirements. For example, they were made to adhere to a specified cover page format, which requires a precise measurement for the borders. It was argued by the Academic that such a requirement had not contributed to the value of the examination questions prepared. As stated by the Academic:

> *"....you have to type within the frame, out by a little that you know so we reject.... we reject, so it's not the content we looking ...., we looking at whether they are, the words for arr... frame ..... "* (Academic 2 from the Business and Management Faculty)

The Head of MBA Programme claimed that the ISO certification requirement had contributed to the increasing amount of time and tasks to which the academics are subjected. It was stated that these various documents had to be prepared within specified deadlines:

> *"...so someone gets 18 hours just imagine 18, 20, 21, 22 hours you're teaching, yet you got a lot of paper work requirement , documentation as requirement by ISO,..."* (Head of MBA Programme)

For example, the Head of MBA Programme had stated that, periodically, academic staff were required to submit attendance lists, quizzes, tests, and students' marks within the specifications required by the ISO:

> *".. for instance you must make sure you have attendance list in there all the time, every year eer every month you submitted to the Ketua Programs , you must ensure that your grade you know , you do your tests, you do your quizzes and be submitted again to the Ketua Programs [Head of Programmes] ,"* (Head of MBA Programme)

In relation to this, an Academic questioned the need for ISO certifications. It was stated that, *"we have won awards but our ends are problematic."* (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty). According to the Academic, an education institution should be focusing on the quality of the graduates and not on the work process. As stated:

"You're an education institution that the final test, final test is not whether you are able to process an application in 2 minutes, that's a mean to an end and end is always is what has become of the students you know or whatever but this means becomes an end in itself and say oo… we have fantastic management system, we can do this in 10 minutes, we can do this online, these are all means to an end." (Academic 1 from the Administrative Science and Policy Faculty)

6.4.4 Section Summary

The findings have revealed that the University strategy monitoring was conducted with the aim of justifying the University strategy formulated, rather than monitoring the real issues behind its implementation. The themes *'assessments as political', 'strategy monitoring reflects in documentations',* and *'ISO certification'* that emerged from the interviews suggests the University strategy monitoring had been conducted to support the University strategy which conformed to the government.

The evidence also suggests that there had been a great emphasis on ISO activities in the University. It appeared that the ISO certification had been used to justify the University's capability to deliver the various strategies without compromising its quality. In a way, it was used as a proof of University's capability to conform to the government plans, despite the existence of conflicts in its implementation.

6.5 SUMMARY

The findings from the study had surfaced within the strategy management process of the University. This includes the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring. The three areas of strategy management process have been presented in this chapter.

1. Strategy Formulation
   The findings had revealed the existence of conflicts in the University

strategy implementation. It was found that the University strategy, which was 'government led', had been formulated without due consideration of its resources. This had contributed to the conflicts which were evident in the 'lack of resources', 'time constraints', and the 'intensification of work' experienced by the University staff in implementing the University strategy.

2. Strategy Implementation

Despite the conflicts, it was discovered that the University strategy had actually started to be implemented, and its effect had started to be felt by the majority of the University staff. This has been discussed in the context of strategy implementation where the following issues had emerged: overflowing of students due to the lack of classrooms to accommodate the increasing numbers of students; the intensification of work experienced by the University staff; the increased focus on research among academics; and the lack of grants for funding research projects. Based on the findings, it was discovered that the obstacle in moving towards the strategy was mainly contributed by the lack of resources and the ability to provide these resources on a timely basis. However, since the University strategy was very much guided by the government, it was apparent that the University was endlessly adjusting to the continuous strategy guided by the government.

3. Strategy Monitoring

The findings also discovered that the University management was aware of the conflicts that might be faced as a consequence of its 'government led' strategy. However, it appeared that the requirement to conform to the government was the main priority, and thus superseded the requirement to consider the availability of resources in formulating the University strategy. This suggests the University's deliberateness in its strategy implementation. The deliberateness was also transparent in the strategy monitoring conducted in the University. It appeared that the strategy monitoring was mainly held for the purpose of justifying its implementation, rather than for acknowledging its conflicts. This was evident in the strategy monitoring, which was seen as 'impressionistic' and 'political'. It appeared that the strategy monitoring had been used for the purpose of controlling the behaviour of the University staff in line with

the University strategy, and for demonstrating the ability of the University to conform despite the occurrence of the conflicts in its implementation.

The next chapter will provide in-depth discussions of these findings. This is done by identifying the relevant literature, for the purpose of illuminating a further understanding of the findings.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The recent chapter discussed various themes that emerged from the study. These themes are based on three areas of strategy management, i.e. strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring. This is in line with the objective of the study, which explores the University strategy management based on these processes.

The study brought to light themes such as government led strategy; top down approach; increased control in the University management; communication of the University strategy; multiple strategies; and politicisation in relation to the University strategy formulation. Other themes such as limited resources; time constraints; and intensification of work describe the challenges encountered in the University strategy implementation. The findings also reveal themes concerning assessment as political; assessments for the purpose of documentation; and heightened emphasis on ISO certification in relation to strategy monitoring discussions.

A further understanding of these themes is advanced with reference to the literature. As such, this chapter presents the discussions and elaboration of the themes based on the references made. In this study, the institutional theory provides a good understanding of the findings. The institutional theory is chosen based on the findings which suggest the institutionalisation of the University through its strategy. In line with this, the seminal work of Meyer and Rowan (2006) and Meyer and Rowan (1977) are discussed in this chapter. A conceptual framework is developed based on the findings and the discussions of the relevant literature. It is introduced in the later section of the chapter. Next, the following discussions will elaborate on the themes that have emerged from the findings.

7.2 THE THEMES

The evidence from the study suggests that the University strategy management process was highly influenced by the efforts to maintain and manage the University legitimacy with the government. This is not uncommon as Pettigrew (1992) had found an extensive degree of bargaining, solicitation and political activity in the strategy decision making process, particularly in the public sector organisation.

As the University is a public university, it is rooted in a societal role, thus open to the external environment and public expectations (Ring and Perry, 1985). Therefore, the strategy in the University can be regarded as political. As suggested by Stewart (2004), strategy in public sector organisations can be political as it is used for the justification of organisations' purpose and directions to the public at large. Hence, it is also believed that effective strategic management in the public sector needs to be focused on its stakeholders (Poister and Streib, 1999).

The ability to manage emerging issues is an important element of a successful public sector organisation's strategy (Perrott, 1996). Hence, public sector organisations are advised to be responsive to the political consequences of their strategy (Perrott, 1996). Unlike private organisations, the public sector organisation strategy formulation changes from market focused to a complex political, economic and legal consideration (Perrott, 1996). This explains the adoption of emergent strategies in public sector organisations. The emergent strategies allow the opportunity to be responsive to the various expectations (Ring and Perry, 1985). For example, studies on Portuguese higher education have shown the adoption of emergent strategies instead of the intended strategies in its higher education (Taylor et al., 2008). A similar finding is also made in Canadian public universities, where the strategy has been described as an ad hoc strategy (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). The existence of emergent strategies in higher education reflects the emphasis for being responsive to external constituents.

The findings in the study provide empirical evidence of the strategy process that can be influenced by its constituents and therefore supports the suggestion by Mintzberg (1987a) that it should not be treated as a linear process. It is also consistent with the suggestion by Mintzberg et al. (2009,

p.234) that strategy is an 'overt process of influence'. The findings also confirm earlier studies conducted by Pettigrew where it is suggested that strategic change takes on a political learning process, a long term conditioning and influence designed to establish the dominating legitimacy (Pettigrew, 1987). It subscribes to the suggestion of Quinn (1980) that the strategy process involves a socio-political process where power behaviour is a major influence in strategic management.

The findings from the study are presented in the following diagram (Diagram 7.1). It is developed based on the main themes found in the study. The findings suggest that the University strategy management is influenced by the pursuit of legitimacy. This is apparent in the strategy formulation which conforms to the government (Section 6.2); the strategy implementation which had been challenging due to the strategy which simply follows the government for legitimacy (Section 6.3); and the existence of strategy monitoring which had been devised to support the strategy which follows the government (Section 6.4).

In this chapter, the main themes discovered from the study are discussed in their respective sections, i.e. Sections 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6. For example, the discussion on legitimacy is presented in Section 7.3; legitimacy is problematic can be found in Section 7.4; taken for granted attitude in Section 7.5; and managing legitimacy in Section 7.6. These sections represent the underlying themes that emerged from the study.

Diagram 7.1: Legitimacy in the University Strategy Management Process (author's own)

These themes are presented in cyclical form and start with legitimacy (7.3); legitimacy is problematic (7.4); taken for granted attitude (7.5); and describe how legitimacy is managed in the University (7.6). It is presented in a cyclical form as each of these themes is interrelated. In a way, it can be seen as a cause and effect paradigm. For example, this is apparent in the strategy of the University which was held for the purpose of legitimacy. This claim is made based on the strategy formulation which conformed to the government (7.3); it is also apparent in the study that such conformity had created challenges in its strategy implementation (7.4); where this had been approached with a taken for granted attitude based on the strategy which had been formulated despite the awareness of its potential challenges (7.5); and has seen the strategy management process which had been managed for the purpose of maintaining the University legitimacy with its key constituent (7.6).

The themes' legitimacy; legitimacy is problematic; taken for granted attitude; and management of legitimacy suggest the legitimisation efforts of the University. This can be seen in the efforts to conform to the institutional rules i.e. the government strategy. As such the findings are consistent with the

institutional theory suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that conformity to institutional rules serves as a means for legitimacy. It has also been suggested that conformity to institutional rules is independent from the effectiveness criteria (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In this study, this has been apparent in the challenges to the strategy implementation. Under this position, it has been suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that organisations create a gap between their structure to conform and its actual activities in order to protect its legitimacy. This is also apparent in the management of the legitimacy found in the study. As such, the conceptual framework of this study is developed based on Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006), and will be further discussed in the conceptual framework section of this chapter.

The following sections will continue to discuss the themes that had emerged from the study. The basis of legitimacy's claim in this study is discussed in the section that follows.

7.3. LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy is defined as the right to exist (Maurer, 1971). It is a process where an organisation is congruent with the social values and norms of acceptable behaviour of its larger social system (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). Suchman (1995, p.574) defines legitimacy as a generalised perception 'that the actions of the entity are desirable; proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, belief, and definitions'.

The evidence of legitimacy in the study can be seen throughout the strategy management process of the University. This is apparent in the themes that had emerged in the discussions of strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University. For example, the discussions on strategy formulation had revealed that the University strategy was formulated based on government strategy (Section 6.2.1); it was top down (Section 6.2.2); had led to increased control in ensuring its implementations (Section 6.2.3); was publicised through its communications (Section 6.2.4); had led to multiple strategy directions adopted at the same time (Section 6.2.5); and therefore, the whole strategy formulation process was considered as political (Section 6.2.6).

The strategy implementation discussions had brought to the surface challenges in implementing the University strategy which include the limited resources (Section 6.3.1); time constraints in delivering the strategy (Section 6.3.2); and the intensification of work due to the various strategy directions and requirements that had to be met at the same time (Section 6.3.3). The discussions on strategy monitoring had revealed issues in relation to the strategy monitoring conducted in the University. This finding has provided a description of strategy monitoring in the University, where it had been considered as political (Section 6.4.1); and led to the claims that the strategy monitoring was only reflected in documents (Section 6.4.2); and had revealed the adoption of ISO as a part of strategy monitoring in the University (Section 6.4.3).

As presented in Section 6.2.1, it is apparent that the University's dependency on the central government for funding had compelled it to conform to the government's policies and initiatives. Thus, the finding in the study is in accordance with Mok (2010), who suggests that Malaysian universities are heavily funded by the government and hence are not free from governmental control. The governmental control in Malaysian higher education is evident from the statement made by the Ministry of Higher Education. As found in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 document, it is stated that "Being owned and funded by the Government, public HEIs must ensure that their strategic objectives are in line with those of the Ministry's" (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p. 18).

As suggested by the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 document, the dependency of the University lies in the fact that it is 95% funded by the government. It was gathered from the interviews that the University's funds are derived from government initiated projects (refer to section 6.2.1). Therefore, the University had to make sure that its strategy supported the government policy. In line with this, Thomas (1996) suggests that the reliance on central government for funding has contributed to universities' affairs which are led by the government. This reflects the claim of universities as political organisations (Baldridge, 1971; Hills and Mahoney, 1978; Pfeffer, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974), which operate in open systems (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974). In relation to this, it has been recommended that strategic planning in a university needs to acknowledge

the political nature of its decisions (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). This is so as university is characterised by a high degree of politicisation (Ferlie, 2002).

The reliance on the government for funding had contributed to the top down strategy in the University (refer to Section 6.2.2). The top down strategy in universities has been found in other studies (Pidcock, 2001; Taylor et al., 2008). For example, Taylor et al. (2008) suggest strategic planning in Portuguese higher education is essentially top down due to financial constraints. Taylor's study had revealed the primary role of rector and presidents in the strategic planning of Portuguese higher education (Taylor et al., 2008). In relation to this, Pidcock (2001) also revealed a low staff involvement in strategic planning of the university in his study. The strategy had been described as being imposed by most of his interviewees (Pidcock, 2001). The study reveals that the top down strategy had contributed to the lack of ownership felt by the university staff (Pidcock, 2001). A similar claim was found from the study. The University strategy was perceived as mandatory, and as something that had to be followed (refer to Section 6.2.2).

Scholars such as Nutt and Backoff (1987) and Ramamurti (1986) explain the lack of ownership in public sector strategy as due to the loss of strategic autonomy. This is contributed by the existence of political agendas in public sector organisations (Nutt and Backoff, 1987). An example of this is apparent in the strategy which has been externally imposed (Ramamurti, 1986). As an organisation that operates in open systems and pluralistic environments, a university needs to address the norms and values held by those who control the resources in order to obtain the resources (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). This suggests the existence of a strong influence on its positions, policies, programmes, and procedures which are enforced by its important constituents (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Consequently, this has created a pressure for organisations to adapt their structures and behaviours to be consistent with the institutional environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). This explains the reason behind the legitimisation efforts by the University in this study. The legitimisation is considered pertinent as it provides the University with justification for its claims of societal resources. As such, this had contributed to the feeling that the strategy formulation in the University was political and served as a means to please the government (refer to Section 6.2.6). The claim of political in the

study is actually referring to the legitimisation efforts. The act of conforming to the government found in the study is rooted in the legitimisation efforts.

It has been suggested by various scholars (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Tolbert and Zucker, 1983; Tolbert, 1985) that legitimacy is believed to enhance an organisation's chances of survival. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977, p.341) success depends on the ability of the organisation to conform to, and become legitimated by, the 'environment institutions'. By conforming to societal legitimated structures, an organisation maximises its legitimacy and increases its resources and survival capability (Aldrich, 2000; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Rowan and Miskel, 1999; Scott and Meyer, 1983; Smith and Keith, 1971; Suchman, 1995).

It is suggested that legitimacy provides justification for an organisation's role in its social system and helps to attract resources and support from its constituents (Allison, 1984; Parsons, 1960). In respect of higher education, Aldrich (2000) suggests that educational organisations are rewarded for their conformity when they can argue that they have done what the state requires. As suggested by Rowan and Miskel (1999), educational organisations are often rewarded and preserved for their conformity to structures, programmes, and processes rather than for the quality of their products.

A legitimated organisation is not only perceived as worthy, but also more meaningful, more predictable, and more trustworthy (Suchman, 1995). The lack of legitimacy will lead to claims that an organisation is negligent, irrational and unnecessary (Scott and Meyer, 1983). As such, it is suggested by Smith and Keith (1971) that an organisation which strays too far from the established norms will risk the loss of legitimacy and the social support that goes with it. In relation to this, Scott and Meyer (1983) suggest that an organisation's environment is characterised by the elaboration of rules and requirements in which it must conform in order to receive support and legitimacy. Therefore, inevitably legitimacy requires organisations to conform. The conformity in this study is apparent in the government led strategy; the top down approach; the increased in control; the university strategy communicated; the multiple strategy directions; and the claims of political.

The following discussions will provide a further understanding of the conformity practices in the University.

7.3.1 Conformity Practices in the University

Conformity is defined as congruency with values, norms, and expectations of society (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). As explained by Suchman (1995), legitimacy is achieved by conforming to the demands and expectations of the existing social structure in which the organisation is positioned.

The conformity in the study is evident in the University strategy which follows the government. It is apparent in the references made to government documentation in the formulation of University strategy. The government documents provide the externally defined goals which explain the governmental strategy pertaining to higher education in Malaysia. By referring to these documents, it justified the University's effort in conforming to the government.

This is suggested by Hanson (2001) as an effort to establish legitimisation in the eyes of society, whereby an organisation adopts externally defined goals and processes in order to gain societal confidence. As explained by Hanson (2001), this happens when an organisation tries to gain societal confidence by doing what the major stakeholders expect it to do. In relation to this, Meyer and Rowan (1977) also suggest that many organisations actively seek charters from collective authorities and manage to institutionalise their goals and structures in the rules of such authorities.

This type of conformity will grant the University with pragmatic legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). The pragmatic legitimacy is based on the justification of an organisation's most immediate audiences (Suchman, 1995). The audiences are the organisation's constituents and the main audience in the study is the government. As suggested by Suchman (1995), pragmatic legitimacy is granted based on the practical consequences of the organisation.

According to Suchman (1995), pragmatic legitimacy can be further classified into three different types: dispositional legitimacy, exchange legitimacy, and influence legitimacy. All the three types of pragmatic legitimacy are noticeable in the study. By following government policy, the University gains dispositional legitimacy, exchange legitimacy and influence legitimacy.

Dispositional legitimacy exists when constituents accord legitimacy to organisations that have their best interests at heart (Suchman, 1995). Dispositional legitimacy in the study is reflected in the University's actions that put the government's interests at heart where it shared the government's values. This can be seen in the conformity to government strategy despite the awareness of the inherent conflicts in its implementation. Also, by conforming to government strategy, the University is granted exchange legitimacy. This exists when the University's strategy supports government policy. Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) explain that exchange legitimacy is the support given to the policy of constituents. By conforming to government strategy, the University indicates its support for governmental policy. As an exchange, the University will be endowed with governmental support.

At the same time, the University also obtained influence legitimacy. This is granted to organisations based on their responsiveness to the larger interest of constituents (Suchman, 1995). This is reflected in the policy making structure and the incorporation of the constituents' standards of performance in organisations (Suchman, 1995). In the study, this is apparent in the University strategy documentation which reflects the government policy.

Legitimacy requires leadership that understands governmental programmes (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). In the study, the understanding of governmental programs was achieved by the references to government documentation. It is apparent in the study that the University relied on government documents as the main source of references for its strategy formulation (refer to Section 6.2.1). It is gathered that the 9th Malaysian Plan (RMK9) was used as a basis for the University strategy formulation. It was clear from the interview that the University management was confident that the references to government documentation had provided a good basis in formulating the University strategy (refer to Section 6.2.1). Interestingly, it appeared that the confidence was derived from the feeling that the University strategy is legitimated as it is consistent with the governmental strategy. By adhering to the governmental strategy, the University leader can be perceived as a leader that understands the government programme (Scott, 2008). The emphasis on understanding the government programme is in line with the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education. As suggested by the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, the criteria for the appointment of higher education leaders are

based on their understanding and appreciation of the national aspirations (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

This explains that the University's legitimacy was also gained through socio-political regulatory legitimacy (Hunt and Aldrich, 1996; Scott, 2008; Suchman, 1995). The socio-political regulatory legitimacy is derived from regulations, rules, standards and expectations created by government, credentialing associations, professional bodies and powerful organisations (Scott, 2008). In this study, the University acquires legitimacy by adhering to regulations, rules, standards and expectations that are created by the government.

Drawing from the explanations on legitimacy, the reason for the University's conformity to the government can be comprehended. Based on evidence from the study and the literature, it is clear that the conformity displayed by the University was mainly for the purpose of getting the governmental support. This serves as a social judgement of acceptance, appropriateness and desirability which enables an organisation to access the resources needed to survive and grow (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

This can be seen in the conforming strategy adopted by the University. According to Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) an organisation that conforms to social norms, values, and expectations is said to be legitimated. Similarly, Suchman (1995) suggests that one of the strategies to gain legitimacy is by conformity to the institutional environment. According to Suchman (1995), under this strategy, efforts are made to conform to the dictates of pre-existing audiences within the organisation's current environment. In the context of this study, the audience is represented by the government. Conformity to the government can be seen in the University strategy formulation that is aligned with government policy. As suggested by Scott and Meyer (1983), such conformity can be seen in university's affairs which are guided by the government.

This section has discussed the rationale for legitimacy in the University. As suggested by Holdaway and Meekison (1990), the key to a successful strategic planning in university should include the alignment of its political realities, environment, and resources. In practice, the alignment has proven to be difficult to achieve, particularly considering the complexity of the political realities of a public university. As found in the study, the University had acknowledged the political realities by legitimising its existence with the

government. This is apparent in the strategy which conformed to the government. As presented in this section, such conformity will grant the University pragmatic legitimacy through dispositional, exchange, influence legitimacy and socio-political regulatory legitimacy.

It had appeared in the study that the legitimisation effort is also bounded by challenges, especially in the University strategy implementation. This brings us to the next discussions on legitimacy as problematic.

7.4 LEGITIMACY IS PROBLEMATIC

Earlier scholars have suggested that legitimacy can also be problematic (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). This is presented in Diagram 7.1, as the second cycle. In the study, it has been discovered that the pursuit for legitimacy had led to the challenges in the strategy implementation. The challenges are apparent in the University strategies that were not supported by adequate resources. The finding is similar to studies conducted by Enders and Teichler (1997). They have indicated a consistent trend of limited resources in universities in Germany, England, Netherlands, Sweden, Japan and United States (Enders and Teichler, 1997).

It appears that, in conforming to the government, the University had neglected its own resources and capabilities in its strategy implementation. This is suggested to be a common problem in organisations that obtain legitimacy through institutionalised rules (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). An example of institutionalised rule in this study is the government strategy. In gaining legitimacy, the University had adopted the government strategy. The strategy which had been led by the government was taken for granted as the appropriate strategy for the University. The taken for granted attitude is evident in the absolute acceptance of the government strategy without any consideration of its resources. As explained by Meyer and Rowan (1977), this can create problems as technical activities and demands for efficiency are in conflict and inconsistent with the efforts to conform to institutionalised rules (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In this study, the conflict is apparent in the themes: limited resources (Section 6.3.1); time constraints (Section 6.3.2); and

intensification of work (Section 6.3.3) that had emerged in relation to the University strategy implementation.

7.4.1 Emerging Issues

The inadequate classroom is the most frequent example of limited resources that had emerged from the interviews (Section 6.3.1). The lack of classrooms to accommodate the increasing students had caused the overflowing of students in classes. This had contributed to the conflict between the academic staff and the University management where the staff had declined accepting students into their classes due to the limited classroom size. At the same time, this action had been resented by the management team. In a way, the academic staff had been made to accept the overflowing students in their classes. This also suggests the increased control (refer to Section 6.2.3), in the University strategy management process where staff are made to comply with the University strategy. The finding in this study is similar to the study of Willmott (1995) which suggests that universities are forced to accommodate a huge increase in students that is driven by government initiatives.

In accommodating the increasing students, classes are conducted at night. They are held as a means to accommodate the University strategy of increasing student enrolment despite the inadequate classrooms (refer to Section 6.3.1). The finding is consistent with Ogbonna and Harris (2004) on a rising trend of increasing students without any corresponding increase in resources in universities. The importance of resources in strategy implementation has been highlighted by Davies (1993), Kotler and Murphy (1981), Mankins and Steele (2005), Rudzki (1995), St. John (1991), and Wernham (1984). In practice, this has been challenging, especially in a public university context. As suggested by Shattock (2000), universities need to respond quickly to external pressures. It is suggested that universities should be opportunist in winning research grants, gaining reputation through league tables and competing for students (Shattock, 2000). This has seen various activities conducted in universities at the same time (Shattock, 2000). As found in the study, despite the limited resources, the University had been pursuing 'multiple strategies' at the same time (refer to Section 6.2.5).

The multiple strategies which had been communicated at the same time were claimed to be confusing and conflicting to one another. For example, the University strategies in increasing the student enrolment and in becoming a Research University were claimed as conflicting because the increasing students demand more time from the academic staff. As discovered from the interviews, this had limited the time available for research. It was found to be challenging for the academic staff to perform both tasks, especially with limited resources. Scholars have suggested that the conflicting strategies in universities are caused by the political struggle of various interest groups (Chaffee, 1980; Hardy, 1991; Maassen and Potman, 1990). This is so, as a public university is exposed to competing interest groups. As suggested by Nutt and Backoff (1987), the public sector is characterised by separation of powers thus will result in multiple and competing interests.

In the University context, the multiple strategies also reflect the government expectation of the University's leaders to be proactive in meeting the international standards. As found in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, higher education leaders are expected to benchmark their universities' performance based on international standards (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). This has seen the adaptation of strategies in line with the international development. For example, in the study, it is apparent in the strategies such as 'Innovative'; 'Entrepreneurial University'; and 'Apex University'. The problems arose when these strategies had not been clearly communicated and hence were deemed to be vague. As found in the interviews, these strategies had not been clearly explained, and thus were found difficult to be implemented (refer to Section 6.2.5). For example, phrases like "to read between the lines" and "all kind of mix messages" show the ambiguity of the University strategy (refer to Section 6.2.5).

The importance of having a clear strategy in ensuring an effective implementation has been suggested (Hamel and Prahalad, 2005). However, in a government dependent organisation, a clear strategy is argued to be counter-productive, and therefore, strategy is purposely vague in order to minimise the effect of competing interests (Ring and Perry, 1985). As found by Ramamurti (1986), there has been heightened goal ambiguity in government department strategy. This has led to the episodic, disjointed or non-existence of plans in government departments, due to the shifting commitment and legitimacy pressures (Stone and Brush, 1996). The statement made by Stone

and Brush fits precisely with the multiple strategies observed in the University where it clearly suggests that the multiple strategies were due to the legitimacy pressure and were for the purpose of displaying the shift of commitments. This suggests the complexity of a public university, which needs to balance between efficiency and expectations of its constituents. As found in the study, this had contributed to the catch-up mode between the University strategy and its implementations. This is presented in the following discussion.

7.4.1.1 Leads to Catch-Up Mode

It appears that the emergence of conflicts in strategy implementation provides the evidence of the University's efforts to deliver its strategy despite the limited resources. This also indicates that the University strategy is in a catch-up mode between implementing and strategising (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006). For example, the theme, time constraints (Section 6.3.2), had emerged from the interviews. This actually reflects on the catch-up mode that existed between the University strategy and its implementation. As described by Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006), an organisation is in a catch-up mode when there is an imbalance between organising and strategising. Organising is defined as the creation and the use of structural practices to coordinate an organisation's interests (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006). Strategising refers to planning, resource allocations, monitoring, and control practices, where strategy is enacted (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006).

It is suggested that under such conditions, 'organizations play 'catch-up', adjusting their organizing processes, then, as they realise the adjustments are having unintended strategizing consequences' (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006, p.645). The catch-up mode in the University is evident in the phrases "not flowing quickly enough"; "we are against the time"; "worried about the completion of the project", which emerged from the interviews (Section 6.3.2). Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) suggest this can be the risk of being externally driven, where the University is playing catch-up in adjusting to the vicious cycle that never synchronises between multiple internal and external demands on the organisation. This has been identified by Kraatz and Block

(2008) as an implication of institutional pluralism, which can be seen in the multiple strategies adopted by the University at the same time.

It occurs that the catch-up mode in the University strategy management process is driven by the legitimisation efforts with the government. The University strategy can be viewed as rules, and the implementation of the University strategy can be identified as routines (Burns and Scapens, 2000). From the study, it is obvious that there had been a deviation between rules and routines which led to the catch-up mode in providing appropriate resources in a timely manner.   It is apparent that the catch-up model had been endless as new strategies had been introduced continuously. These strategies had been driven by its external constituent, i.e. the government. For example, this can be seen in the strategy to become an "Innovative"; "Entrepreneurial University"; "Apex University"; and "Research University" which had been communicated at the same time.

The emergence of time constraints theme suggests the catch up mode in delivering appropriate resources for University strategy implementation. This indicates the gap between rules and routine. For example, the study reveals that students' accommodation had been converted into classrooms. It was found that the process had yet to be completed at the beginning of the academic year.   It is apparent that student enrolment had to be initiated immediately in order to achieve the target of 200,000 students in two years' time. As a consequence, this had immediately affected the University infrastructure. This is obvious in the lack of classrooms available to accommodate the increasing number of students. The existence of conflicts between the rules to increase the student enrolment, and the routines which refer to the implementation of the strategy, (i.e. to provide enough classrooms for the increasing student) had contributed to the catch-up mode found in the University.

The catch-up mode can also be explained by a j-curve. A j-curve is a condition where performance first falls and then rises strongly (Pettigrew and Whittington, 2001). As explained by Pettigrew and Whittington (2001 p.52) 'change almost always makes things worse before they get better'. According to Pettigrew and Whittington (2001 p.52) 'Performance declines as old interdependencies are broken and it improves only when the new set of complements is fully in place.' This indicates that the catch-up mode will stop

when all of the resources are in place. As such, it is important for an organisation to survive its j-curve, as once the phase is over, the organisation will arrive at its stability stage, known as the complementarities (Pettigrew and Whittington, 2001). Ideally, at this stage the University strategy will have adequate resources for it to be implemented.

However, it is important to note that the catch-up mode in the University will never settle as new rules will continuously flow from its external constituents, i.e. the government.   This means the concept of j-curve is only useful in explaining each individual catch-up mode cycle. Apparently for the University, the catch-up mode cycle will continue repeatedly as more strategies are adopted. In other words, the j-curve in the University will never stop.

The endless cycle is evident in the claims of multiple strategies, conflicting strategies, and confusing strategies that emerged from the findings (refer to Section 6.2.5). This reflects the constant strategies adopted in the University which were driven by its constituent. The strategy which was led by the government had contributed to the catch-up mode in the University. As explained by Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006), the catch-up mode between strategising and organising occurs when managers adopt a reactive approach to strategic demands. This reactive approach is inevitable as the University continuously seeks its legitimacy with the government.

The concepts of catch-up mode, j-curve, and rules and routines provide an understanding of the basis that contributes to the challenges in the University strategy implementation. The following discussions will highlight the impact of limited resources and catch-up mode on the University.

7.4.1.2 Destructive Mode

Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) caution the catch-up mode may lead to a destructive association between organising and strategising. This occurs when multiple strategies cannot be aligned and organising is diverse and unable to accommodate the active conflicts (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006). In this circumstance, the organisation is pulled in too many directions in its efforts to resolve the multiple demands (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006). The

destructive mode in the study had emerged in the challenges to cope with the various demands (refer to Section 6.3.3).

For example, it was apparent that the multiple strategies pursued by the University had contributed to the pressures faced by the academic staff. The strategy to increase the student enrolment had consequently increased the teaching loads. This happened at the same time as the strategy of becoming a research university. The intensification of work is reflected in the phrases *"18, 20 hours workload"; "govern by too much rules and regulations here and there";* and *"burden with, not just workload but other responsibility..."* (Section 6.3.3). Here, it had been indicated that the average teaching hours are between 18 to 20 hours per week. In addition to this, it was found that the academic staff were also governed by many rules, requirements and other responsibilities. Academic staff were found to be working outside their normal hours in accommodating the numerous tasks. This suggests the efforts taken by the staff and also shows their struggle in dealing with the tasks. It is evident in the phrase, *"a tough time to balance"* (Section 6.3.3) especially between teaching and research.

This finding conforms to Parker and Jary (1995), where it has been suggested that work intensification among academics had created the imbalance of roles and had squeezed the time available for preferred tasks. This study reveals that academic staff had worked long hours (refer to Section 6.3.3). Academic staff had worked during weekends and holidays to do research and to attend courses. It was discovered that the main reason for working during the weekends and holidays was to cope with the workload. The finding is similar to Bryson (2004), where it has been suggested that academic work such as research could only be done outside working hours due to intensification of work. Thus, the University strategies were perceived as *"....just an adding on"*, (Section 6.3.3), where it had been claimed as an "*additional*" task (Section 6.3.3).

This has been explained by Meyer and Rowan (1977) as a structural inconsistency where technical activity and demands for efficiency are in conflict. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), structural inconsistency is common in organisations that are driven by conformity to ceremonial rules. In this study, the government strategy acts as a ceremonial rule. The structural inconsistencies are evident in the conflicts that derive from the lack of resources (refer to Section 6.3.1). This can be seen in the conflicting demands

of increasing student numbers and research. It had been worse, because the strategies were expected to be carried out within the resources constraints, i.e. limited classrooms and increased teaching hours.

It appears that the multiple strategies which were not supported by adequate resources had contributed to the tension experienced by the University staff (refer to Section 6.3.3). This confirms the suggestion by Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) that the inability to provide resources for the university strategy can lead to the intensification of the academic labour process. It is suggested that the intensification of the academic labour process is exacerbated by multiple and conflicting demands of various stakeholders (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). As found in the study, the multiple strategies had intensified the workload of the University staff. It appears that, besides teaching, the University staff were also compelled to do other administrative jobs.

In relation to this, Ogbonna and Harris (2004) suggest that most academics are dissatisfied with the reduction in their autonomy and the increasing attempts to control and intensify all aspects of their work. In the study, most of the academic staff interviewed was found to be demoralised by the demand of the heightened tasks. The comment, such as *"it's killing me"*, (Section 6.3.3) reflects the pressure faced by the staff in meeting the demands of their work. In relation to this, Prichard and Willmott (1997) suggest the pressures of imperialising discipline are potentially demoralising especially on staff whose status and prospects are weakened by such pressures. This indicates the changing nature of academic work which enable managers to tighten their control over the academic workload (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004).

7.5 TAKEN FOR GRANTED ATTITUDE

The third cycle in Diagram 7.1 presents the taken for granted attitude which had emerged from the study. It is found that legitimacy had contributed to the taken for granted attitude in conforming to the government strategy.

It appears that the University management was aware of the consequences of conforming to the government strategy that was held without prior

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consideration of its own resources. This awareness is apparent in the discussions relating to the student enrolment in Section 6.2.6, where it had been admitted that there would be a problem in delivering the strategy, due to infrastructure that could not be made available within a short period of time. It was also found in the study that the Vice Chancellor had not only agreed to increase the student intake, but also had made promises that it could be delivered in a shorter period than expected. This was done, in spite of the awareness that infrastructure takes time be completed and would certainly affect its implementation (refer to Section 6.2.6).

This suggests the effort to please the constituent which also shows the University's attempt to legitimise itself with the government by adhering to its expectations. This also reflects the government requirements of university leaders to exceed its expectations. As stated in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, university leaders have to "craft their institutions' visions and missions, and rally their constituencies to meet and even exceed expectations" (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.21). It appears that by promising to increase student enrolment in a shorter period of time, it displayed that the University leader was capable of exceeding the government expectation. This was done despite the awareness that there was not enough time to meet the infrastructure demand. Therefore, such behaviour can be explained by the 'taken for granted' attitude.

Greenwood and Hinings (1996) explain the taken for granted attitude as a choice to behave in an inefficient manner, despite the opportunity to improve performance. There are two reasons that could lead to the 'taken for granted' attitude: isomorphism, and risk aversion (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). This is further discussed in the following section.

7.5.1 Isomorphism

Isomorphism is a compliance to institutional norms (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). It is suggested by DiMaggio and Powell (1991) that compliance to institutional norms explains the inefficient behaviour found in organisations. The isomorphism theory suggests organisations play by the rules and adhere closely to societal norms (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). In doing so, an

organisation that conforms does not question, change, or violate the social structure (Suchman, 1995). In most cases, organisations acquire legitimacy by following the rules (Suchman, 1995).

In the study, this taken for granted attitude had led to various challenges in strategy implementation. In legitimising to the government, the University had neglected its own requirements for resources and capabilities in implementing the strategy. It has been argued that organisations which adhere closely to societal norms are unlikely to repel their constituents' endorsements and supports (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). As such, this act has been suggested as optimal or efficient (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). This argument is consistent with the suggestions made by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that organisational success and survival depend on the ability to conform to the institutional environment.

Studies on higher education have reported various efforts of legitimisation through isomorphism. For instance, Cooke and Lang (2009) had discovered a high degree of overlapping words, phrases and concepts from all of the colleges in their study. It was argued that the absence of differentiation resulted from the power of the government which had led colleges to yield their responsibility based on the government strategy (Cooke and Lang, 2009). In addition, the study of Maassen and Potman (1990) also found the strategy in Dutch higher education was moving in a homogeneous direction (Maassen and Potman, 1990). It was argued that the uncertainty in the environment had stimulated the imitation behaviour of the Dutch higher education (Maassen and Potman, 1990). Therefore, the imitation behaviour which refers to the isomorphism provides the sense of security to the organisation concerned. The sense of security is obtained through the belief that an organisation that adheres closely to the societal norms will be unlikely to be repelled by its constituents. This goes back to the suggestion made by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) on endorsements obtained through such conformity.

7.5.2 Risk Aversions

Besides institutional norms, another possible explanation for the taken for granted attitude can be explained by a risk aversion attitude (Kondra and Hinings, 1998). As stated by Kondra and Hinings (1998, p.748), 'Risk aversion may encourage managers to seek performance stability, rather than high (and uncertain) performance'. It is suggested that if all organisations play by the rules, everyone gets to keep their jobs (Kondra and Hinings, 1998). This provides a strong incentive not to question institutional norms and simply take them for granted. Morck et al (1989) suggest that the probability of top management turnover increases when a firm's performance falls below industry norms. Therefore, it is believed that as long as top management can keep up with the industry, their jobs are safe (Kondra and Hinings, 1998). It is likely that risk-averse managers may take the safe route to protect their jobs by following the industry norms rather than taking the risk of uncertain high performance (Kondra and Hinings, 1998).

According to Kendra and Hinings (1998), the perceived inefficient behaviour can be desirable and optimal for organisations. As suggested by Kondra and Hinings (1998), isomorphism has been argued to be inefficient, but placed in the context of risk aversion, it can be an optimal behaviour. The discussions in this section suggest that by being isomorphic and risk averse, the University maintains its legitimacy with the government that holds the key to resources. This is further encouraged by the culture which promotes conformity as a means of success. As suggested by Shattock (2000), successful strategic management in universities must be based on the ability to improve institutions' effectiveness, reconciling internal and external pressures, and to serve as a means to demonstrate its relevance in addressing public issues. It is apparent in the study that the University legitimises itself by promoting its ability in implementing the government strategy.

This section has presented the taken for granted attitude that had been adopted by the University in conforming to the government strategy. This attitude transpired from the adoption of strategy despite the awareness that it is inconsistent with the available resources. This also strengthens the claim of legitimacy in the University. The following section will discuss how legitimacy is managed under this circumstance.

7.6 LEGITIMACY, HOW IS IT MANAGED?

The study has also revealed ways that had been adopted by the University in managing its legitimacy. This is presented in the fourth cycle of the Diagram 7.1.

As discussed earlier, legitimacy can be perceived as a source of success. It is argued to be efficient, especially when the University is relying on government for funding (Thomas, 1996). Nevertheless, as found in the study, legitimacy is suggested to be problematic. Therefore, there is a need for the University to strike a balance in managing the problem whilst undertaking the strategy implementation which conforms to its constituent. Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), suggest legitimacy is managed by symbolic management and substantive management. The evidence from the study suggests that the University had engaged in both symbolic and substantive management in managing its legitimacy. Substantive management involves real, material change in organisational goals, structure and processes (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). Symbolic management, on the other hand, is adopted by simply portraying or symbolically appearing to be consistent with social values and expectations rather than actually changing its ways (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). It is achieved by espousing socially acceptable goals; denial and concealments; redefining means and ends; and by adopting ceremonial conformity (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). Both substantive and symbolic management are discussed in the following sections.

7.6.1 Substantive Management

As suggested by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), substantive management is conducted by role performance and coercive isomorphism. The role performance claims that organisations meet the performance expectations of societal partners upon which they depend for critical resources (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). It is also suggested by Thomas (1980) that the reliance on government for resources had contributed to the greater accountability for their deployment. This is achieved by role performance. In this study, it is apparent that the emphasis on role performance had contributed to the

coercive isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism suggests that organisations seek legitimacy through coercive conformity to the values, norms, and expectations of constituents (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). This may result in powerful, pervasive, and subtle myths about why an organisation ought to exist and how it should function (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

The evidence of role performance and coercive isomorphism in the study is apparent in the themes, government led strategy (Section 6.2.1); top down strategy (Section 6.2.2); managerialism (Section 6.2.3); attempts to institutionalise the University strategy (Section 6.2.4); and the existence of multiple strategy directions (Section 6.2.5). This had led to the challenges found in the strategy implementation, which are evident in the themes, lack of resources (Section 6.3.1); time constraints (Section 6.3.2); and intensification of work (Section 6.3.3). The existence of the challenges provides further evidence of substantive management adopted in the University.

The implementation of the strategy despite its limited resources suggests the role performance had been carried out in the University. As discussed earlier, this is evidence in the strategy to increase student enrolment, which had contributed to the strain on infrastructure and the academic staff. The evidence of role performance is apparent in the acceptance of overflowing students in classes and classes conducted at night as a means to overcome the constraints in classrooms (refer to Section 6.3.1).

The emphasis on role performance had contributed to the coercive working environment and managerialism in the University. This is further discussed in the following section.

7.6.1.1 Coercive Working Environment

The coercive working environment had compelled the University staff to implement the strategy despite the inadequate resources. The coercive working environment in this study is evident in phrases, "*...students overflowing..,*"; and *".. management is not happy ..."* (Section 6.3.1) as academic staff had not accepted additional students due to the limited classroom size. It was apparent from the interviews that the academic staff were made to

comply with the University management directives despite the constraints. It was found that the University management would use a statement like, "*there are some who can do it, why can't you*", (Section 6.2.3) as an argument whenever there was resistance from the staff. From the understanding of the University culture, it can be safely said that staff adherence to management directives has been ingrained in its culture. As such, staff should not question the tasks given to them. This is an example of disciplines of power bloc in the University, where Prichard and Willmott (1997) have suggested that the disciplines of power bloc encourage coercive working environment in university.

The coercive isomorphism is also evident in the way the University strategy is formulated. As found in the study, the basis of the University strategy had never been clearly articulated to its entire staff thus had left no opportunity for discussions (refer to Section 6.2.2). This suggests the University strategy was never meant to be discussed or questioned by the rest of the staff. As suggested by Suchman (1995), an organisation that conforms does not question, change, or violate the social structure. This suggests the taken for granted attitude adopted by the University. It acquires legitimacy by following the rules. The need to conform to the government had encouraged the taken for granted attitude among the University management. The taken for granted attitude which derived from the need to legitimise the University explains the strategy which was formulated without prior consideration of the University's own resources (refer to Section 6.2.6). The conformity had led to the lack of openness in discussing strategy matters with the rest of the staff. The findings reveal that the strategy was only discussed among the University management, and then cascaded to the rest of the University staff as a directive that was expected to be followed (refer to Section 6.2.3).

This is apparent in the statement, "*you do not want to actually articulate the strategic thinking so publicly or so clearly, because it might eer...lend itself to scrutiny,*" (Section 6.2.2) which suggests University management efforts to protect its government led strategy, as well as protecting it from being questioned by the University staff at large. This reflects the University strategy which was top down and had cascaded from the government to the University management, and passed on to the rest of the University staff (refer to Section 6.2.4). The findings also support the earlier suggestion of Pettigrew (1987, p.659) on the existence of biases in 'structures, cultures and strategies' in

protecting the interests of dominant groups which aim to reduce challenges in the strategic decision. The culture and structure of the University with emphasis on the hierarchical position and power of its management had encouraged the biases and provided a means of not questioning the strategy formulated. As described in Section 6.2.2, the University has a culture which tends to follow and agree to the demands of the University management. It suggests a formal culture of the University which succumbs to the dominance of power. In this case, the political nature is evident in the use of power to produce outcomes that favour the interest of the University management (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). This had encouraged the practice of managerialism which was apparent in the increased control over the University staff (refer to Section 6.2.3). This trend also reflects on the government expectations of university leaders, whereby they are requested to "rally their constituents" (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.21). The constituents in this context refer to the University staff.

The following will further advance the managerialism trend in the University.

7.6.1.2 Managerialism

According to Parker and Jary (1995), the changes in political, institutional, and funding environments have increased the power of the management and diminished the autonomy of professional academics. This is in line with the New Public Management movements which require the public sector to be more managed (Ferlie, 2002). According to Ferlie (2002), this is mainly contributed by the resource constraints. As suggested by Middlehurst (2004), resource constraints have increased the power of government, thus create a new responsibility for the rectors, vice chancellor, deans and departmental heads. It is found in the study that this had led to the managerialism with emphasis on strong leadership of University management. This is consistent with the findings made by Prichard and Willmott (1997) on the discipline of power bloc, and the increased demand for strong leadership in universities due to governmental pressures (Mok, 2010). As suggested by Sizer (1987), universities respond to resource constraints by having high quality managers with decisive leadership. These findings also conform with Morley and Walsh (1995) where it has been suggested that managerialism and discipline of

power bloc had contributed to the coercive working environment in universities. As suggested by Hawkin (2009), higher education is under great pressure to be efficient and flexible, responsive, and proactive to cope with external changes. In the context of this study, this is evident in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 in strengthening the universities' leadership in Malaysia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

The managerialism in the University can also be seen in the intensification of performance evaluation of its staff (refer to Section 6.2.3). For example, research and publication had been included as criteria for promotion. This conforms with the suggestion of the existence of various performance measures that follow the criteria established by the associated league tables in universities (Prichard and Willmott, 1997). This has been suggested as a means for gaining legitimacy (Prichard and Willmott, 1997).

From the study, it is revealed that, in addition to the performance evaluations, academic staff were also required to comply with various rules and regulations (refer to Section 6.3.3). This has been argued as a means for university management to tighten their control over the academics' labour process (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). According to Ogbonna and Harris (2004), teaching and research performances have been assessed to provide tangible and comparable measures of academic staff performance. This suggests the change in the nature of academics' work towards managerialism (Ogbonna and Harris, 2004). In doing so, it attempts to control the academics and this has contributed to the shift from collegialism to managerialism in universities (Jary and Parker, 1998). The evidence of managerialism is also apparent in the periodical strategy monitoring conducted in ensuring the University strategy implementation (refer to Section 6.4.1). This was mainly held to ensure that University staff act and behave in accordance with the University strategy. In the study, it was found that each department and faculty was required to conduct periodical monitoring of their strategy implementation. In a way, the managerialism and increased control trends in the University also reflect the emphasis of the government on making universities accountable. As found in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, a greater accountability is expected from the higher education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007).

Besides the substantive management, a symbolic management had also been observed in the strategy management process of the University. This is discussed in the following section.

7.6.2 Symbolic Management

The findings suggest the University had also adopted symbolic management in managing its legitimacy with the government. In relation to this, Suchman (1995) suggests various managerial perspectives and emphases in which an organisation instrumentally manipulates and deploys evocative symbols in order to obtain societal support for legitimacy.

As explained by Moch and Huff (1983), symbols allow individuals to cope with change by concealing, camouflaging and reconciling differences. Brown and Starkey (2000, p.107) describe symbols as the 'unconscious means of allaying anxiety and maintaining self-esteem through the distortion and concealment of unconscious thoughts, impulses and desires'.

The adoption of symbolic management in higher education has been observed by Maassen and Potman (1990). Their findings suggest a skilful use of communications and symbols in motivating stakeholders to act in ways that favour the organisation (Maassen and Potman, 1990). According to Chaffee (1980), this is an example where strategy can be viewed as an orienting metaphor that allows organisation and its environment to be understood by its stakeholders. The understanding of symbols; salience of political process; and organisation culture are deemed as the key to higher education strategic planning (Chaffee, 1980).

In this study, the symbolic management is evident in the attempt to institutionalise the University strategy. This is evident in the issues that had emerged in relation to University strategy communication (refer to Section 6.2.4), and the claims that the strategy had been politicised (refer to Section 6.2.6). Another evidence of symbolic management in the University can be seen in the strategy monitoring practices that were decoupled (refer to Section 6.4). This is apparent in the themes such as: assessments as political (Section 6.4.1); strategy monitoring reflects in documentations (Section 6.4.2);

and the emphasis on ISO certification (Section 6.4.3), which had emerged in relation to strategy monitoring practices in the University.

The two types of symbolic management practises observed from the study are discussed in the sections that follow.

7.6.2.1 Ceremonial, Institutionalisation of Expectations

From the study, the ceremonial institutionalisation of expectations is apparent in the University strategy communicated (Section 6.2.4), and the emphasis on strategy documentation (Section 6.4.2).

University Strategy Communicated

As suggested by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) symbolic management in an organisation can be seen from the verbal communication. In this study, the communication of University strategy reflects the effort to institutionalise the government led strategy. It is found in the study that the strategy had been communicated at every possible opportunity. For example, the University strategy communication was evident in the Annual Speech made by the Vice Chancellor and the documentation of his speech which was then distributed across the University (refer to Section 6.2.4).

Nevertheless, as suggested by the study, the University strategy which had been communicated was perceived as surreal due to its lack of substantive content. For instance, the terms 'Innovative University', 'Entrepreneurial University', 'Apex University', were considered as ceremonial due to their lack of substantive meanings because most of the staff were not sure of how to incorporate these strategies into their day to day activities. It was gathered from the study that these strategies had been conveyed without any further explanations of means of implementing it.

This has been cautioned by Hanson (2001) as a successive wave of innovations which could become a ceremonial routine. It is explained by Kondra and Hinings (1998) as an effort to mimic the apparent changes in the environment. By doing so, the educational leaders establish reputations as reformers even if nothing of significance really changes (Kondra and Hinings,

1998). The phrase, "*I have not seen*", "*a difference, how University behave differently*" (Section 6.2.6) is an example which suggests that there had not been significant changes in terms of its strategy implementation. This suggests that the University strategy also lacks substantive content (Cohen and March, 1974;Stone and Brush, 1996) and can be perceived as a myth (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) it is a myth as the strategy is unconnected to work outcomes.

As found in the study, teaching hours had not been reduced to allow more time for its academic staff to be involved in research (refer to Section 6.3.3). This was despite its strategy of becoming a research university. As such, it was felt by the staff that its strategy was not reflected in the way things were done at the University. It was claimed that strategy represents the changes in expectations, and yet the strategy was not supported by any changes that could assist its implementation (refer to Section 6.2.4) Therefore, the University strategy had been claimed as ceremonial due to the conflicts. For example, it was argued that the strategy to increase student enrolment had increased academic staff teaching hours. This strategy was implemented at the same time as the strategy of becoming a research university. These strategies had been argued as conflicting due to the difficulties that had arisen in coping with the demands of increasing students and doing research at the same time (refer to Section 6.2.5).

As such, the University strategy was claimed to be political. It is political as it signals the intention to accomplish so much and as an advertisement used for external consumption is believed to be largely devoid of substantive content. This is apparent in the claims of University strategy as *"corporate poetry"; "terminologies"; "slogan", "tagline", "politicised"* (Section 6.2.6)**.** The evidence of symbolic management in the University strategy is also apparent in the phrases, "...*more interested in telling the world*" (Section 6.2.6); "*we want to be in a good book*" (Section 6.2.6), which had emerged in the interviews.

According to Prichard and Willmott (1997) this type of change is cosmetic, where it involves simply a change of names rather than any more substantive change in practice. It is argued that such change is symptomatic of a strategic intent to change the ethos of the university, to harness the activities of academics more directly and explicitly to market forces as a means of raising their contributions to national economic performance (Prichard and Willmott, 1997).

This section elaborates on the claims that the University strategy that had been communicated was ceremonial as it lacked substantive content. It has highlighted the use of verbal account, also known as impression management, as a means to harness the University legitimacy with the government (Elsbach, 1994). The next section will show how documentation had been used as another tool for the purpose of legitimacy in the University.

Documentation

Another example of institutionalisation of expectation effort in the study can be seen in the publication of strategy planning documentation that echoed the government strategy (refer to Section 6.2.4). It appears that the University had produced its own 9th Malaysian Plan (RMK9), a University strategic planning document which was based on the government's 9th Malaysian Plan [RMK9]. In this case, it was not just the contents that were similar, as the similarity was also obvious in the title of the documents. As suggested by Elsbach and Sutton (1992), this is an act of espousing the acceptable goals and the efforts of ceremonial conformity. The finding confirms the suggestions of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Scott (1987) that institutionalised expectations are expressed in rules, blueprints for actions, standard operating procedures, impersonal prescriptions, rationalising techniques, formalisation and documentation. As found in the study, the University had produced similar documentation as the government, with a similar name, RMK9 for its strategy documentation.

The RMK9 is the government's 9th Malaysian Plan, which specifies the direction of the Malaysian Plan for the years 2006-2010. The adoption of RMK9 into the University strategic planning document suggests the isomorphism with the institutional environment. As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), the most important aspect of isomorphism is the evolution of organisational language. In the study, the organisational language is obvious in the University strategy document which emphasises government initiatives.

The adaptation of RMK9 into the University strategy documentation presents the vocabularies of structure which are isomorphic with institutional rules that provide prudent, rational, and legitimate accounts of the University strategy. In other words, the incorporation of RMK9 into the University

strategy document provides a legitimated account for the University strategy. As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), the organisational language is seen in the vocabularies used to define organisational goals, procedures and policies which are analogous to the vocabularies of its constituents. In this case, the government vocabularies which could be found in government's RMK9 document had provided the source for gaining the University legitimacy.

It is clear that the effort to institutionalise the University strategy is evident in the relentless efforts to communicate the University strategy, and the formalisation of the strategy communicated through documents (refer to Section 6.2.4). This effort had contributed to the feeling that the University strategy was mere documentation which was held to demonstrate the rationale of the University operations to its external constituent. It conforms to the suggestion by Pidcock (2001) of an increased emphasis on documentation in making strategy happen in universities. As suggested by Pidcock (2001), strategic planning in university is merely a paper exercise, as it is inconsistent with the reality.

The documentation of university strategy is considered by Stone and Brush (1996) as formal planning. According to Stone and Brush (1996), formal planning is used in non-profit organisations because it is perceived to be necessary for external validations and for the acquisition of resources. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991), this often occurs in government organisations as they seek legitimacy from their external constituents. The constituents must believe that the organisation intends to accomplish specific ends, thus formal planning is used for this purpose (Stone and Brush, 1996). This has seen a written plan as an orientating metaphor that is used explicitly to gain legitimacy (Stone and Brush, 1996).

By documenting the University strategy, a formal structure for the University is created. It is suggested that by designing a formal structure which adheres to the prescriptions of myths in the institutional environment, an organisation demonstrates that it is acting on collective values in a proper and adequate manner (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975;Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The incorporation of institutionalised elements provides an account (Scott and

Lyman, 1968) of its activities that protects the organisation from having its conduct questioned. By doing so, the University is believed to be legitimate and this will enable it to strengthen its support and secure its survival.

7.6.2.2 Strategy Monitoring that was Decoupled

Another example of symbolic management practice in the study is also apparent in the University strategy monitoring. It had emerged that the University had chosen strategy performance evaluations criteria that justify and support its strategy (refer to Section 6.4.1). It appears that the strategy monitoring was used for justifying the University strategy rather than for providing feedback on improvements. This suggests the University strategy monitoring which was decoupled from its actual activities.

This had led to the claims of University strategy monitoring as a "political exercise" (refer to Section 6.4.1). This is apparent in the choice of the University strategy monitoring evaluation criteria, where the 'students to lecturers' ratio had been withdrawn from the evaluation as it was feared that the outcome would not support the strategy to increase student enrolment. Suchman (1995) suggests the conduct as a means to prevent miscues in organisation. This mode of control is claimed to be a matter of legitimacy which is secondary to actual performance (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Scott and Meyer, 1983).

This finding conforms to Pidcock's (2001) study which suggests a weakness in the link between a university's strategic planning process and its monitoring. According to Pidcock (2001), there is no actual evaluation mechanism in strategic planning of a university. This also indicates that a university is a loosely coupled organisation (March and Olsen, 1976; Weick, 1976). In a loosely coupled organisation, its structural elements are loosely linked to each other and to activities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In this study, it is apparent in the inconsistencies of strategies and their implementation. This triggers the need for the inconsistencies to be resolved in order to maintain legitimacy. The findings suggest that the strategy monitoring which was decoupled from the actual activities was used as a mechanism to maintain the University legitimacy with the government (refer to Section 6.4.1). This conforms to

suggestions that inconsistencies can be resolved by decoupling and avoidance of inspection and effective evaluations (March and Olsen, 1976). In relation to this, March and Olsen (1976) and Weick (1976) explain that in a loosely coupled organisation, evaluations and inspection systems are subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination.

The findings also illuminate issues which conform to Ashforth and Fried (1988), where it is claimed that reassessment of legitimacy becomes increasingly perfunctory if not mindless. It is perfunctory as it was done for the purpose of getting it documented, without any real sense of meanings or justifications. As found in the study, the actual outcome of the strategy monitoring was never known. As stated, *"...never been measured, nobody really knows whether it has really achieved, what it really supposed to be achieving"* (Section 6.4.1). This suggests the existence of a decoupling mechanism where the University had protected their formal structure from being reviewed on technical performance, inspections, and evaluation. It also suggests that the strategy monitoring was not held for addressing the challenges in its implementation.

In relation to this, Neilsen and Rao (1987) suggest legitimisation can be described as a game where leaders deceive, mislead, misinterpret and exercise self-serving control over the performance of their organisation. This is clear from the removal of elements which were not consistent with the University strategy from its monitoring criteria (refer to Section 6.4.1). In this study, the challenges in delivering the strategy to increase student enrolment had been deliberately dismissed from the evaluation in order to support the University strategy. For instance, issues pertaining to classrooms and academic staff workload had not been included in the University's strategy monitoring as this would jeopardise the legitimacy effort of the University.

This suggests the avoidance of inspection and effective evaluations where the University had dismissed elements that would potentially uncover events and deviations which could undermine legitimacy. Thus, strategy monitoring in the University had been devised to support its conformity to the government in seeking legitimacy. As suggested by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), an organisation attempts to anticipate and prevent or forestall potential challenges to legitimacy. In an institutionalised organisation, evaluation accompanies and produces legitimacy (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). As argued

by Scott (1981) and Rowan and Miskel (1999), educational organisations are rewarded and preserved for their conformity to correct structures, programmes, and processes rather than the quality of their product.

It appears that the University had avoided performance evaluation criteria that could challenge the University strategy (refer to Section 6.4.1). This indicates the denial and concealment of activities that are likely to undermine University legitimacy (Sutton and Callahan, 1987). Instead of providing the actual feedback which could be used for improvements, the University strategy monitoring was deceptive to justify the implementation of University strategy which aligns with the government. The decoupling of the strategy monitoring suggests the University was maintaining legitimacy through 'ongoing role performance and symbolic assurances that all is well' (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990, p.183). This is evident in themes, "impressionistic"; "political exercise"; "on paper it looks good", found in the study which suggest the strategy monitoring was used for legitimacy purpose.

The symbolic assurance is also apparent in the University strategy monitoring that emphasises conformity to the RMK9 (refer to Section 6.4.1). The reliance on the government document for strategy formulation and its monitoring is consistent with what Meyer and Rowan (1977) describe as formalised coordination and control. Meyer and Rowan (1977) explain that this type of monitoring demonstrates institutional conformity. It serves as rationalised and impersonal prescriptions that identify various society purposes (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The formalised coordination is specified in a rule-like way (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In this study, it is evident in the claim that University strategy implementations had been closely monitored. For example, all of the University staff were required to document the strategy that had been implemented and to provide justification for any strategy that had failed to be implemented. This was held irrespective of the challenges in its implementation. It suggests evidence of the heightened emphasis on strategy monitoring documentation in the University. These documents provide a bureaucratic mode of control which produce a form of procedural conformity (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

As suggested by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), this is a mode of control that is 'taken for granted'. It is held for the purpose of relaxing the vigilance of

constituents in order to content them with the evidence of conformity (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990).

ISO Certifications

The heightened emphasis on ISO also provides evidence of strategy monitoring that was decoupled (refer to Section 6.4.3). It is suggested that the pressure of becoming more efficient has led to the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms in universities (Lee and Gopinathan, 2007;Mok, 2010). Townley (1993) suggests the presence of managerial legitimacy which is boosted through series of performance measures and practices. These measures evaluate the productivity of academic labour within departments and across institutions (Prichard and Willmott, 1997). Prichard and Willmott (1997) have reported the existence of increased pressure on senior academics to access and improve performance according to the established criteria of associated league tables. This suggests the university as an institutionally elaborated organisation. As an institutionally elaborated organisation, it adopts an external assessment criterion and is sensitive to external criteria of worth (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), this can be seen in the Nobel Prize, endorsements by important people, the certification from professionals and consultants or the prestige programmes or personnel in external society circles.

In this study, the external criterion of worth is apparent in the adoption of ISO. The ISO certification provides the ceremonial criterion of worth for the University which is important in maintaining its legitimacy. According to Ashforth and Gibbs (1990, p.183), it serves as a 'favorable reputation'; and 'sedative on constituents'. In the study, the ISO certification demonstrates the fitness of the University in delivering the government expectations. It was aimed at providing assurance of the University's ability to deliver the government led strategy without jeopardising the quality of its tasks. This had led to the sceptical feeling with regard to the actual purpose of ISO among the University staff.

The ISO was adopted in the University as a means to control the quality of work. However, it was argued as irrelevant to the actual quality of the tasks. As such, the ISO was perceived as unnecessary and had contributed to the non-value added time in complying with the ISO requirements (refer to Section 6.4.3). The adoption of ISO conforms to the suggestion of Parker and

Jary (1995) on the increasing bureaucratic power of management in higher education by the utilisation of sophisticated surveillance system. The ISO is also an example of a discipline of power bloc in higher education (Prichard and Willmott, 1997). It is a discipline of power bloc as it requires all staff to comply with the ISO requirements. The ISO serves as a means of control over the academics' work.

As found in the study, academic staff had been required to prepare five sets of examination questions in compliance with the ISO requirement (refer to Section 6.4.3). They were required to prepare the questions in accordance with specific ISO guidelines. The specific ISO requirement on the format and presentations had been argued as not contributing to the actual quality of the tasks. It was claimed that the ISO requirement had too much focus on processes which were not relevant to academic work.

The findings accord with the suggestion of Gupta et al. (1994) that government bureaucratic control is irrelevant to work performance. It is apparent in the study that the heightened emphasis on ISO serves merely as a source of legitimacy rather than assurance of actual performance. This justifies the sceptical feeling among the staff. They were sceptical because the underlying reason for ISO was for the purpose of promoting the University rather than for actual improvements.

It was found in the study that the University management had ignored the real challenges faced by the University and instead relied on ISO as a measurement of quality. This was claimed to be an effort to demonstrate the organisation's worthiness and acceptability by manipulating structures and procedures (Elsbach, 1994). The adoption of ISO is evidence of how University management portrays its structures and actions in order to acquire endorsement and support (Schlenker, 1980). This also suggests the impression management used by the University in accomplishing the legitimacy with the government (Elsbach, 1994). The heightened emphasis on ISO provides evidence of symbolic management adopted by the University.

As suggested earlier, the University manages its legitimacy through substantive and symbolic management. It appears that the adoption of both substantive and symbolic management had contributed to the tensions and conflicts, i.e. limited resources (Section 6.3.1); time constraints (Section 6.3.2); intensification of work (Section 6.3.3), which were experienced by the

University staff. This is understandable as the conflicts can be triggered by the inherent differences of both approaches. The substantive approach requires real change despite the challenges in strategy implementation. It is achieved by coercive isomorphism and role performance which can be seen in the efforts to implement the University strategy. On the contrary, this had been challenging for the University staff, as they were required to deliver the strategy despite the inadequate resources.

Under this situation, a symbolic management was applied to camouflage the discrepancies in its strategy implementation. This was not helpful in improving the situation as it did not encourage the University to address the real issues behind its strategy implementation. This is because symbolic management encourages impressions management, denial and concealments, rather than the real issues faced in its strategy implementation (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). As such, symbolic management acts as a hindrance which avoids addressing the real challenges. In spite of the challenges and the conflicts that emerge in strategy implementation, the University portrays that 'all is well' (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990, p.183). This had been achieved through decoupled strategy monitoring and was evident in the themes assessments as political (Section 6.4.1); strategy monitoring reflected in documents (Section 6.4.2); and the use of ISO certification (Section 6.4.3). From the discussions of the main themes presented in Diagram 7.1, i.e. legitimacy; legitimacy is problematic; taken for granted attitude; and the management of legitimacy, it has appeared that the strategy management process of the University is influenced by the legitimisation efforts.

The following discussions will further provide a deeper comprehension of the findings in the study. This is elaborated with the institutional theory. It is presented in the conceptual framework. As such, the next discussions will focus on the conceptual framework developed in this study.

7.7 The Conceptual Framework

7.7.1 The Underpinning Theory

The discussions of the conceptual framework in this study are focused on the seminal work of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006). Their work on institutional theory is prevalent in providing an understanding of the findings gathered. This is based on the findings which are found to be in line with the suggestions proposed by them. Thus, this section will provide a discussion on institutional theory as suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006).

Institutional theory suggests that organisation structure is an adaptive vehicle that shapes in response to the characteristics of the external environment (Scott, 1987). As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), organisations are driven to adapt and incorporate practices and procedures that are institutionalised in society. Institutionalisation is a process of acculturation (Sonpar et al., 2010). In institutional theory, an organisation is viewed as institutionalised and exists as reflections to institutional rules (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

It has been argued that conformity to the institutional rules serves as a means for organisations' survival and legitimacy, which are independent from the effectiveness criteria (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This is because organisation conformity is believed to be in conflict with efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). As such, the institutionalised rules are suggested as myths that are ceremonially adopted (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Thus, in this situation, it is argued that organisations build a gap between their formal structure and actual activities in order to protect their legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This is done by having a loosely coupled structure in organisations (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Over the years, the concept of institutional theory has evolved to reflect the present changes in the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (2006), the growth in private higher education which serves as an alternative option to the public education

providers; the increasing demand for accountability in higher education institutions; and the changes in the governance of higher education institutions which gives more power to the society at large which has seen the changes from monistic to pluralistic governance (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). According to Meyer and Rowan (2006) these are the new themes that evolve around institutional theory which have triggered the requirement for new understanding. It has been argued that the earlier institutional theory which mostly focuses on institutional conformity needs to be further expanded (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

As such, it is suggested that the new concept of institutional theory differs from the earlier concept in three ways (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). This includes the recognition of the changes in the social construction of institutions; the inclusion of market element in the relationship of institutions and the states; and the recognition of history, power and change which are embedded in institutions (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

The new institutionalism acknowledges the changes of relationship between polity, economy and civil society (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). Following the recognition of a market element in the previously confined states and institutions relationship, it now views the economic market as institutionally embedded (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). According to Meyer and Rowan (2006), the new institutionalism places interest on the influence of power on institutional agenda. This is in contrast to the earlier institutionalism which was built around simple descriptive data which tends to ignore the influence of power in the institution environment (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

The differences between the earlier institutional theory and the new institutional theory are further depicted in the diagram below. The reason for highlighting both of these institutional theories is to locate the findings from the study within this context. It is also held to reflect the changes in institutional theory and seeks to explore its relevance in the context of the study. This will be further discussed in the conceptual framework later in the section.

For the purpose of the diagram, the earlier version of institutional theory is identified as the early institutionalism and the more recent developed

institutional theory is called the new institutionalism. The new institutionalism follows the term used by Meyer and Rowan (2006). This diagram is constructed based on the explanations of new institutionalism as described by Meyer and Rowan (2006).

The Early and New Institutionalism
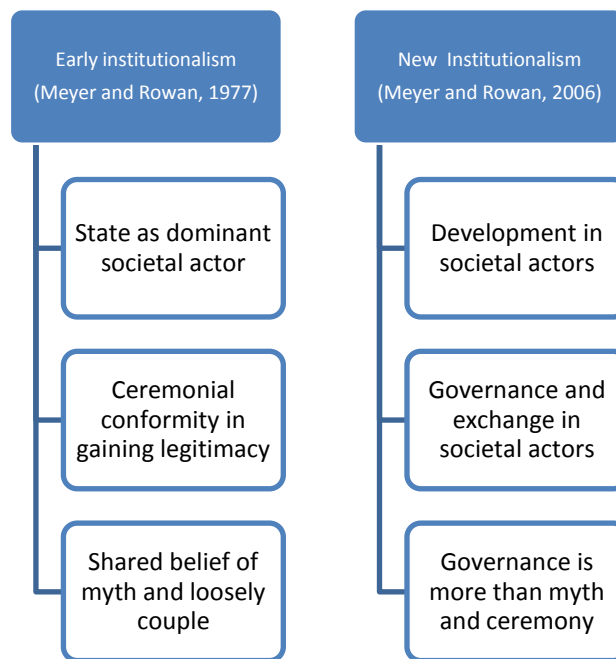
Diagram 7.2: Differences Between the Early and New Institutionalism (author's own)

1. State as dominant societal actor vs. development in societal actors

As seen in the diagram, the first difference between the early institutionalism and the new institutionalism lies in the recognition of various societal actors. According to Meyer and Rowan (2006) there is a need to expand institutional analysis in education beyond the scope of political governance to include the element of market exchange. As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (2006), private organisations have been involved in providing goods and services to higher education in United States. According to Sonpar et al. (2010), organisations nowadays operate in a world which coexist with several

constituents. These constituents may exert simultaneous pressures to implement practices based on their respective values (Sonpar et al., 2010).

Therefore, it is suggested that the new institutionalism should also include these societal actors (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). In line with this, societal actors are defined as organisations that supply goods and services to consumers, as well as organisations and agencies that interact, support or govern these organisations (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). Hence, the concept of societal actors which is introduced by the new institutionalism incorporates the various parties involved in the higher education system. For example, this includes the political elites, experts, think tank, and advocacy groups (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

It is in contrast to the earlier concept of institutional theory where it views the state or the government as the dominant actor in institutions and suggests politics as the main factor for institutional change (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Given the power of the state officials, it creates bureaucratic arrangements which grant little autonomy to organisations (Scott, 1987). The states are likely to impose coercion in pursuing their needs (Scott, 1987). Thus, organisations are expected to incorporate these needs into their structure (Scott, 1987). This has been identified as institutional rules by Meyer and Rowan (1977). It requires conformity to the expectations of key constituents which could lead to ceremonial conformity (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

2. Ceremonial conformity vs. changes in the governance and exchange

The development in the recognition of societal actors also changes the governance of institutions. This is depicted in the diagram as the second difference between the early and new institutionalism. The differences lie in the changes of the governance and exchange. For example, the early institutionalism views educational organisations as institutionalised organisations. These organisations are suggested to be developed based on the logic of institutional conformity which is held for the purpose of legitimacy rather than the logic of technical efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This encourages legitimacy seeking behaviour which seeks to ensure organisations' continued supports and access to resources; and facilitate organisation survival by incorporating institutional values based on the taken for granted

attitude (Sonpar et al., 2010). Therefore, in the early institutionalism, the priority of institutions is focused on the need to maintain trust and confidence by conforming to institutionalised norms, values as a means to gain supports and resources (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). As suggested by the early institutionalism, this is mainly held by ceremonial conformity to the institutional rules (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

On the other hand, the new institutionalism suggests that the diverse societal actors produce various institutions' prescriptions which can be contradictory with one another (Sonpar et al., 2010). This calls for negotiations as the legitimacy seeking behaviour may conflict with other expectations (Sonpar et al., 2010). This has brought the development of strategic approach on legitimacy. Institutional theorists have now provided studies to show how actors use discretion in complying with the various institutional expectations (Oliver, 1991). This exemplifies the difference between the early and new institutionalism.

3. Shared belief of myths vs. more than myths and ceremony

Thirdly, the difference between the early institutionalism and the new institutionalism is triggered by an idea that governance no longer serves as myth and ceremony. Previously, the early institutionalism viewed educational institutions as held by a shared belief of myths rather than by logic of efficiency (Rowan, 2006). As such, it is suggested that these institutions are characterised by loose coupling where institutional and technical levels of administration are loosely coupled (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Nowadays, the institutional theory is expanded further following the recognition of varying degrees of real conformity and tight coupling in organisations (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). This is in contrast to the belief of ceremonial conformity and loose coupling suggested by the early institutionalism.

In short, the diagram has presented the evolution of institutional theory. It reflects the present scope of institutional theory, where institutional theorists have now focused their study on various agencies and actors in social environment institutions; provided studies on market and politics as forces in the institutional environment; and studies on how the institutional environment promotes efficiency and conformity (Rowan, 2006). An example

of an institutional study which has incorporated these changes can be seen in the study by Fiss and Zajac (2006) on German corporations. Their study has indicated the use of symbolic management in addressing the various stakeholders' preferences in relation to the company's strategic change. This has seen the use of language that decouples espousal and actual implementation of strategic change (Fiss and Zajac, 2006). As such, the new institutionalism is argued to contribute to new condition and changes in environment and is thus vital in enhancing the understanding of institutional dimensions (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

The relevance of the early institutionalism and the new institutionalism in this study is discussed in the following section.

7.7.2 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

It is important to note that the choice of institutional theory in this study is purely based on the evidence gathered. The evidence suggests that both early and new institutionalism apply in this study. As seen from the diagram below, government is the key constituent, and conflict with efficiency supports the early institutionalism suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977). At the same time, there is an overlapping of both early and new institutionalism with regard to the existence of tight coupling and loose coupling found in the study which conforms to Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006). This is elaborated.
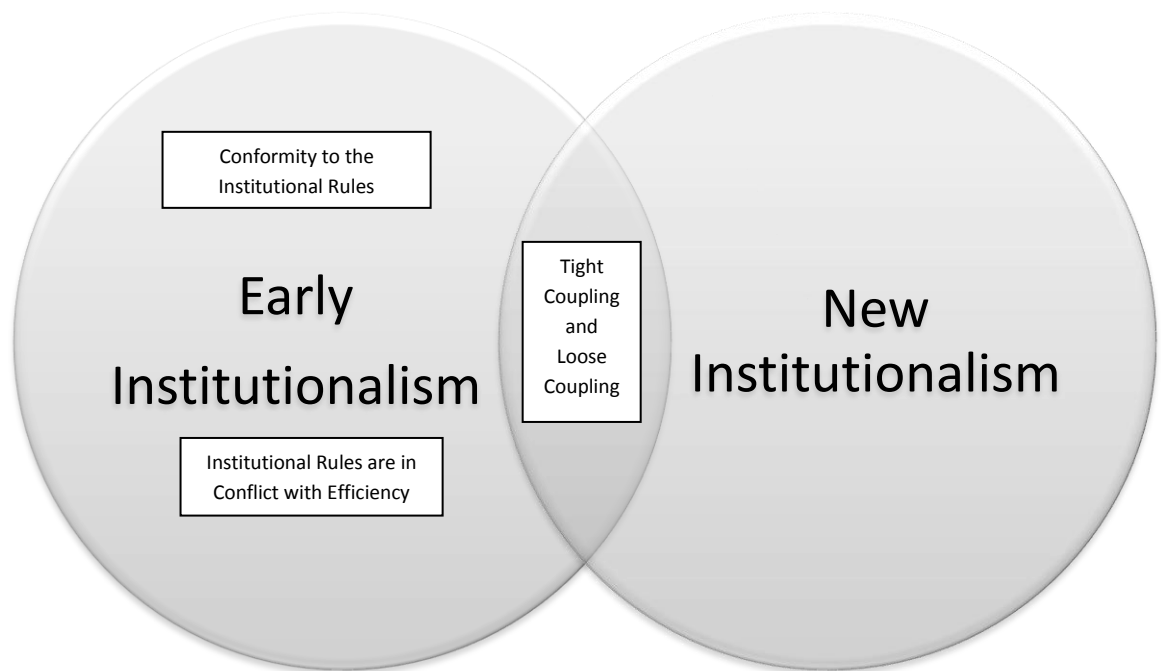
Diagram 7.3: The Conceptual Framework of the Study (author's own)

1. Conformity to the Institutional Rules- Government as the Key Constituent

In the study, the government strategy serves as the institutional rule. It has been proposed by Meyer and Rowan (1977 p.345) that 'As rationalized institutional rules arise in given domains of work activity, formal organizations form and expand by incorporating these rules as structural elements'. The institutional rule in the study is evident in the incorporation of strategies that were led by the government. The conformity to the government is suggested to enhance the University legitimacy thus providing it with the supports and financial resources.

As such, this study supports the proposition of Meyer and Rowan (1977) on the incorporation of institutional rule as a means of legitimacy with the constituent that holds the key to financial resources. The study conforms to the suggestion by Meyer and Rowan (1977) of the state or the government as

the dominant societal actor of higher education. As a dominant constituent, the government is powerful and legitimate (Mitchell et al., 1997). This finding is in contrast to the new institutionalism which suggests that government is no longer the only dominant constituent of higher education institutions. Under the new institutionalism, other societal actors have been identified as influential constituents of higher education institutions. This, however, does not apply to the University in the study as the government is still holding the control over the higher education institutions in Malaysia. As suggested by Mok (2010), the dependency of the University, particularly the public universities, on government funding has made the government the key constituent of these universities. Such dependency provides the government with the power as the University is relying on it for its survival (Mitchell et al., 1997). As found by Larsen (2000), the dependency on external funding encourages universities to change in accordance with the perspectives of its key resource holders. This is vital, as challenges to organisation legitimacy will diminish its ability to acquire resources (Deephouse, 1999). As such, it is suggested that a legitimate organisation obtains higher quality resources and with favourable terms as compared to an organisation whose legitimacy is challenged (Deephouse, 1999).

In the study, the University's governance can be classified as a sovereign, rationality bounded state model as it is heavily controlled by the government. As proposed by Gornitzka (1999), there are four types of higher education governance model: the sovereign, rationality bounded state; the institutional state; the corporate-pluralist state; and the supermarket state. The sovereign model is associated with the interventionist state model where the government holds a tight control over higher education (Gornitzka, 1999). It emphasises higher education to be accountable to political authorities (Gornitzka, 1999). The evidence of such governance is visible in the University strategy formulation which conforms to the government. Such governance is evident in the documentation of higher education strategy which urges Malaysian universities to improve their accountability to the government. It is clearly evident in the statement, 'Being owned and funded by the government, public HEIs must ensure that their strategic objectives are in line with those of the Ministry's' (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, p.18).

This type of governance has also been observed in other countries such as Sweden and Norway. For example, Skoldberg (1991) has found similar efforts made by the government to force rational planning into the Swedish higher education. Larsen (2000) has reported that such governance has pressured universities to be loyal to the state expectations. In this study, the government strategy had been institutionalised in the University and was 'taken for granted', as it is important in ensuring University legitimacy with the government. This supports Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggestions on the importance of institutional rules in maintaining an institution's legitimacy. The sovereign model of Malaysian university governance has made the government its dominant constituent. Therefore, the early institutionalism suggestion of the government as the dominant key actor remains relevant in this context of study.

2. Institutional Rules are in Conflict with Efficiency

The evidence from the study also suggests the existence of conflicts in the University strategy management process. As discussed in Section 7.4, legitimacy can be problematic. This is evident in the government led strategy which has been taken as institutionalised rules which had created a conflict in its strategy implementation. This has been described as the intersection of external expectation and internal norms and values by Larsen (2000). This intersection is contributed by the conflict between the political ideology of external decision makers and the internal demands. For example, Cornbleth (1986) found inconsistencies in the implementation of education reform in the United States. It appears that the reform had been ambiguous and consisted of contradictory missions which in practice were difficult to implement (Cornbleth, 1986).

This conforms to the suggestion made by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that institutional rules create inconsistencies with actual performance. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), legitimacy is evident in the incorporation of elements which are legitimated externally rather than the focus on efficiency. The government strategy found in the study is evidence of the incorporation of externally legitimated elements. The existence of conflicts and challenges in its implementation suggests that the externally legitimated elements can be conflicting with efficiency. This is obvious in the claims that the government strategy had been in conflict with the actual supports available for its

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implementation. Hence, the findings from the study support the argument of Meyer and Rowan (1977) that legitimacy which is evident in the incorporation of externally legitimated elements can be at the expense of its efficiency.

This finding is in contrast to the new institutionalism suggestion that organisations do not necessarily conform for legitimacy but rather act on the logic of efficiency. As suggested by Burch (2007), there is a need for a new lens in institutional theory to include the changes in organisational fields. This includes the changes in governance and the recognition of the existence of differences in ideology (Burch, 2007). According to Burch (2007), nowadays, organisations are prone to question constituents' best practices. This has seen a heated public debate on public policies (Burch, 2007). As suggested by Fiss and Zajac (2006), the strategic change in organisations is not necessarily acquiescence to the demands of a single constituent but rather a balancing frame of accommodating the diverse constituents. This reflects the recognition of various societal actors in organisations, which have moved from the initial recognition of the state as the dominant actor suggested by the early institutionalism. Acquiescence implies that organisations are obedient to norms and institutional processes, while balancing refers to the act of accommodating diverse interests of different constituents (Fiss and Zajac, 2006). In their study, they discovered that corporations use the acquiescence frame to demonstrate its compliance with the demands of shareholders. In addition, they discovered that not all of the corporations indicate full compliance with the strategy placed by its shareholders. Instead, a number of corporations were found to be accommodating to the diverse interests of its various constituents (Fiss and Zajac, 2006).

There have been several ways suggested in dealing with institutional pressures which do not necessarily result in conformity to institutional rules. Along with this development Maassen (2000) has acknowledged the various strategies in dealing with institutional pressure. This includes acquiescence; compromise; avoidance; defiance; and manipulation (Maassen, 2000). Acquiescence refers to the extreme forms of conformity to institutional pressures which is achieved by compliance and imitation; compromise involves balancing, or bargaining with external stakeholders; avoidance is defined as an organisation's attempt to disguise its non conformity which escapes from institutional rules and expectations; defiance is where an

organisation publicly refuses the institutional pressure; while manipulation consists of co-opting, influencing and controlling the environment (Maassen, 2000).

Among the various strategies, acquiescence remains adopted by the University in the study. The findings suggest there have been various efforts taken by the University in conforming to the government. As suggested by Oliver (1991) acquiescence leads to compliance and imitation behaviour. Compliance is defined as conscious obedience to the values, norms or institutional requirements (Oliver, 1991). Imitation refers to either conscious or unconscious replication of institutional models (Oliver, 1991). Both of these forms have been observed in the study. The imitation behaviour had contributed to the adoption of government strategy from the references made to government documents; and the compliance is reflected in the actual efforts taken in implementing the strategy. It has occurred that both forms of behaviour have been consciously adopted by the University. This reflects the influence of the government on the University.

Despite the development of institutional theory in acknowledging various actors in an organisation, the government still remains as the key constituent in this study. This reflects the type of university governance in Malaysia which can be referred to as state interventionist (Gornitzka, 1999); with a tight control by the government (Sirat, 2010). As a result, other strategies such as compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation suggested by Oliver (1991) have not been noticeable in this study. This is because as a state interventionist model, the government is highly influential on the University. Hence, this has superseded the negotiation process which is pertinent in ensuring efficiency in the strategy implementation.

The finding is similar to Maassen (2000), which has found the acquiescence strategy adopted by a Dutch university. His study suggests that the minister of education has strengthened the governance structure of Dutch universities based on the belief that it should be responsive to society's need. This has seen a decrease in staff involvement in universities' decision making and the strengthening of individual positions such as deans in safeguarding the government interests (Maassen, 2000). Inevitably, the compliance without prior consideration of the University's capability had contributed to the

conflicts in its strategy implementation. This reflects the inconsistencies suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977). Therefore, the new institutionalism suggestion that organisations act on the basis of efficiency rather than conformity does not apply in this context of study.

3. Resolving Conflict Whilst Maintaining Legitimacy – Evidence of Tight and Loose Coupling

Real Conformity and Tight Coupling

It is equally important to note that the existence of conflicts also indicates the government strategy had actually been implemented. This is apparent in the existence of catch up modes found in the study (refer to Section 7.4). It implies the conformity to the government was not merely ceremonial or loosely coupled as suggested by the early institutionalism. This is evident in the study, where the strategy which conforms to the government has actually been followed by a close monitoring of its implementation. This suggests the existence of substantive management adopted through a coercive working environment and managerialism in the University (refer to Section 7.6.1). This is adopted to ensure that institutional rules are implemented which also suggests the existence of tight coupling in the University. This is apparent in the strategy monitoring which had been applied to ensure the implementation of the government strategy. In addition to the strategy monitoring, elements of University strategy, such as research and publications had also been included as part of the staff performance criteria. This has resulted in a growing number of research activities in the University.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggest conformity to institutional rules is enforced through inspections and monitoring which are ceremonially adopted. The early institutionalism suggests that activities have been loosely coupled in order to protect the organisation legitimacy. In the context of this study, not all of its strategy activities have been loosely coupled. This presents suggestion of tight coupling which is followed by implementation of strategy in the study. Hence, on one hand, the study supports the recent development of new institutionalism which proposes that governance produces more than ceremonial conformity to institutional rules (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

Ceremonial Conformity and Loose Coupling

Interestingly, at the same time, the findings also suggest evidence of loose coupling in the study. This is shown in the overlapping area of the diagram. As discussed in Section 7.4, the University strategy had not been able to be delivered fully due to the conditions which had been elaborated as the catch up mode and j curve. Under such circumstances, the University had devised a mechanism to show that despite its existing challenges, the strategy can be delivered. This is done by symbolically portraying that all is well. According to Fiss and Zajac (2006), symbolic adoption is capable of enhancing organisation legitimacy even though its actual activities are left unchanged. According to Fiss and Zajac (2006), organisations that have not achieved substantive changes will substitute it with symbolic implementation.

This is where the loosely coupled mechanism is applied. As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), loose coupling and logic of confidence and good faith are the two common devises used in resolving inconsistencies between ceremonial rules and efficiency. Orton and Weick (1990) have identified this as loose coupling between intention and action. According to Orton and Weick (1990) there are various types of loose coupling which include among individuals; subunits; organisations; hierarchical levels; between organisation and environment; among ideas; between activities; and between intentions and actions. The loose coupling in the University is similar to the suggestion by Orton and Weick (1990) of a loose coupling between intentions and actions which can be seen in the loose coupling between planning and implementation; and structural facades and technical cores.

The loose coupling in the University can be described as contributed by a fragmented external environment which occurs when there are incompatible expectations (Orton and Weick, 1990). As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), organisations respond to the inconsistencies with the external environment by buffering, and building gaps between the formal structure and actual work activities in order to maintain ceremonial conformity. The decoupling in the study is evident in the strategy monitoring that was selective so as not to include any elements that could undermine the University legitimacy with the government. As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), the decoupling process can be found in the elimination of data on technical performance. This is recognised as consequential legitimacy

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which is enacted through symbols of achievement (Zott and Huy, 2007). For example, in the study, the ratio of students to lecturers had been excluded from the performance evaluation due to its potential to undermine the University strategy which conformed to the government. This suggests the avoidance of evaluation from exposing events and deviations that could undermine legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Hence the study supports the proposition by Meyer and Rowan (1977, p. 359) that 'Institutionalized organisations seek to minimize inspection and evaluation'. It also supports the proposition on 'elements of structure are decoupled from activities and from each other', as an effort to control and coordinate conflicts and loss of legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, p.357).

As stated earlier, the confidence and good faith are used as means to buffer the conflicts faced in the strategy implementation due to the inconsistencies between ceremonial rules and efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), the confidence and good faith legitimise organisations despite the existence of inconsistencies. The rituals of inspections and evaluations produce the confidence of good faith for organisations (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). This is achieved by avoidance and overlooking whilst at the same time adopting ceremonial inspection and evaluation (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). The study has found that the University strategy had been periodically monitored. This suggests the existence of ritual evaluations and inspection in ensuring the University strategy is implemented. At the same time, it was revealed that this monitoring had been selective in its evaluations whereby only elements that support the legitimacy are ceremonially elaborated. This approach is suggested as an attempt to provide the University with confidence and good faith.

Another example of such an attempt is evident in the adoption of ISO. This also suggests the University's effort in seeking its ceremonial criteria of worth in managing its legitimacy with the government. The significance of ISO to the actual performance had been doubted by the University staff. The ISO is an example of decoupling of inspections and evaluations which had been overlooked for the purpose of legitimacy. This is intended to increase the confidence and good faith in the eyes of its constituent. It reflects the suggestion by Suchman (1995) of dispositional legitimacy which is accorded to organisations that appear to be trustworthy. The ISO certification displays prestige recognition of quality tasks performed by the University. It provides

the evidence of compliance through the adoption of external assessments criteria which aim to define the value of the externally incorporated elements (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Therefore, this study supports the proposition by Meyer and Rowan (1977, p.358): 'The more an organization's structure is derived from institutionalized myths, the more it maintains elaborate displays of confidence, satisfaction, and good faith internally and externally.' The decoupling and the logic of confidence found in the study are part of symbolic management adopted in managing the University legitimacy with the government.

Besides decoupling and the logic of confidence, symbolic management is also evident in the way the University strategy had been communicated and the act of documenting the strategy which echoed the government's documentation. The findings suggest the use of persuasive language in legitimating institutional change (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). As suggested by Cornbleth (1986), this involves the use of language of excellence which can be seen as part of legitimating ritual. According to Cornbleth (1986), the ritual is established by portraying the institution as responsive to the perceived needs of its constituents. As a result, the University strategy communicated had been perceived as surreal by its staff (refer to Section 6.2.4).

The discussions in this section have shown a combination of loose coupling and tight coupling adopted in the management of the University strategy. This study suggests neither a perfect ceremonial conformity with loose coupling, nor real conformity with tight coupling in the University. The evidence from the study suggests there is a combination of both elements. Hence, it supports the suggestion of (Rowan, 2006) on the existence of varying degrees of ceremonial conformity and real conformity; and loosely coupling and tightly coupling in organisations. This study shows empirical evidence of the adoption of loose coupling and tight coupling in the context of a public University in Malaysia.

7.7.3 Summary of the Conceptual Framework Discussions

Based on the evidence gathered, the conceptual framework in this study has incorporated a combination of both early institutionalism (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) and new institutionalism (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). In this study, the

early institutionalism is still relevant, particularly in respect to suggestions of government as the dominant actor for higher education; and the existence of conflicts contributed by the inconsistencies between the institutional rules and actual activities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). As such, the new institutionalism had not occurred in the study in the way that it has been suggested by Meyer and Rowan (2006), particularly in the context of recent development of societal actors and governance and exchange. In this study, there are no other societal actors that are actively engaged in challenging the salience of the dominant constituent as found in the studies of Sonpar et al. (2010). One of the reasons is due to the government which still represents the key constituent of higher education in Malaysia (Sirat, 2010).

The study also suggests that the institutional rules have actually been implemented. As such, it is not mere ceremonial as suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977). In a way, partly it is consistent with the suggestions of new institutionalism that governance produces real conformity (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). In this study, the government strategy had been implemented with tight coupling applied in ensuring its implementation. On the other hand, whilst adopting the tight coupling (Meyer and Rowan, 2006), the study also suggests the adoption of loose coupling (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) at the same time. The loose coupling had been adopted on activities that had proven to be challenging in order to maintain its legitimacy with its key constituent. Therefore, the findings suggest the adoption of loose coupling with ceremonial conformity (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) and tight coupling with real conformity (Meyer and Rowan, 2006), in the University. This is evident in the symbolic and substantive management applied in the study (refer to Section 7.6).

Having all said, the findings do not refute the possibility of new institutionalism taking place in the future context of higher education in Malaysia. The changes in the political scenario may change the governance of higher education in Malaysia, therefore could lead to the acceptance of new perspectives provided by the new institutionalism as suggested by Meyer and Rowan (2006).

7. 8 Chapter Summary

Four key findings have emerged from the study. These include the suggestion that the University strategy was held for the purpose of legitimacy with its key constituent, i.e. the government. The findings also suggest that the emphasis on legitimacy had led to the adoption of government strategy in the University without prior consideration of its resources. This had created the challenges in its strategy implementation. The findings also revealed that the efforts of legitimacy had contributed to the taken for granted attitude in incorporating the government strategy as the University's own strategy. The findings show that the efforts to legitimise had seen the substantive and symbolic management adopted in the University.

This chapter also presents the conceptual framework which has been developed based on these key findings. This conceptual framework has presented the findings based on the seminal work of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006). Three elements from their seminal work have been discovered to be similar to the findings made in this study. Firstly, the findings show that the government remains as the dominant constituent of the University. This conforms to the early institutionalism suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977). As suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), 'As rationalized institutional rules arise in given domains of work activity, formal organizations form and expand by incorporating these rules as structural elements' (Meyer and Rowan, 1977 p.345). The incorporation of the institutional rules is evident in the University's conformity to the government.

Secondly, the findings show that such conformity had created challenges in the strategy implementation. This conforms to the early institutionalism suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), that conformity to institutional rules creates inconsistencies with the actual activities and performance.

Thirdly, the findings also show that the conformity to the government is not merely a ceremonial conformity as suggested by the early institutionalism (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Instead, it is found that the conformity to the government was followed by a real implementation. Thus, this supports the new institutionalism suggestion of varying degrees of real conformity in organisations (Rowan, 2006).

At the same time, the findings also show the evidence of symbolic management applied in the University. In this study, strategy which had not been met was found to be ceremonially adopted. Therefore, it supports the suggestion by Meyer and Rowan (1977, p.357) that 'Because attempts to control and coordinate activities in institutionalized organizations lead to conflicts and loss of legitimacy, elements of structure are decoupled from activities and from each other'. The findings also provide evidence for the claim that, 'The more an organization's structure is derived from institutionalized myths, the more it maintains elaborate displays of confidence, satisfaction, and good faith' (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, p.358).

As such, this study produces empirical evidence of the propositions by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006) in the context of a public University in Malaysia. This contributes to the body of knowledge in an area that has not been explored before, i.e. strategy management in a public university in Malaysia. The following chapter will present the conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the conclusions of the study. It highlights the contributions of the study, explains its limitations and provides recommendations for future research.

8.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study focused on exploring the strategy management process of a university in Malaysia. In particular, it explored the issues behind the strategy management process of the University. This is in line with the objectives of the study. The objectives of the study are recapped for the purpose of discussion in this chapter. The research objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

2. To explore any issues in the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

This section will present how the research objectives of the study are met and identify specific conclusions that can be drawn from its findings.

8.2.1 Research Objective 1

To explore the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

The findings presented in Chapter Six suggest the government's influence in the University strategy management process. The study suggests that government plays an important role in the University strategy formulations. This has been apparent in the University's strategy which conforms to the government. As such, the University's strategy has been claimed as government led; top down; a matter of politicisation; and had contributed to the increase in control of its staff. The findings suggest that the conformity to government had also led to multiple strategy directions adopted by the University at the same time.

The study has also revealed that the conformity to the government has contributed to the challenges in the University's strategy implementation. Among the challenges are issues concerning limited resources, time constraints, and intensification of work experienced by its staff. It appears that the University has been continuously adjusting to the demands of the government and this has been apparent in the themes that were identified in the study. Despite the existence of the challenges, it was found that the University strategy had actually been implemented. The findings also suggest that the University staff were compelled to follow the University strategy which conforms to the government. This was maintained by rigorous strategy monitoring.

As discussed in Section 7.6, such strategy monitoring is reflected in the specific requirements in producing strategy monitoring documentation that supports the University strategy. As such, it was found that the University strategy monitoring had been used as a mechanism to support the strategy which conforms to the government, rather than to monitor the real issues behind its implementation. This has led to the claims that the University strategy monitoring was just a matter of documentation, and had been political. This is apparent in the themes "assessments as political" and "strategy monitoring reflects in documentations" which emerged from the interviews. The theme "ISO Certification" also suggests the use of ISO as a justification of the criteria of worth of the University. It justifies the

University's legitimacy to the government, where the ISO certification had been used to portray that all was well.

The findings suggest that the strategy of the University had been formulated in line with the government expectations. Inevitably, the strategy which had been formulated without prior considerations of its resources had contributed to the challenges in its strategy implementation. This has been apparent in the lack of resources, time constraints, and intensification of work experienced by the participants in the study. Despite these challenges, the findings suggest that the University had used strategy monitoring as a mechanism to control and support its legitimacy to the government. The strategy monitoring was used as a means to control the behaviour of its staff to be in line with the University's strategy rather than as a mechanism which could address the challenges and issues of its implementation.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the University strategy formulation; strategy implementation; and strategy monitoring had been carried out mainly for the purpose of conformity to the government. As presented in Chapter Seven, this is inevitable considering that universities in Malaysia are still heavily funded by the government, thus are not free from government interference.

8.2.2 Research Objective 2

To explore any issues in the strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy monitoring of the University in the study.

The findings presented in Chapter Six and the discussions in Chapter Seven suggest that the University's strategy management process is influenced by the pursuit of legitimacy. The University strategy which conforms to the government; the existence of challenges in its strategy implementation; and the strategy monitoring which was held for the purpose of justifying the University's strategy suggest the legitimisation efforts of the University with the government.

As presented in Chapter Seven, the conformity to the institutional rules had created the challenges in the University strategy implementation. This is evident in the lack of resources; the catching up mode; and the intensification of work found in the University. The existence of these challenges suggests

that the University strategy had actually been implemented. This suggests the adoption of substantive management which was based on real performance, conducted to ensure that its strategy was implemented. The substantive management practices have resulted in the University strategy monitoring activities where staff are required to produce reports of their individual department's activity which should be in line with the University's strategy. Strategy monitoring was held despite the awareness of the University's management of the challenges in the University's strategy implementation. The study has discovered that the emphasis on real performance and substantive management has raised the issue of managerialism in the University's strategy implementation.

At the same time, the findings suggest that not all of the University's strategy had been deployed according to plan. It appears that the strategy monitoring had been used as a mechanism to protect the University's strategy, instead of addressing the real issues behind its implementation.

This suggests the adoption of symbolic management in the University. The symbolic management in the University is revealed in the strategy monitoring which was decoupled from the actual activities. It was held mainly to protect the University's strategy which conforms to the government. In addition to this, the University management was also found to have been actively portraying its support of the government strategy. This has been apparent in the University's strategy communication and its documents.

Therefore, from the findings it can be concluded that the pursuit for legitimacy had contributed to the issues behind the strategy formulation; strategy implementation; and strategy monitoring of the University. The legitimacy had led to the taken for granted attitude by the University from addressing the real issues behind its strategy implementations. This position was found to be deliberate in maintaining the University's legitimacy with its key constituent, i.e. the government. In so doing, both substantive and symbolic management have been adopted as the University legitimises itself with the government. Drawing from the study, legitimacy, substantive management, and symbolic management represent the issues that have been discovered behind the strategy management process of the University.

8.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. **Theoretical Contributions**

The emergence of legitimacy, substantive management, and symbolic management triggered the need for institutional theory to be discussed in this study. In line with institutional theory, the seminal works of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006) have been identified as relevant for the discussions of the findings. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the study extends the institutional theory of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006). The findings from the study demonstrate three key similarities which support the works of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006).

Firstly, the findings suggest the existence of conformity to institutional rules which confirms to Meyer and Rowan (1977). In the context of the study, the institutional rules are produced by the government. This is mainly contributed by the political structure of the country which grants the government control over its public universities. In the study, this has been apparent in the University strategy formulation. As a policy maker, the government determines the direction of higher education in Malaysia. Malaysian public universities are required to adhere closely to the demands of the government. As such, the government remains the key constituent of the University in the study. This finding is similar to Meyer and Rowan (1977), where they have suggested the government as the dominant societal actor of higher education. This is in contrast to the new institutionalism which suggests the influence of other constituents in higher education. As it stands, the argument of new institutionalism has yet to be proven in the context of the University in the study.

Secondly, it has emerged that the conformity to the institutional rules has led to the conflict in the strategy implementation of the University. This is also consistent with the suggestion made by Meyer and Rowan (1977) that conformity to institutional rules creates conflict with the actual implementation. In the study, such conflict has been apparent in

the challenges to the strategy implementation. This finding contradicts the new institutionalism, where it has been suggested that organisations do not necessarily conform to the institutional rules as they have a choice to act based on the logic of efficiency. In the context of the study, this is not feasible, especially considering the cultural and political environment of the University which requires it to conform to the higher authoritative body.

Thirdly, the study has revealed a combination of loose and tight coupling in relation to the conformity to the institutional rules. The findings suggest that the institutional rules in the University are not merely ceremonial, as they have been followed by actual implementation. This finding confirms to the new institutionalism which suggests that governance produces more than ceremonial conformity as it is followed by actual implementation (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). According to Meyer and Rowan (2006), this is held by tight coupling to ensure its implementation. In the study, the tight coupling has been apparent in the strategy monitoring which is conducted to ensure the strategy implementation. As such, the implementation of strategy has been closely monitored in the University.

At the same time, it was also found that, in addition to the tight coupling, the University has also adopted a loose coupling in its strategy implementation. This is found to be consistent with the earlier institutionalism suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977), that activities have been loosely coupled in order to protect an organization's legitimacy. In the study, the loose coupling was applied by symbolically portraying that the University strategy had not been inconsistent with efficiency. This has been apparent in the strategy monitoring that has been devised in order to support and justify the University's strategy which conforms to the government.

In general, the theoretical contributions of this study have shed light on the relevance of the seminal works of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Meyer and Rowan (2006) from the context of a Malaysian public university.

2. **Empirical Contributions**

The understanding of the culture and the language spoken in the fieldwork is important in identifying the key issues of the study. As a person that comes from a similar background as the participants in the study, I have been able to capture the real sense of meaning from the interviews conducted in the study. As a result, three empirical contributions have been illuminated from the findings. These are:

Strategy Management Process and Its Influence

The study provides empirical evidence of the institutional theory in the context of a Malaysian public university. It reveals a pertinent influence in the strategy management process of a university, a context which has been rarely researched. The findings suggest the influence of government in the strategy management process of the University in the study. As discussed in Section 7.3, this has been inevitable as all public universities in Malaysia are required to act in line with the government policy. The National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 laid down the demands and expectations of the government on universities, particularly the public universities in Malaysia. In line with this, the strategy of the University in the study had been formulated according to the expectations of the government. As such, the government has been a significant influence in the strategy management process of the University.   This study has brought together studies on institutional theory in the light of a Malaysian public University strategy management process.

Legitimisation Process

The study has also provided empirical evidence of the legitimisation process in the University. The findings suggest legitimacy in the University had been managed by substantive and symbolic management. Hence, the study has presented the legitimisation process which is consistent with the suggestions made by Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) that legitimacy is managed through substantive and symbolic management. The study has produced empirical evidence of different forms of substantive and symbolic management from the study. As suggested by Fiss and Zajac, (2006), there is a need for future strategy studies to be conducted to examine the relationship between

substantive and symbolic actions. This study has illuminated the use of both substantive and symbolic management in the University strategy management process as a means of managing the University's legitimacy.

Direction of a Malaysian Public University

The study provides empirical evidence of the direction of a Malaysian public university. The findings suggest that the University has had a similar experience to universities in the Western countries. Chapter Three discussed the emergence of New Public Management and its challenges for Malaysian universities. The New Public Management development in Malaysia is outlined in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, issued by the Ministry of Higher Education. The New Public Management emphasises accountability and autonomy. Along with this development, it has seen the corporatisation of Malaysian public universities. Corporatisation of universities was meant to provide universities with more autonomy. However, in Malaysia this has been questionable due to the fact that the government is not willing to provide universities, especially the public universities, with full autonomy. This has been clearly stated in the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 document. The accountability aspect of New Public Management has shown its effects on the University in the study. This has seen the trend of managerialism, intensification of work, and emphasis on performance measurement in the study.

It appears that the University in the study has not been excluded from the global trend of New Public Management in making universities more managed and accountable. However, in Malaysia, the development of New Public Management has shown a one- sided effect, i.e. increases in accountability which are not followed by any increase in autonomy. In the study, the lack of autonomy is apparent in the influence of the government on the strategy management process of the University.

8.4 IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

The study is beneficial to the University's management as a mirror on the current strategy practices of the University. It brings to the fore issues of legitimacy in the strategy management process of the University. The legitimacy in the University has been managed by substantive and symbolic management. As discussed in Chapter Seven, the substantive management applied in the University has contributed to the trend of managerialism and coercive working environment. This requires serious attention from the University management team, as it is potentially demoralising for the University staff.

At the same time, the adoption of symbolic management is not helping to improve the situation. This is because the use of symbolic management will only encourage a defensive stance which is a shield against acknowledging reality (Gabriel, 1991;Gabriel, 1995). In a way, it distorts the learning opportunity and creates a mental block (Brown and Starkey, 2000) which could be an impediment to addressing the real issues. In the study, this is apparent in the strategy monitoring that was decoupled from the actual activities. The criteria for strategy evaluations have been devised to support and justify the University strategy. The findings suggest that symbolic management is also apparent in the communication of the University strategy which has been considered as ceremonial as a means to institutionalise the University's expectations.

The effect of substantive and symbolic management has been demoralising on the University staff. By substantive management, the staff need to translate the strategy into their daily tasks, when at the same time they have not been given the opportunity to address the challenges faced as the University also adopts symbolic management. This is the counter effect of engaging into symbolic and substantive management found in the study. It may work in maintaining the University's legitimacy with the government. However, this has affected the people from the inside of the organisation, i.e. the University staff.

One of the suggestions that can be provided is for the University to manage its legitimacy by having good communication with its staff. By being open with regard to its legitimacy requirements, this could enhance the understanding of its staff and would justify the strategy formulated. At the moment, the University has not consulted its staff in its strategy formulation process. This might not be felt as necessary by the University management team, considering the structure of higher education in Malaysia and the influence of government in its strategy management process. However, such an opportunity can be used as a point for discussing and justifying the University strategy. This is in line with the suggestions provided by Beer and Eisenstat (2004) on honest conversations and promotion of dialogue by Tourish (2005). It is important in striking the right chord in managing the University's legitimacy with the government whilst maintaining a conducive working environment for its staff. By doing so, it allows issues to be acknowledged with openness. These suggestions are drawn based on what was found to be lacking in the University, thus important for its improvements.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The findings in this study were based on a single case study of a Malaysian university. Therefore, it is not intended to be generalised to other cases. Nevertheless, it provides an in-depth analysis based on a unique context. The findings from an in-depth analysis can be expanded by other researchers in other substantive fields. By doing so, the findings from this study can be a good basis for comparisons with other similar studies.

2. The interviews conducted in the study were focused on participants from the University and have not been extended beyond the University community. The reason for this is because the study is an exploratory study, a first time study, which explores the strategy management process based on the perspectives of the University participants.

Hence, the study has been focused on gathering in-depth perspectives in bringing out issues from the context of the study.

3. The study was not set up to explore the aspect of legitimacy, i.e. internal or external legitimacy. This is because the main objective of the study was to explore the strategy management process of the University. Legitimacy is a concept that has emerged in the research findings. From the findings it has emerged that the strategy management process of the University is being predominately influenced by the government. This has triggered the concept of legitimacy in the study. The findings suggest that the legitimacy has compelled the University's staff to translate the strategy into their tasks. In other words, the legitimacy has made its entire staff conform to the government expectations. As such, at this stage, the study has brought to the fore the aspect of legitimacy of the University with the government, i.e. external legitimacy. This is mainly because the discussions in the interviews were centred on external legitimacy with the government. Therefore, internal legitimacy has not been explored at this stage. Perhaps, the internal legitimacy can be further explored with more comprehensive views in future research.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has provided a starting point in the exploration of the strategy management process in a Malaysian public university context. Potentially, it provides a rich comprehension of the strategy management process of the University. This kind of research is found to be rarely explored in the existing strategy management literature.

There are various areas that can be explored in extending the present study. This section provides recommendations for further research based on the outcome of the study.

1. It is suggested that similar studies can be conducted on other Malaysian universities, comprised of public and private universities for comparisons of findings to be made. This will help to determine

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the generalisability of the findings in this study and to reveal any other issues in relation to it.

2. Due to the proximity and influence of the government in the strategy management of the case study, it would be beneficial to include government representatives as participants in future study. Their perspectives would provide empirical evidence of their involvement in the University strategy management process.

3. A further study on the trend of managerialism on Malaysian universities staff could be conducted in the future. This will allow further justifications on the existence of managerialism in Malaysian university management. This will explore the aspect of emotional labour of universities' staff in Malaysia as a result of the growing demands placed upon universities globally. The study will potentially contribute to the existing body of knowledge which is currently concentrated on universities from western countries.

4. The implication of performance evaluations on Malaysian university staff could be further investigated. This will provide empirical evidence on the effect of such performance evaluations on the concentration of work carried out by university staff.

5. The issue of internal legitimacy could be explored in future research. This could be by exploring the effect of legitimacy with government on the internal legitimacy within the University. The current study has provided a good basis for this proposed research.

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Chancellor

Board of Directors

Vice Chancellor — Executive Management Team

Senate ———— **Executive Committee**

Operation and Management Team

Head of Internal Audit ------- **Legal Advisor**

DVC 1 | **DVC 2** | **CFO** | **DVC 3** | **Registrar** | **DVC 4** | **Chief Librarian** | **Rector Branch campuses**

DVC 1 branch:

Assistant Vice Chancellor Corporate Communication;
Assistant Vice Chancellor InQKA;
Director Students Admission;
Director IMPAK;
Director MDAB;
Head Auxiliary Police;
Assistant Vice Chancellor iLQAM;
Director Academic Development;
Director Curriculum Affairs;
Director OIA;
Director I-Learn;
Director InED;
Director UPENA

DVC 2 branch:

Director Student Development;
Director Co-Curriculum;
Director Sport Centre;
Director Health Centre

DVC 3 branch:

Assistant Vice Chancellor Research; Assistant Vice Chancellor Development, Facility, Management & ICT;
Head Centre of Strategic Planning

DVC 4 branch:

Assistant Vice Chancellor Entrepreneurship; Community & Industrial Networking

Rector Branch campuses branch:

Director INTEC; Assistant Vice Chancellor Puncak Alam & Puncak Perdana Campus

Deans of Faculties/ Directors of Academic Centres

Head of Programme; Head of Graduate School; Head of MBA

Academic Staff

DVC1 - Deputy Vice Chancellors of Academic and International

DVC2 - Students Affairs & Alumni

DVC3 - Research and Innovation

DVC4 - Industrial & Community Networking

InQKA - Institute of Quality & Knowledge Advancement

ilQam – Institute of Leadership & Quality Management

OIA – Office of International Affairs

UPENA – University Publications Unit

INTEC - International Education College

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Participant Information Sheet

Title of the Study: Exploring Strategy Oversight Gap: A Case Study on a Public University in Malaysia

The Purpose of this Study: This is a PhD study and the findings from the study will be used as part of the PhD thesis material. In the future events, the findings might also be used for the purpose of article publication.

Background of the Study: This study intends to explore the strategy management process of the University. Specifically it aims to gather views from multi level perspectives of a University management particularly in respect to the elements of strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy monitoring experiences in the University. At the end of the study, it is hoped that a theoretical framework will be developed from the data that emerge in the study.

Collection of Data: Semi-structured interviews will be carried out for this purpose and it is estimated that the interview will last for 60 minutes where it shall be recorded using a digital audio recorder. It is important to note that any matters arising after the interviews shall be followed up by a telephone conversation or any other means that is considered suitable for this purpose.

Withdrawal from Research: A participant may withdraw from answering certain questions or totally decide to withdraw from the interview at any point during the interview session by informing the researcher.

Confidentiality and Anonymity Matters: The data obtained from the study will be kept fully anonymous. The identity of the participants as well as the case will not be disclosed in any form. Their personal identity will not be attached or associated with the data or findings obtained from the study. This data will be safeguarded by the researcher and no one will have access to it without the prior consent from the researcher and the participants involved in the study.

All personal information collected will be considered privileged information and dealt with in such a manner as not to compromise the personal dignity of the participants or to infringe upon their right to privacy.

Contact Details: For further information the researcher can be contacted at n.abdul-kadir@uea.ac.uk. or phoned 01603250475.

Consent: Please provide your signature below to state that you have read and understood the content of this Information Sheet and agreed to participate in this research.

Signature of Participant: --

Date: --

Ethical Clearance Form (taken from http://www.blackboard.uea.ac)

<div align="center">

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
NORWICH BUSINESS SCHOOL
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A
RESEARCH PROJECT

</div>

This form is for all staff and students in Norwich Business School (NBS) who are planning research that requires ethical approval (as identified by completion of the Research Ethics Checklist, Form E1). Applicants are advised to read the information available on the NBS Research Ethics site at: http://www.blackboard.uea.ac.uk prior to completing this form. Applications will be considered by the School's ethics committee. Completed applications should be submitted to the Teaching Office (students only) or Clare Cooper (staff only) as appropriate. Please photocopy the completed form for your own records.

1. APPLICANT DETAILS

Name:

School:

Current Status (delete as applicable): UG Student / PGT Student / PGR Student / Staff
If Student, name of primary supervisor and programme of study:

Contact telephone number:
Email address:

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS:
Title:
Start/End Dates:

Funder:
Has funding been applied for? YES NO Application Date:
Has funding been awarded? YES NO
Will ethical approval also be sought for this project from another source? YES NO
If "yes" what is this source?

2.1 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

Please describe the general aims and objectives of the proposed study and research
questions (append original funding application if applicable). Provide any other background which will help the reviewers contextualise your research.

2.2 PARTICIPANTS
Who will be sampled, approximate number, method of contact.

2.3 METHODOLOGY
Please describe your proposed methodology, including details of what participants will be expected to do/experience.

3. ETHICAL ISSUES

3.1 RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES
Is there any sense in which the participants might be obliged to take part? Have the
implications of non-participation be indicated to subjects? Will payment or other
inducements to participation be made to research subjects (if so please describe and
explain justification for this)?

3.2 INFORMED CONSENT
Please give details of how consent is to be obtained from participants. Will participants be informed of the proposed use of the data? Please attach a copy of the proposed consent form and any information sheets to this application.

3.3 PROTECTION OF PARTICIPANTS
What risks are entailed for the participants through their involvement in the research? Are there any potential physical, psychological or disclosure dangers? What procedures have been established for the care and protection of participants? Please attach a risk assessment if one has been prepared for the proposed study.

3.4 WITHDRAWAL FROM RESEARCH
Will participants be told explicitly that they are free to leave the study at any time without jeopardy? If so, when and how will this be done?

3.5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY
Please state who will have access to the data and what measures will be adopted to maintain the confidentiality of research subjects and to comply with data protection requirements?

What will happen to the data at the end of the proposed project?

3.6 DECEPTION
Is any deception involved in the proposed research? If so, please describe and give reasons for its use.

3.7 DEBRIEFING
How will participants be debriefed? If they will not be debriefed, give reasons for this.

3.8 THIRD PARTY DATA
Will you require access to data on research subjects held by a third party? Where this is the case please describe the arrangements you intend to make to gain access to and to safeguard this information.

3.9 USE OF DRUGS / TESTING OF NEW MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
Does the proposed project involve either of the above or research on NHS staff or patients?
If so it MUST be referred to an NHS Research Ethics Committee for approval and details of this application (date, name of COREC) should be given below.

3.10 PROTECTION OF RESEARCHERS
Please state any specific precautions proposed to protect the health and safety of
researchers and others associated with the project (other than participants). Please attach a risk assessment if one has been prepared for the proposed study.

4. DECLARATION:
I am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project. I will abide by the procedures described in this form.

Signature of Applicant:
Date:
Supervisor declaration (for student research only)

I have discussed the ethics of the proposed research with the student and am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project.

Signature of Supervisor:

Date:

Attachments

The following are not mandatory attachments but may help the reviewers when considering your project for ethical approval – please tick if attached and list any additional attachments below:

☐ **Application for funding**   **Other   (please state):**

☐ **Written consent form**

☐ **Participant information sheet**

☐ **Participant risk assessment**

☐ **Researcher risk assessment**

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Considered by NBS-REC / Chair's Action (delete as applicable) on:
            (Date)

NBS-REC Recommendation:

Accept Amend and Resubmit

Amend Reject

NBS-REC Comments:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS- Executive Management Team

1. *What is your role in relation to the University's strategy?*
2. *Can you describe the current University strategy?*
3. *Can you explain how is the strategy of the University formulated?*
4. *How is the University strategy communicated?*
5. *How is the University strategy being carried out?*
6. *What is your challenge in managing the University's strategy?*
7. *How do these challenges affect your department?*
8. *In general, what is your opinion on the University strategy formulated?*
9. *What is your opinion on the University strategy monitoring?*
10. *From your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*
11. *If you were to improve on the University strategy process, what would be the areas for improvements?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS- Operation and Management Team

1. *Can you describe your role in relation to the strategy setting of the University?*
2. *Can you describe the current University strategy that is directly effecting this department?*
3. *Can you identify the challenges faced by this department in implementing the University strategy?*
4. *In the context of this department, is there anybody/ any specific unit that actually manages the University strategy?*
5. *In your opinion what are the challenges faced by this department in managing the University strategy?*
6. *From your opinion, what do you think about the whole strategic process of the university?*
7. *What can be done in order to improve things further?*
8. *Can you suggest any academic staff from this department that has been involved in the strategy process of the University?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS- Executive Management Team (Strategic Group)

1. *Can you describe your role in relation to the strategy setting of the University?*
2. *How is the strategy of the University formulated?*
3. *Can you describe the current University strategy?*
4. *Can you tell me how the University strategy being cascaded?*
5. *Tell me about the strategic group of the University?*
6. *How does the strategy process actually take place in the University?*
7. *Can you identify the challenges faced in the University strategy implementation?*
8. *In the context of this University, is there anybody/ any specific department that actually manages (providing feedbacks/monitoring/oversees) the strategy of the University?*
9. *How does the University strategy being managed?*
10. *What are the challenges faced in managing the strategy of the University?*
11. *In your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*
12. *If you're to improve on the University strategy process, what would be the areas for improvements?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS-Operation and Management Team [reflect the changes as a result of 'trail of discovery']

1. *Can you describe your role in relation to the strategy setting of the University?*
2. *Can you describe the current University strategy that is directly effecting this department?*
3. *Can you identify the challenges faced by this department in implementing the University strategy?*
4. ***What do you think about the support given by the management in implementing the University strategy?***
5. *In the context of this department, is there anybody/ any specific unit that actually manages the University strategy?*
6. *In your opinion what are the challenges faced by this department in managing the University strategy?*
7. *From your opinion, what do you think about the whole strategic process of the University?*
8. *What can be done in order to improve things further?*
9. *Can you suggest any academic staff from this department that has been involved in the strategy process of the University?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS –Academic Staff

1. *How do you relate your work in relation to University strategy?*
2. *What is your opinion on the University strategy?*
3. *How well do you think the University strategy is being communicated?*
4. *Can you identify the challenges faced in the University strategy implementation?*
5. *From your views, what will be the important elements in implementing the University strategy?*
6. *What do you think about the support given by the University management in implementing the University strategy?*
7. *From your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*
8. *What can be done in order to improve things further?*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS –Academic Staff [to reflect the changes as a result of 'trail of discovery']

1. *How do you relate your work in relation to University strategy?*
2. *What is your opinion on the University strategy?*
3. *How well do you think the University strategy is being communicated?*
4. *Can you identify the challenges faced in the University strategy implementation?*
5. *From your views, what will be the important elements in implementing the University strategy?*
6. *What do you think about the support given by the University management in implementing the University strategy?*
7. ***How well do you think the management is looking into the aspects of employees well being in meeting the challenges in relation to University strategy implementation?***
8. *From your personal opinion, what do you think about the whole strategy process of the University?*
9. *What can be done in order to improve things further?*

Number of Participants

Opinion on University Strategy

The Emerging Themes	Number of Participants
Top down	19
Guided by government	18
Managerialism	15
Attempts to institutionalise the university strategy	14
A lot of strategy	9
Strategy not reflected at the operational level	5
Politicised	4

Strategy Implementation

The Emerging Themes	Number of Participants
Lack of resources	17
Increase in tasks	16
Time constraints	4

Strategy Monitoring

The Emerging Themes	Number of Participants
ISO certifications	15
On papers	12
Open mindedness to feedback	6
Monitoring initiatives and feedback	5
Political	5

Free Nodes

admit the challenge of balancing between the government bureaucracy and need for improvement
bureaucracy hard to break- must find other ways to speed up the work process
but in terms our ver.. verification to say yes they actually did it that one we we have not actually gone to each department and check like audit 'lah' [yeah]
challenge when working with people and to make people work with you
challenges in managing strategic change -non
challenges research strategic plan
challenges to implementation-time management as a result of other commitment
challenges to s. implementation- getting the data
challenges to strategy implementation- human behaviour
challenges to strategy implementation-budget constraints to get more lecturers
challenges to strategy implementation-commitment from the people
challenges to strategy implementation-decline in lecturers
challenges to strategy implementation-making people understand
challenges to strategy implementation-to stay committed
challenges to strategy- multiple strategy
challenges to strategy- people who doesn't subscribe to the strategy formulated
challenges to strategy- social agenda
challenges to strategy-people who talks rather than doing
communication efforts- doesn't work
communication efforts to make it work-documents
communication ineffective-reasons - middle management
communication must result in actions
communication- not all transpire
communication the strategy to the staffs is a problem-communication do not

pass down
constraints to implement the strategy-not a part time job
convincing staffs to take up responsibility
despites the constraints-most of the job performed
efforts in supporting constraints on lecturers- to reduce workload
efforts to focus on research-incentives workshops
i'm proud of the university, Vc say that we are a very well known institution
incentives for research- well endowed grants in science
incentives for research- grants social science limited
incentives provided by university to encourage research-promotions
its easier to have somebody from outside to review and comments on the faculty management
management knows and aware of the work load issue but this cant be solved immediately as it will effects budget
management role in relation to the heavy workload
management support for staffs-development
managing strategic change is hard when you have heavy loads.
mmt strategic change into RU need financing- for space, support staffs
mmt achievement- 10 folds in 8 years
mmt being the dean aware of the need to get people to work with her
mmt challenges in medical school in getting lecturers
mmt challenges to strategy implementation-resistance to change
mmt challenges with monitoring-people
mmt challenges with strategy -it keeps on changing
mmt changing people attitude is a challenge in strategy implementation
mmt communication and justification is important to convince people to change
mmt communication is a challenge- to make people understand the same thing
mmt communication must be continuous
mmt communication of strategy - VC speech relayed to MMT, broad strategic planning
mmt communication problem in the faculty due to age gap

mmt despite all the communications- message still not delivered across
mmt despite having said about the infrastructure problem, he believe that the strategy 200,000 is not a problem
mmt difficult to understand from own experience- communication can be misleading
mmt effect on having to work in constraints-stress
mmt effects of limited classrooms, class overflowing, lecturer have to turn away students, creates tensions with the faculty management
mmt effects of the constraints on people-demotivation
mmt feedback on challenges at faculty level conveyed by the deans
mmt feels that university has done well in its strategic planning as there are tremendous achievement that have been achieved considering its size, and tradition
mmt happy with the current leadership and says that he knows how to pick the right people for the right job
mmt iso for monitoring and getting certification-celebrating the means and not the ends
mmt lecturers that go against the directive- will be penalised on other aspects
mmt like to see more discussion across departments in working towards strategic change
mmt maintaining quality of academic staffs-courses and programs
mmt maintaining quality using ISO
mmt management promise - management have constraints- only half delivered and not timely
mmt management support not really to be seen
mmt meeting with top management is for disseminate information rather than discuss
mmt monitoring of the strategic change- using the quality management system,
mmt monitoring strategic change- is to get people understand the need and the situations
mmt monitoring-is it measuring the right thing
mmt monitroing quality every 6 months, review-measuring the current situations and how far from the goal

mmt nonitoring is not effective - is management being rhetoric, only for political agenda
mmt one strategic change lead to many changes in the system
mmt overall strategy of the university- it can be achieved
mmt promotions not transparent and depends on whether tmt knows you, more than anything else
mmt resistance can be overcome with communication and feels that vc has done well in communicating as the rate of those engaging in research has increased
mmt role in strategy implementation is to give feedback to the tmt
mmt role of ILQAM in line with the strategy of university to become RU, then it has incorporated under its training the elements of research
mmt strategy planning has not taken consideration of the people at tactical level- the tactical level is expected to do whatever is being directed
mmt strategic change - internationalisation, research university,
mmt strategic change challenge is to see changes take place within the people in timely manner
mmt strategic change challenge- turn it into actions
mmt strategic change challenges- balancing strategy and quality
mmt strategic change challenges- resources not there on time
mmt strategic change challenges- resources, is it there, budget, space, infra
mmt strategic change challenges- to communicate, to make people understand and be committed
mmt strategic change challenges working within the constraints-infra and financial-because the requirements doesn't go hand in hand with the strategy
mmt strategic change challenges-resistance to change
mmt strategic change- get support from the office circle is important
mmt strategic change- implementation takes time-increase the evaluation cretria for certain grades in the system
mmt strategic change- in fact moving into many different directions
mmt strategic change- into RU staffs need to collaborate- need of funding
mmt strategic change management supports in moving towards RU
mmt strategic change monitoring result in improvements
mmt strategic change- monitoring the infra, facilities etc

mmt strategic change monitoring with ISO beneficial -other people monitors, monitoring more timely
mmt strategic change- needs resources to make it work
mmt- strategic change previous strategy- strengthening the programs, bumiputras,
mmt strategic change require cooperation between various departments which is still not available
mmt strategic change- rewards people so they change
mmt strategic change- the existence of the centre to support the change
mmt strategic change the faculty receives a lot of support from the top due to its size
mmt strategic change- to make it happen- financial resources
mmt strategic change -to make it happen- supports from all rounds of staffs
mmt strategic change triggered by the environment
mmt strategic change-gbs uses power to get staffs to teach
mmt strategic change-getting more space,
mmt strategic change-not in line with vision and mission of the university
mmt strategic change-reasons for change-globalization
mmt strategic change-reasons for change-university is ready
mmt strategic change-system change- administration must also change
mmt strategic change-system change curriculum need to change
mmt strategic change-system change- giving students the right exposure
mmt strategic change-to research university challenge is to deal with the human resource
mmt strategic implementation at the faculty level- must be in line with the university strategic plan
mmt strategic implementation challenges- constraints supporting staffs
mmt strategic implementation- monitoring is done by the management team of the faculty
mmt strategising to achieve its faculty objectives by having good curriculum,
mmt strategy change feedback- infra problem still exist
mmt strategy formulation must benefit the people involve
mmt strategy formulation- too many things to do at the same time
mmt strategy implementation - economic down turn facing budget cut

mmt strategy implementation- infrastructure is slow comparing to the rate of the progress
mmt strategy implementation- role enhancing the skills of the academic staffs in becoming academic administrator
mmt strategy implementation- approach discussion among faculty staffs
mmt strategy implementation challenges - tmt don't actually listen and take actions on the grievances of the people at the tactical level
mmt strategy implementation challenges- to overcome resistance, vc efforts to make them informed
mmt strategy implementation challenges- attitude of some people
mmt strategy implementation challenges- budget constraints
mmt strategy implementation challenges- bureaucracy
mmt strategy implementation challenges- constraints in resources- academic staffs
mmt strategy implementation challenges is to move the staffs
mmt strategy implementation challenges- produces the best, competing with the rests
mmt strategy implementation challenges- some people just not bother
mmt strategy implementation challenges- the size can create vacuum in understanding information given at the top
mmt strategy implementation challenges- to convince people to change
mmt strategy implementation challenges-communicating strategy
mmt strategy implementation challenges-infrastructure constraints
mmt strategy implementation challenges-people do not understand
mmt strategy implementation challenges-to understand, translate from broad strategy
mmt strategy implementation constraints on lecturers- workloads
mmt strategy implementation- despite the multi tasking demanded on the lecturers- one of the ways to ensure quality is by monitoring and certification by ISO
mmt strategy implementation effects- constraints on lecturers- classrooms
mmt strategy implementation -keeping up with the ISO certification standard

mmt strategy implementation- leader must make people understand
mmt strategy implementation lecturers are pressed with a lot of work, to conform with the quality management requirement, teaching loads, overflowing students in a small class,
mmt strategy implementation -management is supportive, initiatives must come from the faculty and must ask from the top
mmt strategy implementation- mmt aware that staffs need to be motivated and motivations comes from good understanding
mmt strategy implementation- most of the time its a directive from government when a lot of things required not in place
mmt strategy implementation- resources classrooms is a problem
mmt- strategy implementation role
mmt strategy implementation- role in support of the strategy
mmt strategy implementation role is giving input to the tmt, are informed but not involved in setting the strategy
mmt strategy implementation -scholarship, quality should not be overlooked
mmt strategy implementation some degree of freedom in strategising but not in all aspects
mmt strategy implementation- system must support the strategy movement
mmt strategy implementation the workforce resist to change-the nature of the university which is actually started from institute
mmt strategy implementation welfare of the staffs- thinks is good
mmt strategy implementation-challenges research not a problem as the faculty is still new, so not use to the teaching tradition
mmt strategy implementation-mismatch between strategy and resources
mmt strategy implementation-monitoring done by PPS only on papers
mmt strategy implementation-strategy of the faculty is in line with the university
mmt strategy implementation-the change in strategy promote the change in the faculty
mmt strategy implementation-thinks that workload not a problem- lecturers must manage their time
mmt strategy implementation-what lead to the classroom problem-bureaucracy

mmt strategy is rhetoric, but not even followed through
mmt strategy of faculty in line with the objectives of the faculty- produce medical leaders
mmt strategy so far - satisfied as a lot of work has been put previously
mmt stratgey change challenges-management promise to look into it but will it materialised
mmt stratgey change- increase intake of students
mmt support for research comes after being informed by vc
mmt supports are given to promote research- training, promotion exercise, colloquium to promote research culture, faculty coming out with own journals
mmt supports are given to promote research- training, software
mmt supports by the tmt to promote research- policy to encourage paper presentations
mmt the challenge of communication even there is communication its not cascading to everybody
mmt the strategic change come from government directive
mmt the support staffs also having constraints- not so helpful towards the lecturer
mmt tmt should be serious in solving lecturers constraints, they should do their part
mmt top management of the faculty follows what the tmt says, something hinders them from being frank with the tmt
mmt understanding comes with discussion
mmt what is said is not always done-rhetoric
mmt- communicating strategy is not effective when leader talks of the same things every year- not effective so people don't bother
mmt-feedback given to tmt but problems remains
mmt-inka does the auditing in monitoring other departments strategy moves and encourage for best practices
mmt-strategic change as a response to government
mmt-strategy implementation-too short of a time
mmt-strategy implementation-what's been done-action plan initiatives
monitoring the strategy implementation-giving information on lecturers development

no actions taken even if the tmt knows about the performance of certain mmt-
open mindedness of the faculty management to accept comments for improvement
opinion on leadership of university-transformational leader
performance evaluation of the staffs is without consulting the staffs concern
promoting research in the department-KPI
research commendable
resources-lack of staffs to perform the tasks
response to the delegation of work-some people are receptive some are not
seems that strategy is all about documentation, people are working hard to get the documentation done
staffs not being confirmed because have not done the research that is required for confirmation- the staffs leave
staffs should be rewarded on fair and just basis
strategy implementation challenges-communication of strategy based on common values
strategy implementation challenges-getting management support is crucial in order to make the strategy work
strategy implementation- de motivating when credit is not given when it is due
strategy implementation- limited opportunity for being rewarded
strategy implementation the management of the faculty is not moving fast enough
strategy implementation-inputs to remove the challenges
strategy implementation-monitoring is there but how effective is it
strategic change- people have to move along
strategic change- people move but support system doesn't
strategic change- top making people understand
strategic change- top relayed information
strategic change-elements needed-top commitment
strategic change-necessary in staying ahead
strategy communication- a lot have been done but people don't take interest in it
strategy formulation challenges- to maintain continuity, at many point it is too

attach to personality
strategy formulation changes frequently
strategy implementation challenges-how do you turn the strategy into actions
strategy implementation- believe that staffs are willing to do more than expected, even without the support of the management
strategy implementation challenges - strategy change when those initiating the strategy not longer there
strategy implementation challenges -constraints time, human behaviour
strategy implementation challenges- getting the action plan to support the strategy
strategy implementation challenges- resources hard to get due to system which is not supportive
strategy implementation challenges the system doesn't promote research culture, exam oriented,
strategy implementation challenges-constraints on the lecturer
strategy implementation- coping is a problem
strategy implementation- last minute- due to consensus needed from the group
strategy implementation- last minute effects class postponement
strategy implementation people need to be motivated to commit-giving rewards
strategy implementation- research culture starts with teaching that promotes research
strategy implementation- system is not supportive bureaucracy
strategy implementation- the need to recruit best quality staffs in ensuring the university perform
strategy implementation- too attach with personality , never being folowed through
strategy implementation- virtual, don't put pressure on physical
strategy implementation- what support the research university strategy- supporting environment-research culture
strategy implementation- workload high, class size big- difficult for lecturers to do research

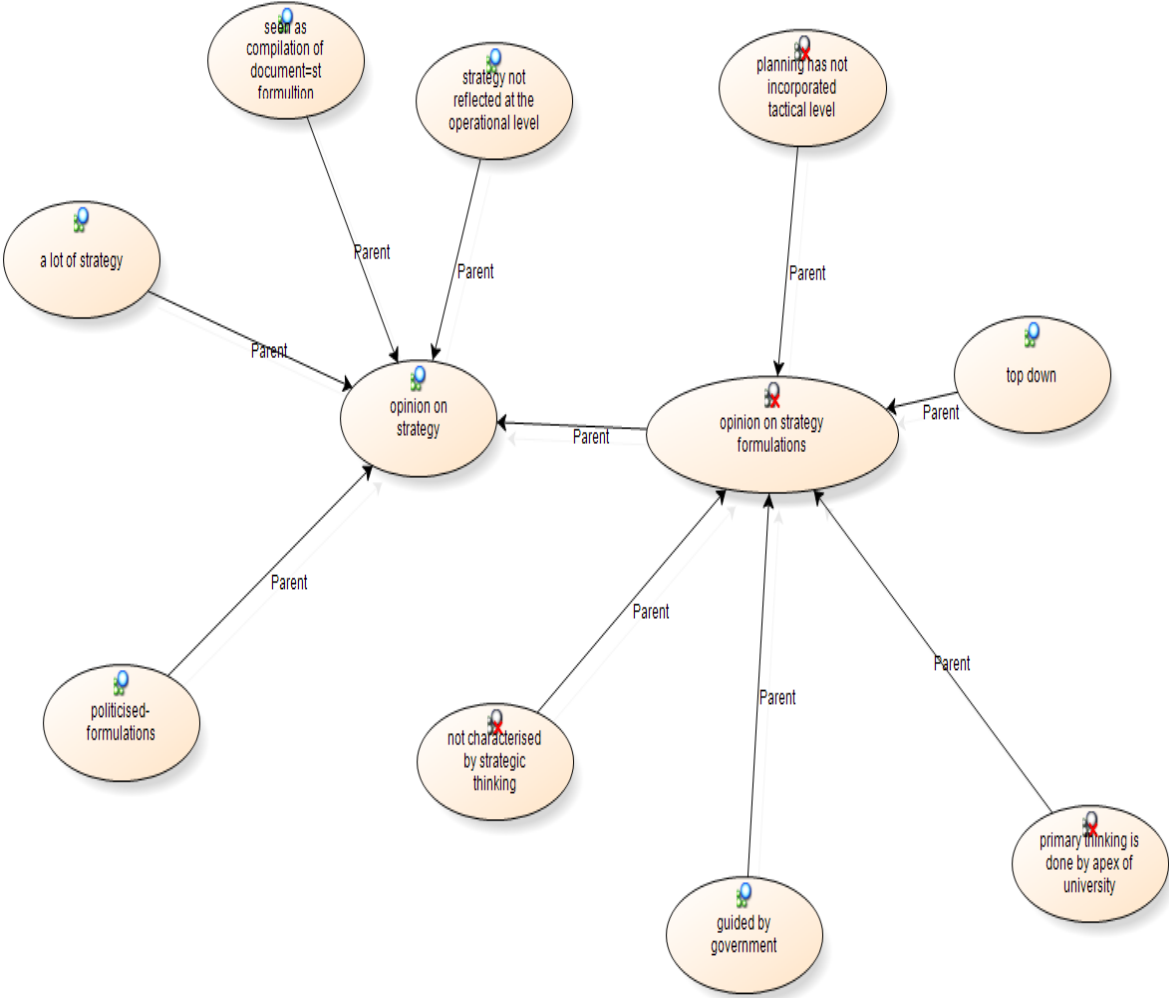| |
|---|
| strategy implementation-constraints for the staffs - high ratios of students |
| strategy implementation-constraints lecturer-understanding needed |
| strategy implementation-last minute-due to last minute info |
| strategy implementation-management support in workloads |
| strategy implementation-no efforts shown in capitalising on technology |
| strategy implementation-people are confused with whats the meaning of strategy |
| strategy implementation-resources is limited, which is not in line with the strategy |
| strategy implementation-teaching workloads constraining from moving towards strategy |
| strategy implementation-understanding comes through kinship, kinship creates commitment and easier for leader to manage |
| strategy implementation-what's the need for ISO, help people to conform, doesn't promote research |
| strategy to increase number of students- inline with market need |
| strategy implementation research university challenges-support from tmt to reduce workload, environment-wasted time to conform |
| tenure of academic administrator should be limited to certain period |
| the challenge to strategy implementation at this faculty is having ineffective leadership |
| the change in the status of the organization from institute to university changes its strategy at the faculty |
| |
| the limitation of tenure will result in less commitment among the academic administrator |
| |
| The specific Strategic change that has happen to the university which is directly related to my department is definitely eer the aspirations to become a research university, so although it's an aspirations, but we have to work towards becoming eer eer RU |
| tmt achievement of university |
| tmt budget is for a year, so has to wait for another year in getting allocation for appointment of lecturers |

tmt efforts in communicating- vc speech, booklet
tmt- even hard to implement strategy as its very vague
tmt getting resources can be hard as all universities fighting over same pool of people
tmt- human resource requirement is hard to meet
tmt involve in strategy setting of the university
tmt ISO is seem to be the answer to the strategy solution
tmt leave to the people to decide how they will perform
tmt managing strategic change-the result is not immediate
tmt monitoring is for monitoring the process and not the strategy
tmt monitoring the strategy plan
tmt -needs to communicate to every one - challenge to strategy implementation
tmt rewards system must support the strategy formulation
tmt speed up the process in appointment of academic staffs
tmt strategic planning university follows of the directive from government
tmt strategy change challenges to manage people, making people change
tmt strategy communication-documentation
tmt strategy communication-one way is to inform rather than discuss
tmt strategy formulation top down and bottom up where necessary
tmt strategy formulation-determine what university aspire than call for strategy meeting-how to achieve what the university aims for
tmt strategy implementation challenges in ensuring that the strategy support the strategy intent
tmt strategy implementation challenges-getting the message across, size is big
tmt strategy implementation challenges-making people committed
tmt strategy implementation hard as multi tasking
tmt strategy monitoring- initiatives, and feedback
tmt strategy unit of university-pps, how they work
tmt streamlining the activities with the directive of the government
tmt understanding of the leader's importance role in committing people to

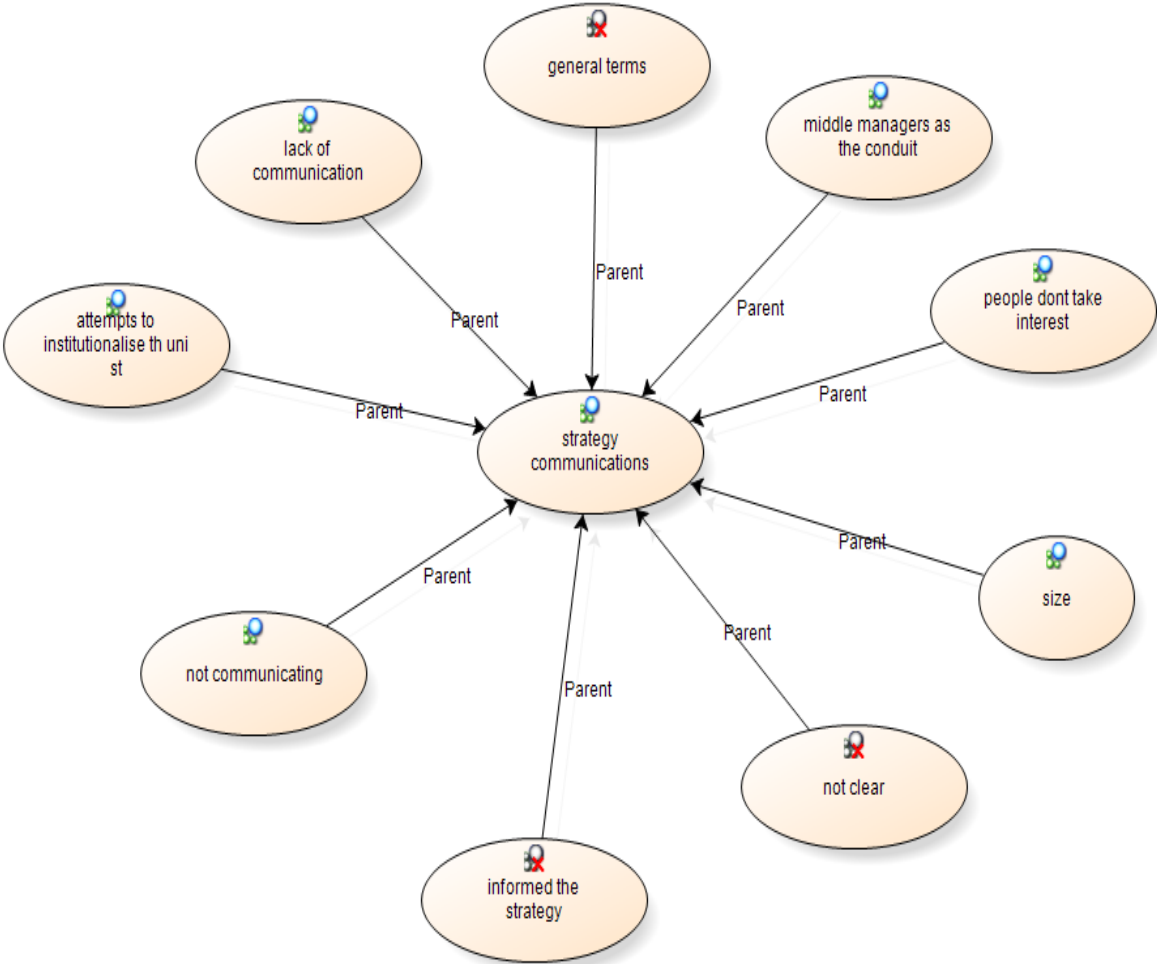| |
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| change |
| tmt understanding of the mmt role to convey what the leader wants to the masses |
| tmt views on whether people understand what leader wants |
| tmt-people are too busy with their daily routine that they forget the strategy tasks-monitoring |
| tmt-role of tnca in relation to strategy of university- wcu |
| tmt-strategy communication -tmt communication at every chance |
| tmt-strategy formulation based on government initiatives |
| too many strategy at one time |
| too many things to do, teaching, committee to move the strategy |
| universities' Malaysia are competing to become a research university |
| views on strategic achievements-positive view |
| views that communication is important in managing the strategic change |
| We have the ISO and everything isn't it ~ all those maintenance were everything I think it was already been documented in the ISO~~The ISO..... you have to look at what we're trying to achieve in the ISO, is it teaching..... 'dia dia ada dia punya', [they have got their] there |
| workload in University X is heavier than other universities |
| workload to be reduced part of strategy but still unachieved |
| workload- nature of the university which in the beginning only focus on teaching |

Tree Nodes

- **Opinion on University strategy**
  - Top down
  - Strategy not reflected at the operational level
  - Attempts to institutionalize University strategy
    - Seen as compilation of document
    - Not communicating
  - Politicised
  - Managerialism
  - Guided by government
  - A lot of strategy

- **Strategy Implementation**
  - Time constraints
  - Lack of resources
    - Operation doesn't change
  - Increase in tasks
  - Strategy directive keeps changing

- **Strategy Monitoring**
  - Political in monitoring
  - Open mindedness to feedback
  - On paper monitoring
  - ISO certification
    - Seen as no point

Development of Initial Themes

increase in tasks

time constraints

lack of resources (2)

collective actions

strategy directive keeps changing

operations doesn't change

strategy implementation challenges

from institutions to university

size

managing people

Parent

Parent

Parent

Parent

Parent

Parent

Parent

Parent

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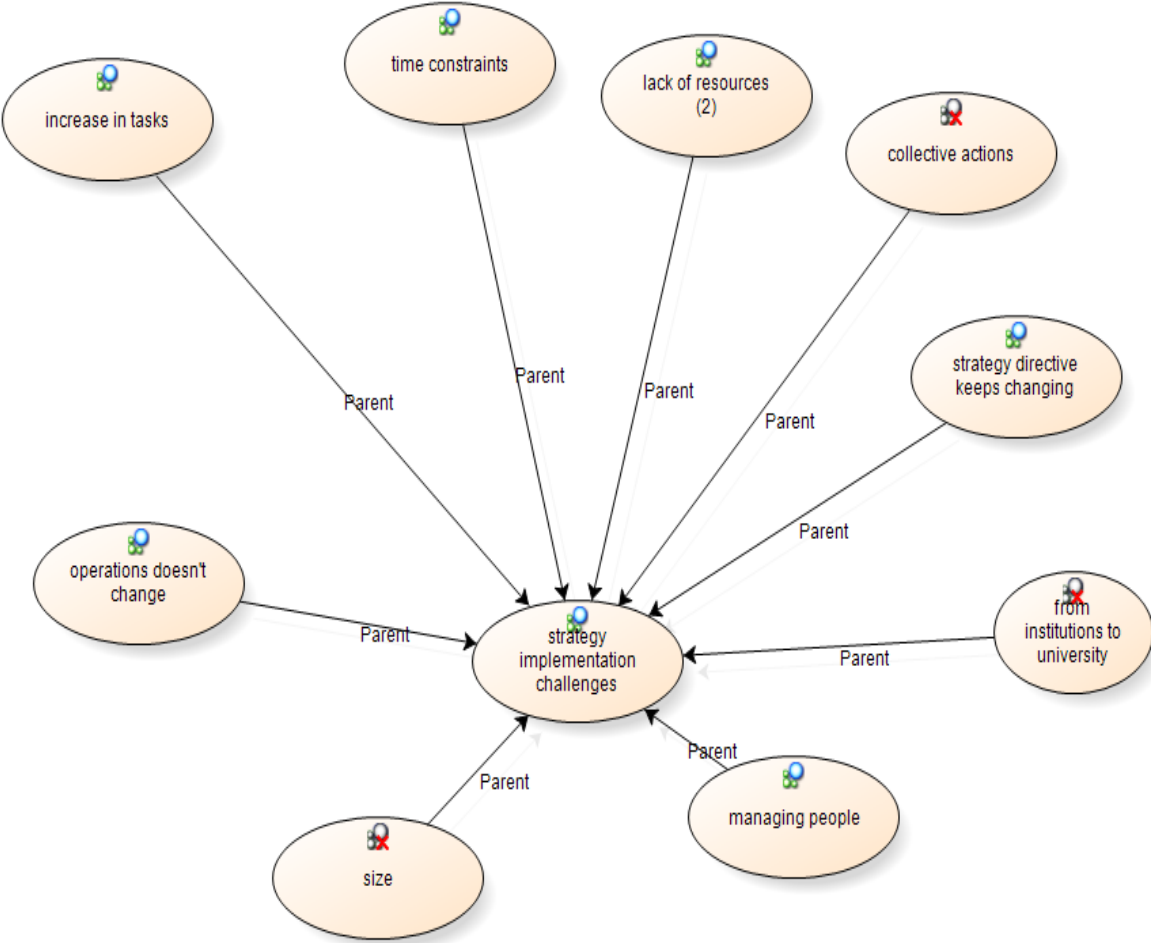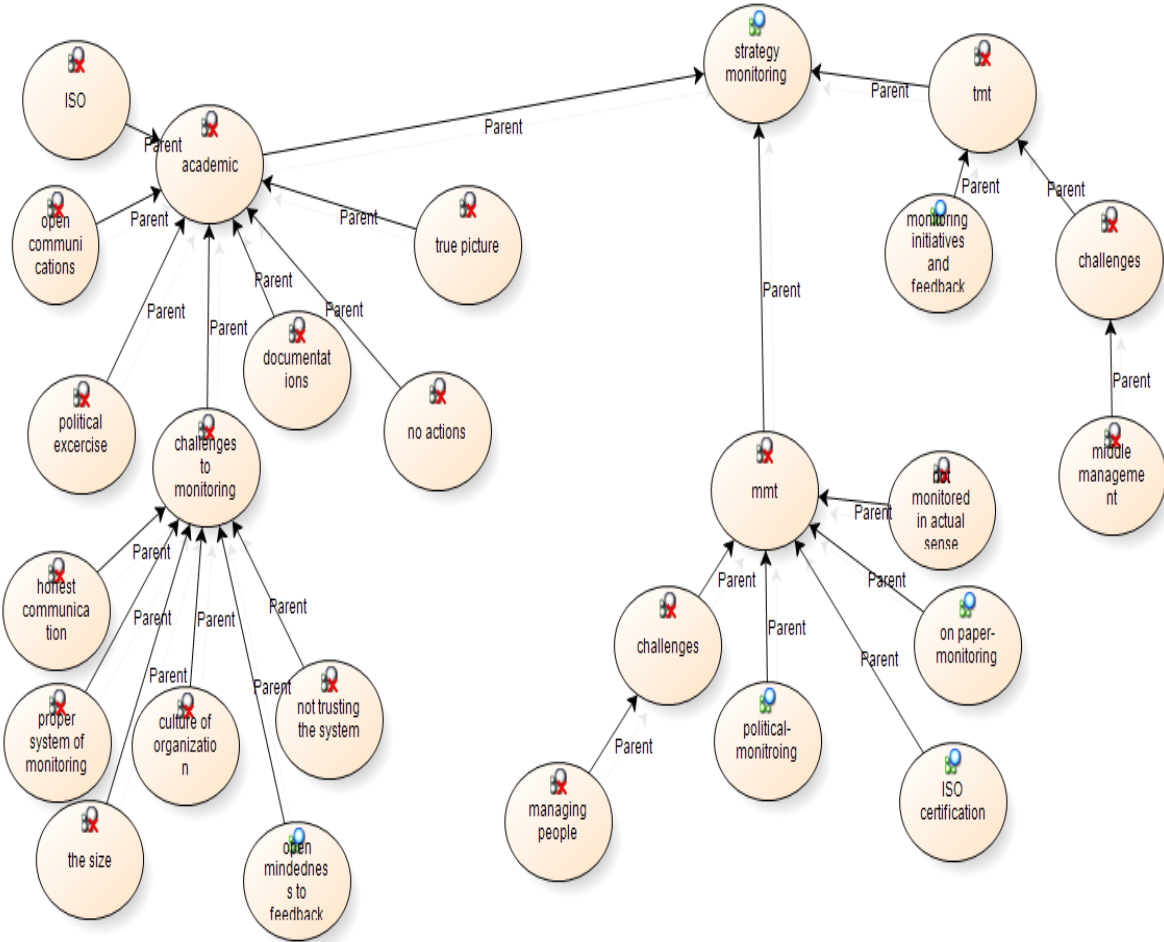
Examples of Excerpts from Interviews

Opinion on University Strategy Formulation

1. Guided By Government

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"Yes we are very much guided, whatever cost we are taking is very much related to the government, because it is always the government lead things, the funder is the government... unless if we have our own money we can direct ourselves what we want to be..."*
Head of Graduate School	*"Okay now eer.... one of the strategic change that was required under the directive given by the.. the... government, was to increase the number of students"*
Director of INTEC	*"the goals or the visions are always aligned with the ministry of higher education, and aligned with the ministry of education and aligned to the federal government, it is that...".*
Academic 4	*"strategy ni [this strategy] actually the way I look at it, actually comes from the ministry, so... very much so ministry 'kata' [says] 200,000, 200,000lah [then 200,000]*
Academic 9	*"...government university, you know we have to abide but the UPU and so on and so forth"*

2. Managerialism

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"We have our own officers to monitor but you have your people down there to ensure that the initiatives are being carried out, what is the progress line, if it is not being carried out, why is it not, we have a periodical, so you can ask Dr. N, to explain all these mechanism."*
Registrar	*"...every staff will have their own performance indicators. Of course it will have to match of departmental and then as an overall for the registrar office. So we do have our monitoring mechanism in that sense. So report is done monthly. Monthly to the process document owners and then it will be given to the heads of units to monitor."*
Academic 1	*"...is the culture of the university, it tends to be very eem...like these responsibilities are of the top management, they ...they eer.. they have to make them, they have to make this decision, then..emm.. they make them, but the eem..the dissemination of this, getting a broad community involved is not something required to do. It's my responsibility, I have to make the decision..."*
Dean 4	*"at the end of the month, yeah.. when I came in as a Dean, I started to aa.. get the aa.. aa.. the aa.. office to print me out, every single person, the attendance for the month because everyone is suppose to fulfill a 38.5, 38.7 to seven point eight or something like that hours per week, so that comes to about 120 or less kan.. per month..right?.. so that should show aa.. the attendance so.. "*
Head of Graduate School	*"....but for people who just refuse to teach just because it's at night you know what reason do you have other than well I have to go back and take care of my children or whatever, to us you are working here you know you are you are govern by the rules here you know if we give you workload, we give you workload within the range that's required, if that workload falls within the range we have to work and normally we are reasonable, we don't give you night class twice, not even twice a week,*

| | once a week and normally it's paid ok but otherwise if if the workload cannot be increased due to some reasons, it is not paid they will still have to take you know because it's a directive, the directive the dean issue the letter so there's no way they can say no but they are people who go round you know get someone to tell the dean to remove there are people, not many" |

3. Attempts to Institutionalise University Strategy

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	"We produce the blueprint, a master copy of RMK 9 for example, that would be the direction that the university is heading on various field academic, 'sumber manusia' [human resource]', ICT, you can have a copy we can give it to you and from time to time Dato' [title given] come out with monograph that is his annual speech 'amanat tahun baru' [New Years' Speech] document in a form of hard copy and also CD."
Registrar	"at the university levels the Vice Chancellor who is the head of the university would give his maiden speech for the year. His expectations and what are the challenges. Now as registrar of the university, I would take the same mm.. template, in that sense and get it translated to the operational at registrar's office"
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International	Em..there's many ways to make sure that things are being pass down or cascade down to the masses, as you know University x [name of the university] is a very big org, we have steps and eer... levels normally our VC will cascade this down in eer.. meetings and err..during visits ok eer...and eer... I would normally also go to branch campuses from visits, for audit and so and so, every time we meet or people, we have to make sure that all these policies are always being reminded"
Director of Academic Centre	"Dato' is talking about entrepreneurial, innovative RU,..."
Academic 1	"in the speeches that ...that ...they tend to give life to the strategic intend of ..the chief...the VC give the speech."

4. A lot of Strategy

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Head of MBA Programme	"It's clear but my main problem is that sometimes it keeps changing, along the line it diverts into something else."
Dean 7	"the VC has identified that it's not any usual university it has to be innovative , entrepreneur research university, so he will give you that so he will give what are the criteria that actually fits the innovative entrepreneur research university. When you go back to the faculty you need to translate that into what can be done."
Academic 1	"...because so much of plans that have been communicated and you don't know how to organize them say this are the no 1 priority, things like that eer..at any point in time they may list you 20, 30..."
Academic 3	"No to me when you talk about you know your strategy is number one you want to go for 200 students, 200,000 students at the same time you want to go for research university, these are 2 strategies which I I think you know is conflicting, ok because ok when you say research university, are you telling us we have 200,000 students, we're teaching students towards research, or you're asking for the lecturers or the culture within you know the faculty 'ke' [or], you know within campus towards research? If you want to go towards research we have to be practical, ok, 200 students, meaning to say more ATA, ok now you want the lecturers to be into research, ok how can you balance that you tell me, we cannot..."

Academic 4	*"...strategy 'ni' [this strategy] changes most of the time [laughing]*
Academic 6	*"... when I see LAN 'kini kepada' [now changes to] MQA, which of course we're going to do it, we got no choice, before it was only the IPTS, now we are into it, then we move in ... I mentioned earlier APEX right, for grant, yes, then they say fast track, fast track that means Ministry of Higher Education say fast track, [ ] the university says fast track to us, we will say to our people what, fast track, ..."*

5. The Strategy is not Reflected at the Operational Level

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International	*"Ok..well as it is now I would say we have beautiful policies, we have eer...good strategy, the only things is that we have to make sure that all the smaller policies, ok ...I'm not worried about the main policy sometimes it the instructions from the government or our own dream of becoming of what we want to be....but the smaller policies have to make sure that all the rules, guidelines, procedures will support the bigger policy otherwise there no point having our dreams or inspirations of becoming world class uni but when it comes to the policy of giving scholarship to the the staffs from e.g. , it doesn't work towards that, so what's the point or the policy from e.g., rewarding lecturer when they do research or when they publish in good journals for e.g., if the policy doesn't support..it's not supporting all the bigger policy then there's no point having bigger policy, when your subordinates do not support you, if I were given a chance I will make sure that these smaller policy will be polished, will be oiled, so that they will move even faster to support the bigger policy"*
Head of MBA Programme	*"...so there's a lot of loose ends, yeah so planning at that level has not incorporated the day to day kind of thing you know,."*
Academic 1	*"The strategy is just a change, a guide to behaviour, individual and groups must behave different, now you must behave as a researcher, do things that research demands and things like that, if you do the same things as you do 10 years ago, actually at the ...in the trenches there is no strategy change. There is no strategy change in the trenches,..."*
Academic 3	*"If you want to go towards research we have to be practical, okay, 200 students, meaning to say more ATA [teaching hours] okay, now you want the lecturers to be into research, okay how can you balance that you tell me, we cannot".*
Academic 8	*" research never allows me to conform, research allows me to think, explore, so for as far the environment, if you mean that as support if the environment a support is not there then there's no point, you got your ISO 2000 or whatever, whatever it is 'lah', [yeah] you got all kind of these and that, guidelines towards this, guidelines towards that then you're not encouraging a lecturer's own initiative of what's the best way to teach the subject matter then the students can enquire knowledge,.."*

6. Politicised

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Head of MBA Programme	*"...don't know .... I don't know .... somehow either they are more interested in telling the world see this is what I've done, but whether I've achieved what I set out to do, I do not know whether they really do it you know . we like to .... 'kita suka mewarwarkan kelebihan ke...ke' [we like to brag about our strength] you know what we've done, University x [name of the*

	university]is the first to get ISO and things like that but so what you know?"
Academic 1	*" ...when the 200,000 was given eer we were given time frame of 2015, the VC said no I'll do it in 2010. It may be appealing to u know show that we can get it done, but ..em...we almost double eem...at the time they were talking you know we are about 90,000, so it's almost doubling the populations, infra...emm even if u have the infra it may takes years..."*
Academic 2	*"I think sometimes we we we implement strategies based on what others are doing probably on who's at the top so we want to be in a good book, or we want to go with the flow and not knowing what is really the need, you know what is going on, with our own"*
Academic 4	*"they like to satisfy those people that's all, they want to satisfy, that means ye..we can do it , that's it, but whether we can really do it or not, that is another thing,"*

Strategy Implementation challenges

1. Lack of Resources

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"The problem is physical infrastructure..,"*
Dean 7	*"Oh well eem .... I really think that we're doing a lot of things at one go with the short time and eem eer we are being..... I think on one hand ... the ministry has identify certain numbers, certain visions that we have to achieve on the other hand we have limited resources for e.g. ministry has said you have to have 200,000 intake. That intake without extra eer lecturers so you have to work within that you know so a lot of thing that needs to be done,"*
Head of Programme	*"...now there are some lecturers who hasn't got their own room"*
Director of Academic Centre	*"we only have one 'kerani' [clerk], two actually, one is in charge of quality, which is under me, and another one is in charge of the 7 units....so imagine how these people work"*
Academic 1	*"eer classroom size...classroom size...is a big problem, why because physically you cannot accommodate,"*
Academic 2	*"...infrastructure, look at [a lecturer name] mentioned she's given, (no I have a very poor voice today, that's why I call her), and she's given 60 over students for a class that is suitable for 30 students"*

2. Increase in Tasks

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Registrar	*"Very multi task. I think we are over multi task, if we are talking about people with multi task, we are definitely very multi task. So when we say that heads of department sometimes will be taken to task to ensure that what happen within their department can match what happens in the registrar's overall objective as oppose and match to the university's overall objective. So that can be a straight line, it can be very wavy, it can be very daunting task, it is a daunting task and of course we must find ways and mean so that aa.. heads of department and to the lowest level understand the same things. That is very difficult"*
Head of MBA Programme	*"so someone gets 18 hours just imagine 18, 20, 21, 22 hours your teaching, yet you got a lot of paper work requirement , documentation as requirement by ISO, for instance you must make sure you have attendance list in there all the time, every year eer every month you submitted to the 'Ketua' Programs [Head of Programs] ,"* *"That I think is going to be eem... so the load is increasing, the work is intensify fine, but is there significant corresponding increase in facilities is not is not..."*
Academic 1	*"The burden of work is actually increasing both teaching eem ...many of them do teaching, administrative , eer load is there and then eem research and things like that, comparatively speaking the work is increasing the load is increasing eem what way in what way eer..what resources has act been made to the lecturer eem...I don't know whether there has been anything significantly change my be there is a little bit of a change in facilities and things like that but other than that what has actually changed to make..."*
Academic 2	*"As it is right now we are having a tough time to balance, because we are talking about those days we use to have students 20 in a group, of course we weren't research oriented back then, now the number of students has gone like triple then you know and and yet we are to do research alright, our ATA used to be 12, use to be 12, now it's 18 alright,.."*
Academic 2	*"it's... we're finding difficulty trying to .... balance, during the holidays that's when we're try to write as much as possible, but that that is also the time we ...we take leave, that's the time we have to attend courses, and when you talk about research, it's not just like that anymore you know the ideas come in, it's very time consuming, ..."*
Academic 4	*"One thing 'kita'[we] are very board down with the lectures, the credit hours that we have,"*

3. Time Constraints

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"Number one time, we are against the time, for example we are given the mandate to increase the enrolment to 200,000 by 2010. We now have...we are not worried about our full time students because currently we have program of our students, the intake is oversubscribed we have students wanting to come into the university. The problem is physical infrastructure that the money may not be enough to eem...to construct to develop new buildings for students and staffs you know. With that amount of money how can you ensure that you will get the basic facilities like computers and lab, so these are actually challenges and very short period of time you're converting this university or branch campuses from what we are suppose to say the capacity is 11,000 now we have to increase to 20,000. In a very short of time, even if we have the money can for example this contractor construct the building in due time, time is the essence so these are the challenge, facilities.... we may have the money but we are worried about the completion of the project and most of the time*

	they are not able to conform you know to our time."
Registrar	*"And this is …you know it cannot happen quickly."*
Head of MBA Programme	*"Plans are there, so in terms of what top management has done is that they try to find solutions but the solutions are not coming fast enough"*
Dean 8	*"….target too short to achieve for example 200,000 students by 2010, not given enough time for the faculty to react."*

Strategy Monitoring

1. ISO Certifications

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"ISO, because there is a need for ISO, for example now things are becoming easier at the faculty, you have a teaching portfolio, you have the course work, the syllabus now are documented, the process are now transparent, so I thought that is something that has been done and it is great…that the documentation are intact."*
Registrar	*"So, by streamlining our works processors, having them got ISO. Then we are saying that we have a quality management system."*
Assistant Vice Chancellor Research	*"Yeah our quality management system, yes I'm sure you're aware that this university is accredited by Llyods,.."*
Head of Programme	*"..then of course we we have wins the award ISO2000, so this this ISO2000 you have to fulfil the and or to comply the need of ISO isn't it so this is part of monitoring the quality, okay the if we monitoring of the quality of the lecturer, the students, the paper, the exams, okay that's it's, so all these things if we combine together I think it becomes eer becomes eer becomes a good monitoring the performance of the whole system of faculty I think so, I believe that it can be done, okay that is so far we we have implemented at the faculty level"*
Head of MBA Programme	*"… if you really… really think it over, ISO is really not relevant in the academic arena you know you can have ISO for the process and administrating. The manufacturing of course they want zero defect , imagine you want students with zero defects , does it means you want to have all everybody graduate… you can do that but is it really you know what you want to measure but this is the advise that he gets and this is what we have to move towards, so everybody is into ISO now like it or not and we pay a lot to the auditors ,"*
Academic 1	*"…. the ISO certification said, how beneficial it has been to the university, what, how has classroom experience change as a result of eem….the certification?*

2. Documentation Purposes

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Registrar	*"I have a unit there. Who will administer with the document process owner to the various department where err.. reporting of work processors, outcomes, whether you've met the PI, by department, by activity, so the report is made monthly. So that when we have our monthly departmental meeting, this are reported, what cause of actions would have to be taken. Is it in line?"*
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International	*"When we talk about strategy, we can always strategise, because strategising, will be mostly on paper, ok but when it comes to implement that can be a daunting tasks"*

Head of MBA Programme	"No it's been there a long time like I said it's just on paper on paper it looks good nothing ....monitoring but if you ask them have they come over to the faculty, if they have, how many times, have they come over to look at each faculty, they have not," "That's the weakness of our strategic management I would say, they are good at that ... that conceptualizing ..... conceptualisation stage but when it comes to the control stage you know the stage they were suppose to measure they don't really do that"
Manager in Strategic Planning Centre	"what they need to fill in every six month as reporting is this part. 'Keterangan' status [explanation of status], what have they done for each of the step ..."
Academic 2	"And people just do it because on paper, oh we have a meeting, we have a gathering on this this this ,but that's about it"
Academic 4	"..we have feedback whenever they want it and we starts doing it as what they want...... you know ? it's just like ISO same thing also .....we are struggling doing it when Lloyds are coming ...surveillance audit comes in.... but do we really do that ? we don't ..".

3. Openness to Feedback

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Head of MBA Programme	"I don't blame the dean I guess, it's just that when you are there you tend to be like that , the dean is just like us ...... you know , if she sits with us or he sits with us he would be complaining what we would be complaining but once they are there they just ... don't, I guess we have to understand our VC as well, you should talk to our VC as well and see how he disseminate his visions"
Head of Graduate School	"I've already conveyed this to the management, eer to them again you know people when they want something they expect you to do it, you know without having any eer.... 'apa' [what] eer.... comments or opposition,"
Academic 1	"there must be degree of openness otherwise it is perceived as 'digging your own grave'."
Academic 2	"I think everywhere is the same thing, you want your own people to be around you right?"
Academic 4	"...sad to say I think those people in the meeting dare not say it, even though we have our grouses, we have our meeting all the time here, but it fall to deaf ear up there... here only, it never been not to say transpire, it never been brought up to the highest level meeting.."

4. Political Exercise

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Head of MBA Programme	I don't know .... I don't know .... somehow either they are more interested in telling the world see this is what I've done, but whether I've achieved what I set out to do, I do not know whether they really do it you know . we like to .... 'kita suka mewarwarkan kelebihan ke…ke' [we like to brag about our strength] you know what we've done, University x [university name] is the first to get ISO and things like that but so what you know ?
Academic 1	"There will be I mean series of successive strategy , I mean from time to time and things like that, whether the strategy has work , the assessment is a very political exercise.."
Academic 4	personally, they like to satisfy those people that's all, they want to satisfy, that means ye..we can do it , that's it, but whether we can really do it or not, that is another thing, that is why University x [university name] doesn't go very far because the top changes we said we can but we cannot, we can't do it because we have a lot of

	constraints you see how many time the faculties changes, we take are very simple e.g., the whole stretch here, accountancy, and law was actually promised to us, see very simple e.g. but because those people have a fight here and there and we don't have very strong management , I would say, whoever is vocal enough in the meeting they will get, so we don't get, we have actually laid down plan for it, so we cannot move as what we want to do, as we aspire to do then things changes again, when we not announced the four research uni, then we have to quadruple our efforts in order to be in that mainstreams,[laughing] so that is the constraints that I feel..of course they are doing it, of course they are following what the ministry is saying , but eer..a eer.. as I said we have to relook at University X [university name] per say?"
Academic 2	*"..because on paper, oh we have a meeting, we have a gathering on this this this ,but that's about it,....It never go through, there's no result, it's just half way through...."*
Academic 6	*"...the following year, dean says okay eer ... 'kita akan buat, kita ambik, kita nak nak masuk' [we will do, we will take, it is going to be the] second round, okay AKNC, 'anugerah' [award] quality, you're talking about quality, then fine, he say 'nak atau tidak' [either you want it or not], lead, oh you 'percaya I ke'? [trust me?]"*

5. Monitoring Initiatives and Feedback

Participants	Excerpt from interviews
Manager in the Strategic Planning Centre	*"Once.. once.. this is set to implement it then we ask them to come up with projects to implement the strategies aa.. so we call them initiatives. They come up ok, ok this is strategies, you want to increase student, you want to improve student's English, you want to have new buildings, so set up projects, initiatives, set up what are you going to do so step by step initiatives aa... each department may have four five initiatives some 'cawangan' [branches] have 30 initiatives aa.. in order to implement whatever strategy that is here, and at their level aa.. so and then we monitor the initiatives whether.."*
Registrar	*"So that when we have our monthly departmental meeting, this are reported, what cause affection would have to be taken. Is it in line?"*
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation	*"...we must also have the monitoring, at the operation,.."*
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and International	*"...when are we supposed to do it and who is supposed to be in charge? So we try to chart that course, so everytime from e.g. I'm supposed to do, eer from certain things by Dec 2008 for e.g.. By 2008, they will monitor, what have i done so far, and what will be the next steps, altogether, or what we call the initiatives, yeah...so far when the last time we had our meetings we had about a few hundred initiatives that are being monitored by the PPS."*
Deputy Vice Chancellor Students Affairs and Alumni	*"semua department ada, perancangan strategy , berapa tahun dah kan, so sekarang ni makna nya so contoh lah ya penilaian kita lah ya, [flipping through pages] so kita bagi lah apa pencapaian kita, masa dulu kita buat 2007 dengan 2006, 2007, now kita banding pulak 2007 apa pencapaian kita,"* *[....all departments have their own strategic plan, so..now for example, we look at the achievement in the past, say compare with what we have achieved now, let say 2007 with 2006, what have we achieved?]*

Memo : An example of notes from interviews

[done earlier stage of the interviews-to see where the direction of the interviews taking to enable decision making for question to be followed up with] in raising issues to be followed up in the next interviews.
[gather thoughts and understanding of the issues raised in the interviews]
[later this is no longer necessary as there appears to be a common pattern that arise from the participants]

About the interview:

• again the strategic planning in the department serve as the implementer to the strategy of the university, any meeting done in relation to this is to ensure the smooth running of the implementation of the university strategy

• the strategic change even triggered by the government requires a change in the mindset; any changes in the strategy will affect the way processes are conducted, therefore it requires the change in people attitude; sometimes due to constraints is difficult for some process/strategy to be implemented as people are constrained with the amount of work that they are engaging in, people are multi tasking; so it is not just attitudinal change but more than that is the supporting environment in making/ implementing the strategic change is equally important to ensure that things are implemented.

• the size of the university in term of its populations, employees to ensure that all employees have and gather the same information is also difficult to be ;in making them understood and interpreted the aspirations of the top management is very difficult.

• for example, the strategic plan directive by the government for the university to move towards the 200,000 students by 2010, is causing much concern as the infrastructure is still not in place and at the same time faculties are receiving a large number of students enrolment every semester but the facilities are not in place, so there seems to be a mismatch between the strategy directives and the infrastructure available in the university.

• staffs/ resources is still not up to the ideal compositions as academic staffs are overwork, as their teaching loads per week is in the average of 18 hours a week; and at the same time they are expected to be involved with number of committee; including the strategic planning committee of the university; and also some of them are holding an administration post.......

[evidence: most of the lecturers feel that it is difficult for them to concentrate

on research activities with the overstretching workload]

[observation: parking space problems; classes problems- confirmed by the faculty involved]

b**ut as stated in this interview, it is also difficult to fill the number of lecturers at the faculty due to budget constraints; and processes/beauracracy ....if the budget been laid out ....have to wait for next year budget and so on....**

[question to ask: when the budget for the request of lecturer been made, has the directive been announced?] forecasting?...' why it cannot happen quickly? '....if the government has strategized for such amount of enrolment, shouldn't they be ever more willing to provide the support?

[time; daily work;

Middle management

- move has been made to encourage more lecturers to participate in research; workshops been conducted t get lecturers involved in doing research.

- the strategic plan of the uni will follow the based on the allocation of the budget

- the changes in the strategy will be determined by the changes in the government policy, eco changes, political changes

- the monitoring of the strategic is for the purpose of making sure that the strategy is implemented, for e.g. finding ways to improve or to speed up processes in making sure that the plan is achieved

- sometime the doc asked for the purpose of monitoring is only being submitted for the purpose of satisfying the requirement of PPS rather than to really update in the real sense

- the **understanding** of the need for things to be done is important to ensure that people will do things with passion; **open-mindedness is also important factor in ensuring full commitment and receptive of the ideas by the staffs in conducting the tasks;**

- the strategic moves has been communicated by going to each faculty, departments and branches to inform the mgt team and administrative staffs of each.

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- believes that communication is the key '**communication lah, communication.. like at my level you know aa..reaching out, make sure people are aware, appreciate urm..what we have and also aa... we have a lot of information that we generate from this office, to me let people know about them as much as possible so that they can use them for their decision making or whatever' ;**hoping that people will appreciate more the need of the implementation and monitoring ; it is quite a challenge as the uni is big; clear visionory leaders;

PPS

1)the strategy of the university is determined by the:
1.9th Malaysian plan, 5 years plan
2.industrial master plan, where reference to the industry needs is made
3.other documents like the vision 2020

probably there's a need to look at these documents? may need to contact the MOHE and ask for the documents or probably to interview the MOHE people to see where UiTM is in term of its strategic planning

2) mentioned about the 5 years plan, vision 2020 and beyond...., and about the futurist studies to see where UiTM is in the next 15 to 20 years of time

Should ask, how far is uitm from the vision 2020 and has any of these been effected by the change of leadership in the country? and from the point of futurist study where has UiTM been now?

3) when took office, he consulted VC's views towards UiTM for the next 20 years and told that the changes in UiTM is triggered by the government mandate, for example the 200,000 students by year 2010

4) the VC's plan:
1. Enhance our academic quality, by mechanism, polish mechanism not just ISO but others (outcome based education accreditation, imposed in all Malaysian university by Malaysian qualification education MQE, 50 % of these academic program accredited by international bodies.

2. how do we enhance our academic staffs?

teaching and learning but also to make them good researchers, now the government wants to see our research product to be marketable, so they also must become entrepreneurs.

5) there is a gap between the plan and implementations:

'challenging tasks, that this is not easy for senior management to go down, because most of the time it is always us who is thinking about the strategy of the university and when it comes to the implementing is another point'.

6) Realised that:

1. Not everybody number one, admire, or appreciate what we are trying to do for the university,

2. They may appreciate but they may not able to implement it because of constraints that they have at the faculty,

Solutions have been taken to improve the communication gap: the deans, road show by the VC, blue print, CD's.....

a copy of the blue print is obtained ....

This indicate that there is still gaps as to the management plan and the people in implementing them

7) summary
Strategic planning at the university is directed by the government in line with the government policy, but discussion is made within the university level in gaining feedbacks and ensuring that the strategy directed by the government is implemented within all levels of the university. For example, data is kept for government use, very much straight forward. This is because the government is the funder of the university 95% of the budget are obtained from the government .

Any changes in the strategy is also being triggered by the government factor, and monetary constraints, for example the economic crises may trigger the need to re strategise

the problem in implementation is that given an example of university towards 200,000 students in 2010 is infrastructure... there is a doubt that the developer is going to complete the construction on time.....

Probably there is a need to identify the reasons to this....may be birocracy....if that's been identified has there been anything done to ensure a speedier process.

the monitoring the change process is done at the pps level and the faculty/centre's level.
the challenges in making the change is identified as the people; to convince them,

how do you convince people?

Areas for improvement according to him:
Working culture; leadership and people

AS's view:

Identified challenges to managing strategic changes as:

1. Communications
- As what's transpire from the top doesn't effectively trickled to the bottom, uitm is too big (the size)
- the middle management unable to communicate the strategy of the university to all the staffs effectively
- the channel of communication is not being fully utilised by the staffs, ignorance

2. lack of resources - staffs
- too much of work existing on the daily basis and having to monitor strategy is an additional burden to the work load (existing multi tasking)
- the middle management is too busy with their existing work tht they forget to monitor the strategic moves of the university (managing strategic change is not a part time work, it involves time and these people are already having a time constraints and therefore is hard to perform the task effectively, what is done normally all these tasks will be assigned to the academic staffs which will be headed by the administrators, and again the administrators and the lecturers are busy people, with classes of 20 to 21 hours per week and this can distort the monitoring process that is suppose to be done, uitm has the most ATA among academic staffs)

3. Incentives and influence to do the task even with scare resources
- encouragement in term of letter of acknowledgement which will be reflected in the performance appraisals (not much: doesn't affect the salary pay, only the grades which is useful if the staffs is seeking for scholarships, naik pangkat etc)
- not all staffs are receptive with the idea older generation are more likely not to be influenced by this move

4. Ineffective resource allocations
teaching university (classes are still in small size compared to other university; so most of the academician are still teaching when they can occupied their time with teaching, having said that these people still managed to do research even with these constraints, the management has promised to reduced the teaching hours of the lecturers, and this has been the main issues being highlighted since it is being upgraded as a university but the recruitment process has taken long time and outcome of this has not being felt or exist in the work process)

5. Improper planning
the uni is aiming for 200,000 students by 2010 but the resources is still lacking and the infra is still not up. (the planning is a directive fr the ministry and being accepted by the tmt of the uni)

I: How does the strategy of the university being formulated

The strategy of the university is based on number one a few significant and important doc, one is in relation to the Malaysian plan. At the moment for example, it is based on the 9th Malaysian plan so I think that is the reference point, because the university eer.. only operate in term of say introducing a new academic program will be based on what will be the need for the country in 5 years time, the development of the infrastructure development, of the university in 5 years time, the capacity of a how much students enrolment can we take in, it all depends on the central planning by the government. The other document is in relation to the industrial master plan, it is also an important doc because we produce graduate that will be employed eer...at industry and we emphasise that our graduate will go to the private sector not just the government sector, so in that sense we need to know eem what will be the market of employment in the future, eem.. of course eem other documents like the vision 2020 because we are also on S&T, the policy of the government on S&T, bio technology, these will be the important so the university will be guided and now of course the other important doc is the Malaysian of Higher Education strategic plan, blue print which now has important agenda, direction, from 2007 – 2020, so again it is important documents for our strategy to look at. Our strategy is basically based on all these reference documents.

I: So how long does it set up for?

Basically the strategic plan is for every five years because we have our plan since I took office in 2005 but before that my predecessor Dato' H has already planned, has made planned for the university every 5 years, right up to 2020, beyond 2020, this is another document that we will look at we also has called for the people from the future studies, or the futurist from local and abroad to help us to see where we are, Malaysia generally, the world generally, and University X [name of the University]by the 15 years to 20 years times..

I; So when you came into office you just continue with what Dato' H has planned for?

I made some changes because I do not want to be conservative, no 1. I'm guided by the VC that will be the first consideration, what he sees University X [name of the University] in 20 or 50 years time. I will ask him that questions and put his views we thought that is very important, we look at A [the University's founder] for example and started Institute J [the University's former name] then, in 1967 and he has introduced the... very I must say pioneered, he in fact he introduced program which I thought was very much relevant which was not thought off at that time, like the computer science, hotel catering, and library science. These were programs which we started off in 1967 and it is still relevant until now, so we thought that we must have that mind set, forward thinking, what will be the program that will be relevant to University X [name of the University] in 50 years time? So those are the things that we've done when I took office in 2001 we want to see change, we can't be hoping on the at the moment 300 program when the numbers are going to get bigger. We have the mandate from the government to increase the enrolment of students to 200,000. So with 200,000 of students you must be thinking of doing more say 400 or 500 academic program. So these are the things that we

thought off, we must be forward thinking , in a way not just one step ahead of others but may be 5 steps ahead of others.

I: You mentioned the VC's view. What is the Vice Chancellor's view of University X [name of the University]. What is his view actually?

He is very creative, he has a lot of ideas especially in no 1. Enhance our academic quality, in other words that is very important, we can see that the quality academic program is important for the university because we produce a lot of students, we produce graduate who will be working in the industry so of course that need to be strengthen, and from time to time we need to review our mechanism, polish mechanism not just ISO but others. At the moment for example the outcome based education is being imposed in all Malaysian university by Malaysian qualification education MQE. So we are in that mode at the moment so in years to come we have to look at our program outside Malaysia, for example if our students want to credit transfer in Spain for example, in Portugal, in Cuba, in Brazil for example these are the things that we have to start thinking so that our academic program are compatible, our academic program will have some recognition, not just basic academic program but he is looking at our professional program, that we should ensure that our academic program are accredited, are elevated into full professional program by countries outside Malaysia and international accreditation bodies.

we have of course established with ACCA , architecture, survey, but we want more, we hope we can achieve say more than 50 % of these academic program accredited by international bodies and also to ensure that our students will be given much credit and due recognition also transfer credit in other university all around the world. So that's one of his ideas and another idea is how do we enhance our academic staffs?

[Phone ringing in the background, the interview stopped for 30 seconds]

The eer... academic staff, is also we have to give due consideration because they need not just the training on teaching and learning but also to make them good researchers, now the government wants to see our research product to be marketable, so they also must become entrepreneurs. So that's why this year, in his speech that we want to internationalise our university and therefore we are also looking at in what way the university can become a research university and to be a research university you need not be like any other universities. And we would like to approach our research university as an entrepreneur and innovative research university, because we thought that that would be our niche and compare ourselves with the other university in this country. In order to be one you must be innovative, you must also have an entrepreneurialship elements because we also want to see some of our academic staffs becoming millionaires in science, you don't have to sell your product literally, the problem with researchers is that they are not able to market their product, so we thought that they must have these some basic elements of marketing and PR exercise the product.

We are not marketers, we are not trained marketers, but you have to accept the fact that some but we must have sense of, not business equipment for example if you want to conduct a research, at the end of the day, how much of this research product is profitable, or beneficial to the committee as a whole, and in what way can the university, eer after spending so much money, we know that not all research product can be commercial product, may be 10% or 5% is good enough, but at least we must be seen to be going towards that

trend. So these are again some of the VC's idea we pick up and we thought that we should plan strategically for the university.

I: How does the strategic plan being cascaded?

Well we realised that most of the time that this is a challenging tasks that this is not easy for senior management to go down, because most of the time it is always us who is thinking about the strategy of the university and when it comes to the implementing is another point. That is the reality and the reality comes to grip when we realised that not everybody number one, admire, or appreciate what we are trying to do for the university, number two, they may appreciate but they may not able to implement it because of constraints that they have at the faculty, so we thought that we have the dean to be the bridge, the conduit, the communicator , but not all the time dean is able to do that because again dean are not trained managers, they sometimes missed the point and they don't understand. so we have to keep on saying and communicating it in whatever forum we can, at the senate, the eerr at the executive level, whenever Dato is going for road show, visit the branch campuses or faculties so that is the time, of course we have corporate office, so from time to time hard copy of magazine that we have, but that is periodical rather, but we have our websites that so we have to tell our corporate office this and that...

I: Is this strategic blueprint accessible to anyone?

We produce the blueprint, a master copy of RMK 9 for example, that would be the direction that the university is heading on various field academic, human resource, ICT, you can have a copy we can give it to you and from time to time Dato' come out with monograph that is his annual speech 'amanat tahun baru' document in a form of hard copy and also CD. So I thought we have done a lot you know in term of communication strategy so it is a matter whether the masses is going to take it you know with his heart or you know at least be aware of what is going on in the university. For example, we are moving from different governance systems that are one university with two systems, because when it comes to rating and ranking, we realised that the number of student and the number of lecturers will kill us. The number of students and the number of lecturers that probably not enough to cater the need of the university as to the ratio of students lecturers.

So what we have done recently, is to split, not to split but to tell our masses and ministry and our stakeholders that we now have although one university like china but we have two systems. Two systems means that for ranking and rating purposes by the ministry or the outside body, we will have only the Shah Alam campus as a campus where we put in our Phd lecturers, the number of degree programs onwards up to Phd and our centre of excellence of the faculties. So that it will be balance, at least we are not going to count 180,000 students per how many lecturers with only 400 of PhDs. So as far as rating is concern it is in Shah Alam. So we have put all our diploma program in branch campuses. So that is to cater the social obligation of the university. But at the same time we are telling the branch campus/ state campus that they are not being deprived for promotions, they are not being deprived if they want to pursue with degree program they can do so but they must get the consent from the faculty because the faculty is the source of any academic program, they are the guardian of the academic quality. This are the one that we told the masses, we passed through communication be it hardcopy, softcopy, or whatever, so they should be aware but of course if you asked again the people on the street they say I don't know. I suppose this is an attitude problems, we

have done what we are suppose to do, so beyond that we keep reminding the dean to mention of this and to mention of that but as I said deans are not trained managers sometimes they are being burden with administrative jobs, they may not have time thinking about...maybe give us feedback, as to what is the best, what will be the solutions, and what will be the proposals, they are not able to do that.

[Talking behind...asking for his staff]

Can you tell me about the strategic group of this university?

All strategic plan will begin from our planning office, PPS, I'm the head of the PPS this is one of my portfolio as deputy VC, so we will churn, have a everything so e will have the ideas the concepts of everything then we will passed to the VC, and then discuss at the JKE, if its agreeable we will endorse it at the 'Jabatan lembaga' and then will pass over to the dean, faculties, the road show and everything....

I: So that means that will be a top-down..?

Yes, yes, of course at the same time we need feedback...we will also ask from the ground we will have small group discussion, open dialogue, of the formulation of say for example we have small group of people we will engage them, there will discussion go whoever at that level the deans, the director of campus, professors, so we will get their feedback well before eer... we finalised the concepts or the ideas, we did that, so there is no such things as the strategic group, so it starts from this office, ... based on feedback, based on whatever ideas that come from, sometimes it's not just from the VC, minister for example, so we start the ball rolling, so it start from this office.

I: can you describe your role in relation to the strategy setting of the university?

Because there is this PPS eer..I will have to eer... I have to be ahead of others in that sense... but eer...we have a strategic unit in this office, one is...this unit is in charge of data, data is very important, data verification office, before the data is out sometimes the ministry want to know, the number of enrolment, this and that....so we are the office that they have to find eer we are the resource to the government and also within the university systems. We hold the data....with this data we will strategise; we need the data, because only the right data will give the right decision. We have to ensure that the data is correct all the time; we are in fact cleaning the data, most of the data at one time, all not correct. If you ask current enrolment at one time we have several versions. We have 10 you know...and each faculty we have their own ....now we receive only one so we get it from the ICT PSMB, and finally we said this is the clean one. So that is the unit that holds on the data and also those are strategic data.

So once we have the strategic plan we must also have the monitoring, at the operation, under Dr. N, we also have the strategic planning on S&T. Because we want to increase the number of S&T program, because this university is very much a technological university, and also science based university so we have a unit under Dr. Nz, so these are the people..so from time to time if there is a need for training, we go for training, a short because we don't have time...so conference, meeting with EPU, higher education, prime minister office, so we are in touch so whatever we do we are very much on the ground,

so it is not something that we do that is not being directed or guided, so this office is very important actually, then so we have a discussion, we will have our people, we will have workshop, we will have a round table discussion to get the feedback from the ground.

I: How does the strategic change process take place?

Although we have a 5 years strategic plan but we cannot stick to that most of the time. We have the fluidity, we have to be fluid in that sense because policy's change, policy on the top from the MOHE, from the economic planning unit, from the treasury, sometimes they change, so whilst there is change we have to make sure that so again we are guided by the people up there so for example the budget, we get more than 95% from the government, it could be because of economic crises we might not be able to get whatever amount that is promised by us or by the government to us, so if we can't get the amount that we're promised then we have to strategically again skim down the cost the budget, so these are the things that we have to bear in mind, we are aware of that, and every time we have this problem, we have to re strategise, sit down, back to drawing board ..... and also sometimes direction from the ministry that we may have to change something... for example the number of students that we have to give to private colleges, we have align colleges 30 of them, sometimes they can't make it, the numbers, so we have to come in, how do we strategise that, so this are very last minute, ad hoc, we have the 5 years plan, 10 years or 15 years plan but sometime because of the intervention which is inevitable sometimes because we don't have the money so we then have to sit down redo and rethink what's best for the university....

I: So basically one of the main factors .... correct me if I'm wrong, so one of the main factors is determined by the government...

It is...yes we are very much guided, whatever cost we are taking is very much related to the government, because it is always the government led things, the funder is the government... unless if we have our own money we can direct ourselves what we want to be but having said that, it does not mean that the government is also interfering with our system, it is only when things are not .....government are not able to ....like at the moment budget is slashed because of economic downturn so it is only in that situation that we have to...we can understand that as I said because the government is the main funder, 95% of our project come from the government, so rightly they have to change...

I: So when we talk about strategic change, can you identify the problems in the implementation of this strategy change?

I think the challenge is, number one time, we are against the time, for example we are given the mandate to increase the enrolment to 200,000 by 2010. We now have...we are not worried about our full time students because currently we have program of our students, the intake is oversubscribed we have students wanting to come into the university. The problem is physical infrastructure that the money may not be enough to eem...to construct to develop new buildings for students and staffs you know. With that amount of money how can you ensure that you will get the basic facilities like computers and lab, so these are actually challenges and very short period of time you're converting this university or branch campuses from what we are suppose to say the capacity is 11,000 now we have to increase to 20,000. In a very short of time, even if we have the money can for example this contractor construct the building in due time, time is the assent so these are the challenge, facilities.... we may have the money but we are worried about the completion

of the project and most of the time they...they are not able to conform you know to our... our time.

I: Is there anybody or a specific unit that actually manage the change embarked by the University?

We have our ....when we started the RMK9 we asked the faculties and department what would be your initiatives? What do you want to achieve or to change in your faculties or department? They have their own people to look, to monitor progress of whatever project they want to carry out ....you know we have 700 over initiatives all over the university. We started the project rolling, they say they want to do this, and they want to do that so ok you go ahead with that you tell us what you want to do. We have our own officers to monitor but you have your people down there to ensure that the initiatives are being carried out, what is the progress line, if it is not being carried out, why is it not, we have a periodical, so you can ask Dr N to explain all these mechanism. This change, you know you talk about change, I'm one of the recipients that gone through change management. In 2001 we spent, the university spent ...to train ...so call potential leaders to go through a project called a change management project we call it project 2000. It is reengaging a private consultant, I was not a TNC back then, because to the wisdom of the past VC Dato' Z when we are elevated to a university we have to behave like a university, our masses is still in the Institute J [former name of the University] mode so how do you go about it, we try to change the culture, so we thought best that we go through a project. So we went through a one year change management project. The result is we are more flexible, we are multidisciplinary, cross functional we understand departments and these are the people now heading the various department, Dr. H is in INTEC, myself here and the former head of library Pn. F you know and some of the deans.... so if you talk about that we have done that and eer...you know ... the challenge is how to sustain it, to have the group to sit down again and to discuss, what are the changes that is needed for the university because it takes a lot of sacrifice, dedication, patient, it's not easy, because we look at the culture now is no money no talk, for example, we look at the young lecturer now are not thinking about serving the university as the primary consideration but what is it for them. I thought that is not a very good starting point, they are not into research because they know that they will get the money from part time teaching, for example, one of the examples, so how do you change the attitude is always these three factors, people, process and technology. You have the best technology you have the best full prove process but it comes to the people at the end of the day. In a way it helps me, the change management program help me to understand the university, we have to be passionate and compassionate, last time we were making a lot of noise, I'm beginning to realise that it is people, how do you change people, how do you change, convince the people, but we manage to do one thing the ISO is one example we thought we can persuade, I was in charge of that, I was at INQKA, and we did it in less than one year, all the system with ISO , why? because number one we are able to convince the masses, why do you think that you should go for ISO, because there is a need for ISO, for example now things are becoming easier at the faculty, you have a teaching portfolio, you have the course work, the syllabus now are documented, the process are now transparent, so I thought that is something that has been done and it is great...that the documentation are intact. Of course people complaint, you know...but if you don't do it then you are the worse off, but now it helps with accreditation purposes, it helps with university outcome based learning, the document actually helps. Dulu bila kita tanya rayuan proses for students, mana dia? tak da. But now it is step

by steps, it's all documented, of course what you say and what you do is not easy but at least you have the documentation that is change. Now the change is to make this university a research university how do you change that, again I said it is not easy, and it is always leadership by examples, the people at the top must show the change, that you walk the top so you must be seen to be doing it also so if you ask change, I'm not just a preacher of change but I'm practise change but it's not easy with that all these challenge, these limitation although it can come from the top, they say top down easy, but you know down there, sometimes we are the only one who is keen to make the changes , but down the line, if people are not bothered, you say whatever you like....

I: Challenges....

Challenges is how do you call people, .. tell people that this is good, but it is not easy because you have 1000, 2000, 6000,7000 academic staffs with different ideas and thought. Even if you call the opinion leaders, you call the union, you call the professors, well we can talk but at the end of the day, it is them isn't it they are the one who do the work, so this university is very much dependent on this people. Even if you push, that's why I always believe that you know you can say whatever you want to say up there, here, but down there it is going to be different, so it's always.... this is my principle, but I hold this principle very dear to my heart what you say is not important but how you say is important you must empathise, sympathise, and be with them ....you know now they are board down with this and that so I have to tell the management that .....enough with all these we have to look what.....once you convinced them they will buy it then it's much easier to do our job.

I: What has been done so far in relation to that?

What is it that we have not done for our warga [masses]? number one research for example, we give them time off if they want to do research they have to show us evidence that they are doing research, that we have this and that, we want to go for reward system now, if you publish your research paper in a refereed flagship journal, we will pay you, we will give you reward because we have to equip that with those lecturers that only want to teach part time because they get more money, the researchers are not getting any incentives, so this is the incentives that we thought off, of course the promotion will come and promotion now is err..open its' not just once in a year, or twice you know, it's ongoing if you feel that you're eligible to become a, AP, or professor you can do it on line now we will call you for interviews you know of course you have to come out with the expectation you must have the criteria, so what is it that is stopping the masses from becoming the best, I don't think the university, you know here at our level , senior management we are always try to facilitate our people, so if it's not it could be because of the dean, lecturer have been complaining that I have 20 hours, we have told the dean we why do you give 20 hours to your staffs. We told the dean that if your staffs can prove that they are doing research then give them exemptions you know so if this is happening then it is beyond our control. Of course we heard a lot of things on the ground this and that but in what way, we have been telling the deans that they are the second line, but they are the one who actually move the faculty so I thought that choosing leadership is very important, what is the right formula in making a dean is very important. Now we are going into succession planning, even I have conducted recently a succession planning for research leaders, we take in young lecturers as young as 24 , 25 come with us, and we will groom you to become research champion. Of course we get the feedback from faculties, but we still didn't get all the

names,   you see what else is there that we should do, you tell me...because one of the biggest challenge is that we are big, we are so big compared to others university they only have one campus, 2000 students, 3000 students, we have 120,000 students, it's a humongous amount, it's large, so big, and we have so little people to manage things.

I: I think there is something to do with communication...don't you think?

Of course communication, we have to communicate and communicate.....that is the rule that we learn from Peter Senge, change management, but again is not easy you know....

[Asking for his assistant to come to his room]

I: Last question, in your personal opinion, what do you think of the whole strategy management of this university? Do you think there are areas for improvements? What are the areas if you want to change things that are going on here?

I think there are a few areas that I thought I want to focus, number one,... of course this... this is... is just a wish lists, I would like to change the working culture of this university, number two leadership, people at the top must be a dynamic leaders, they are the one how inspire the masses, the shaping of leadership is very important, you give me 200 young lecturers than I want to train them as leaders of the university, finally we have the people to lead the university, the succession planning, we may be successful now but we don't know about the people at the bottom, so the other thing is the you know, one is what's been mentioned just now, number two is the culture and number three is the people.

[His assistant came in the room and stopped the conversation and passed the sessions to his assistant]

I: Thank you.