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Performance Evaluation of Architectural Education in a Selected Department in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract— Organizations, irrespective of what the organizations stand for or promote, face competition locally, nationally and globally.; especially in this era of fast pace development. Moreover, for any organization to keep up and compete favorably, the organization must do all things possible through strategic planning and good leadership or management to be well above competitors. Therefore, this study aims to assess a selected department of architecture (name withheld) to evaluate its architecture studies. The study explored the combination of the SWOT and PESTLE assessment tools using the departmental academic, non-academic staff and students as case study. Extensive literature was reviewed, and face-to-face interviews were conducted randomly. The findings from SWOT revealed 11 strengths, ten weaknesses, eight opportunities and eight threats the department has. The PESTLE also discovered external opportunities and threats facing the department. Findings from both analyses were used to suggest strategic recommendations for the department.

Keywords: Architectural Education, Organization, Performance, PESTLE, SWOT.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the pace of development, changes and growth globally, there is a corresponding degree of competition. Organizations must compete or collaborate in order to succeed and remain at the top. More so, the leadership must have a strategic plan in achieving the goals set by the organization and, from time to time, evaluate the performance to know whether the set goals are met or not. To compete favorably, formulate strategy, and make decisions, the organization, as opined by [1], do not exist in a void but coexist, compete and collaborate in different magnitudes and interconnected environment; an Furthermore, in Organizations are expected to demonstrate their effectiveness and relevance [2].

Every organization aims at being successful and achieving set goals. Every organization has their main goal of aligning with maximization of profit [3]. [4] argued that achieving success is the ultimate goal of every organization. Furthermore, [5], opined that all organizations want to make profit; in doing that, organizations explore all aspects of management such as production, investments, finance and economics, strategy, management and organization. Additionally, organizations strive to take precautions and actions for higher efficiency and minimize errors [6]. Organizational assessment strives for continuous improvement in the workplace and a search for untapped potentials by employers. Organizational assessment is the evaluation of progress, activities, workforces, and environment of a company; and helps identify the strength and weakness to resolve and prevent problems in the organization [7]. An Organizational assessment is used analytically to gain information about the performance of an organization and the factors that affect performance; and the operation of the organization as a whole [8].

The benefits of assessing an organization are numerous; [9] asserts that, it helps to identify success and create opportunities for improvement; motivates the employees to focus on common goals; ensures that funds are in line with the strategic objectives; and bring about changes and results. According to [4], with the fast pace of development, the present work pressures of realizing the set goals of organizations in the shortest time and fully harnessing the benefits of organizational assessment demands that employees perform beyond the requirements of his responsibilities. Any organization that wants to know how they are progressing must periodically evaluate or focus on specific aspects and activities. For an organization to survive, record success, and compete successfully, such organization, according to [10], must have a strategy that aligns with that of its environment and must have the capabilities that fit its strategy. There are certain assessment tools or methods organizations use in checking all areas for performance and areas that need improvements in approaches and organizational activities. This study therefore explores by combining two assessment tools to check the internal and external environment of architectural education in a selected university in Nigeria.

II. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF ARCHITECTURE STUDIES

All professions, including architecture, are affected by the rapid change and development across the globe. Besides, all types of users' demands are being faced daily in the fast developing world [11]; consequently, it calls for continuous update of knowledge and experience of the architects and architectural education, both at the practicing and studentship levels. The knowledge of becoming an architect is taught in the tertiary institutions; assessing these institutions periodically is necessary in order to check the skills, quality,



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understanding and the realization of their goals [12].

The common definition of architecture as also defined by [13] is "the art and activity of designing, building, and organizing space and its surroundings; where functions and festivities connected with human life created as a community and individually are carried out." Architecture as a profession not only shape the environment, and but also contributes to the quality of life of an individual [14]. As opined by [15], architecture profession through the process of design to production is technologically intensive and entails challenging training. The discipline creates livable, healthy and aesthetics spaces for users. The Architect is involved in all aspects and levels of a building right from studentship, eventual planning and designing functional, aesthetically pleasing, and safe buildings to the construction. Its education brings about students creativity through design studio courses, including architectural theory, and the technology of building and materials [16]. The studio is where students design, review and generates projects and is a significant part of architectural education [17]. On the long run, the quality of education received, and output, including that of staff, management and the entire department is vital and determines visibility and image of the department.

Irrespective of the goals of any organization, a priority must be given to the quality of the services being provided, this is because providing quality management as opined by [18] will improve standard and consequently lead to a profitable venture. In this vein, the quality of education determines the quality of output and services in the real world. In architectural education, a large percentage of the module is made up of design studios and students are expected at the end of their study to be able to compete with the outside world based on the quality of education received. This implies that the education of the architect eventually leads to the quality of practice and service the architect provides in the real world [19]. This infers that, a lot is expected from the employees for the goals of the department to be achieved. To keep up with the quality of architectural education, and help with its growth and development, there is the need for constant and periodical appraisal of the study, the students, the staff, the professional competence, academic standard, the goals and strategy in order to compete favorably and create opportunities for improvement. To achieve these, the periodical accreditation done nationally in tertiary institutions by regulatory bodies is not enough, performance evaluation needs to be added every so often, at departmental levels to check if the goals and strategies it set to achieve is being achieved or not; and what needs to be done both internally and externally in order to meet the targets set. This is because forecasting and predicting the changes and trends will help the decision making process of the organization [20].

III. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

A. SWOT Technique

A popular instrument used for assessing an organization 's performance is the SWOT analysis. Meaning of SWOT is strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is a tool for strategic management and ensures that the organization aligns with its environment using the internal and external factors in order to know the strengths and weaknesses and also the opportunities and threats the organization might face [2]. SWOT analysis studies an organization's core strengths and weaknesses, at the same time the chances for upgrading, and possible pressures the outside setting presents to the organization's survival [21]. While the strengths and opportunities (the internal factors) are helpful to achieve organizational goals, the weaknesses and threats (the external factors) are harmful to

the organizational goal, as shown in figure 1. According to [22], this is done through a strategic management process of the vision, objectives to the strategy implementation in order to have a competitive advantage (Figure 2).

SWOT has an advantage to provide the opportunity of positive and negative aspects to focus on using internal and external environment of the organization, furthermore, the elements in this environment are those elements that add positively and negatively all together in a related viewpoint [22]. Performance evaluation in the education sector is not new because researchers and other experts have used SWOT as a planning tool in investigating the positions of organizations, address these issues discovered and subsequently developed their strategies [21].

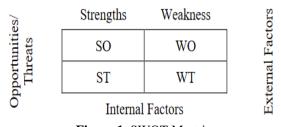


Figure 1. SWOT Martrix Source: Benzaghta, Elwalda, Mousa, Erkan, & Rahman (2021).

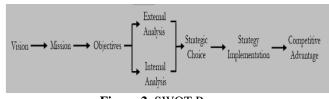


Figure 2. SWOT Process Source: Gürel, E and Tat, M (2017)

B. PESTLE

PESTLE full meaning is Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal and it is a strategic planning technique for evaluating these factors and their impact on an organization [23]. In PESTEL analysis, the



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factors are used to identify threats and weaknesses which are used in a SWOT analysis. PESTEL analysis helps in assessing external impacts of an organization, indicates opportunities and threats and defines needed guidelines and direction for improvement [24]; can be used or addressed in

SWOT analysis and it is widely accepted. An advantage PESTLE has is that it can reveal the direction of change within the business environment [23]. The acronym PESTLE is analysed are shown and summarized in Figures 3 and 4

An organization's success or failure can be influenced by PESTLE. The political factors are government policies, political situations, tax regulations. The factors determine the level of influence of government on an organization and how it may affect the organization [25]. The economic Factor are the present and projected economic growth, patterns and their impacts on the organization. Disposable income of customers, change in economic situations, foreign exchange rates, inflation rates, job growth and unemployment. Social factors are those events that can affect the organization, considering the advantages and disadvantages to the people. These include cultural expectations, religious influence, ethnicity, living standard, population [24]. The technological factors refer to the innovations in technology. This includes the technological awareness and level of development [26]. Environmental factor is determined or influenced by the surrounding environment and include climate, geographical location, ground conditions, water sources. The legal aspects have to do with laws and policies that affect the organization such as consumer laws. Employment, safety standard regulatory agencies. [25].



Figure 3. PESTLE Analysis Source:

https://www.academia.edu/39859801/PESTLE-Analysis

Р	E	S	Т	L	Е
Government policy	Economic growth	Population growth	Technology incen-	Weather	Discrimination laws
Political stability	Exchange rate	rate	tives	Climate	Antitrust laws
Corruption	Interest rates	Age distribution	Level of innovation	Environmental	Employment laws
Foreign trade policy	Inflation rates	Career attitudes	Automation	policies	Consumer protection
Tax policy	Disposable income	Safety emphasis	R&D activity	Climate change	laws
Labor law	Unemployment rate	Health consciousness	Technological	Pressures from	Copyright and patent
Trade restrictions		Lifestyle attitudes	change	NGO's	laws
		Cultural barriers	Technological aware-		Health and safety
			ness		laws

Figure 4: Summary of PESTLE Source: Mihailova (2020)

C. McKinsey 7-S Model

As opined by [27], the 7-S Model summarizes the main factors in an organization that contributes in achieving its strategic goals in relation to change (Figure 5). The factors include the 'hard' (strategy, structure, system) and the 'soft' (Style, staff, skills, shared value) as can be seen in figure 6. The hard are measurable and easier to control while the soft are tangible and harder to manage directly. The factors are interconnected such that if there is a change in one, it will require change in others for a company to function effectively [6]. The goal of the 7-S is to show the alignment and effectiveness in an organization [28]. An advantage it has is that it can be applied widely whether going through a change, or to identify weakness and opportunities in the organization [29]. The model is used to review efficiency of a company in its marketing procedures, governs the best way to align and implement strategies, evaluate changes and the impacts within the company and also place subdivisions and processes if put up for sale or merging with other companies.

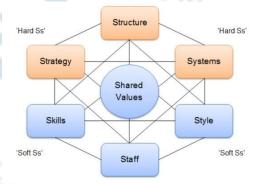


Figure 5: McKinsey 7-S Model Source: Ravanfar (2015)

Hard elements	Soft elements
Strategy	Skills
Structure	Shared values
Systems	Staff
	Style

Figure 6: McKinsey 7-S Model Elements Categories Source: <u>https://tallyfy.com/mckinsey-7s-framework/</u>

D. Balanced Score Card

The Balanced scorecard (BSC) is a tool that helps organizations translate the mission of the organization and the strategy into objectives. And has four perspectives which include customers, financial, internal business processes, learning and growth and innovation (Figure 7). The technique help balance the external measures; which is financial and customers, and the internal measures; that is the internal processes and innovation and learning. Using these four



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perspectives, an integrated and aligned balanced focus is achieved and collectively they help achieve the organization's vision [30]. The BSC helps the managers to organizations strategy and how performance can be measured [31]. The BSC helps translates vison to strategy and exploits both financial and non-financial measure of performance [32]. This is done by helping managers with a comprehensive view of the business and allows allow managers focus on areas that are critical and subsequently driving the strategy forward [33]. The relationships between the four elements leads to improvement, problem solving and also to decision - making. The BSC helps managers pay attention to issues the promote growth as well as help reduce costs and increase efficiency [34]. The BSC helps managers pay attention to issues the promote growth as well as help reduce costs and increase efficiency [34]. The BSC helps managers pay attention to issues the promote growth as well as help reduce costs and increase efficiency [34].

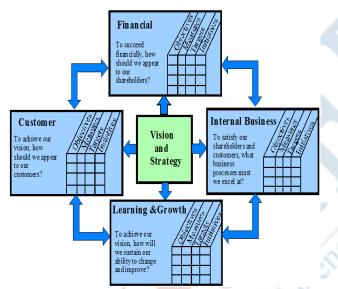


Figure 7: The Perspectives of Balance Scorecard. Source: Martin (2021).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study was to use a combination of SWOT and PESTLE analyses to identify the main internal and external factors that impacts on the success of the department of architecture and those that may serve as dangers. On the long run, know the true and current position of the department and strategy for the future in line with the goals of the university. The population of the study are students and staff of the selected department of Architecture. This was divided into three strata, that is, the students, non-academic and academic staff.

In the students stratum, the level representative was purposively selected per level across all levels from 100 Level to the masters class; these were six in number. Two respondents were randomly selected from the nine non-academic staff. And finally, among the academic staff, twelve respondents were randomly selected, two each per cadre (Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer I, Lecturer II, Assistant Lecturer), making 20 respondents altogether, for the study.

V. CASE STUDY

The department of architecture is an educational institution in the south western Nigeria (name withheld for some reasons) was used as the case study for the research. The university was established 1981 with the vision to be a centre of excellence in training, research and service delivery.

The selected department of architecture was established in 1989 and runs Bachelors of Technology (5 years), Master of Technology (2 years), and Post graduate Diploma (2 years). The department has the head of department who reports directly to the Dean of faculty. The organogram is as shown in figure 8. All staff, both academic and non-academic, and students reports directly to the head of department; occasionally can bypass the head of department and go straight to the dean of faculty depending on the issues at hand. Students are also free to report to members of staff, who may be able to resolve issues without necessarily having to go to the head of department. The dean of school reports directly to the vice chancellor of the university.

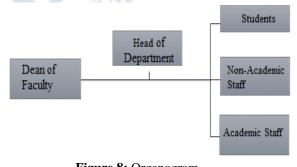


Figure 8: Organogram Source: Author's Field work

In support of the university's vision, the department's vision is to be a center of excellence in research, training and service delivery in architecture. At inception in 1989, it has a sizable number of academic, non-academic staff and students. In 2021, it has recorded increase as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Number of Staff

Year	1989	2021
Number of Academic staff	4	33
Number of Non-academic staff	2	9
Students	9	421

Source: Author's Fieldwork

The SWOT analysis was used in combination with PESTLE analysis to gather, evaluate, identify, and analyze the strategic forms that are facing the department. Using both analyses help the organization in reassessing and finding out



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opportunities and threats that are emerging. This was done by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, in order to know areas where the department is strong, and where the greatest opportunities lie; and to counter the dangers posed by the threats in order to develop a plan of action. Unstructured face to face interviews were conducted amongst members of staff and students; and below is summary of harvests of responses received. They were collated and analyzed.

A. PESTLE Analysis

PESTLE analysis was conducted in order to identify the external forces affecting the selected department. This was done first to help identify also the SWOT factors. See table 2

Table 2: PESTLE Analysis

PESTLE	External	Results
Political	Introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) by the Federal Government The use of Treasury Single Account (TSA) by the Federal Government Increase in Taxation	Threat
Economics	Increase in cost of living around the vicinity of the University (accommodation) Financial c h a l l e n g e s a f f e c t i n g i n f r a s t r u c t u r a l provision Students and staff constantly under pressure due to unmet needs caused by financial supply Unpaid allowances of staff	Threat
Social	Controlled student population Availability of facilities and staff strength	Opportunity
Technological	ICT/Internet in and around the campus has improved academic research Students can register anywhere Advertisement of positions and programs	Opportunity
Environment	Lack of infrastructural Provision Bad state of roads Low level of development	Threat
Legal	No Employment except through the federal Government No thorough professional regulation Excessive deduction from staff financially	Threat

Source: Author's Fieldwork

PESTLE, from the table above identified the external threats and opportunities.

Politically, the introduction of IPPIS by the federal government and the irregularity associated with it has left some staff unpaid, consequently affecting their welfare. Also, all, projects are initiated through one source of TSA and funds are not released as at when due, slowing down the pace of development in the department.

The economic related factors as noted were the increased cost of living as a result of the presence of the university in the present location vis-a-viz, accommodation, prices of food, commodities; this has affected both staff and students in terms of their output (innovation, exposure, and originality).

Social issues have to do with a reduced student population due to the availability of spaces and facilities and that means reduced staff strengths.

Technologically, the ICT/Internet centers and outlets have helped in the improved research by staff and students. Ideally, students irrespective of where they live can register online, which is an improved way of interaction and learning. Also, positions and vacancies can now be advertised nationally and globally.

Environmentally, bad roads within the city and around the vicinity of the campus and low level of development have generally affected studio culture of the students, as they prefer to work in their accommodation outside the campus thereby losing the studio culture.

Legally, the staff are affected as employment are directly from the federal Government. Also is the excessive deduction from staff financially, which has reduced their productivity.

B. SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis arose as a result of the threats and opportunities from the PESTLE analysis. This was also explored to know the internal, that is, the Strength and Weakness; and the external factors, that is, the Opportunities and threats. This are detailed in the Table 3 and 4 shown.

Table 3: SWOT Internal Factor Evaluation

	Strength	Rating	Weakness	Rating
		1 - 3		1 - 3
н	igh subscription (Admission)	3	No joint Departmental	1
н	igh staff strength	3		
			Research	
A	ccredited programs	3	Passive Interaction with other	2
St	taff development	2		
R	eputation	2	Faculties within the	
	dividual research	2	No collaboration with other	2
in	idividual research	-		-
	ncouraged			
P	hysical Facilities (staff/	2	departments,	
			(Multidisciplinary)	
st	udent ratio, office spaces)		Not able to follow up on	1
	ery competitive due to	2		
			collaboration	
			Not involved in Faculty	1
	uality uration of Program	1		
D	uration of Program	1	administration	
Le	eadership qualities	1	Poor Postgraduate program	2
G	ood number of studios and	1		
			coordination	
l la	ecture rooms		Outdated curriculum	1
ie.	our crooms		Few online resource materials	1
			No collaboration with industry	1
			No staff development structure	1
			•	

Rating (1 = Minor/Low, 2= Medium 3 =Major/High); Source: Author's Fieldwork

Table 4: SWOT External Factor Evaluation

Opportunities	Rating	Threa	Rating	
	-	ts	-	
	1 - 3		1 - 3	
Linkage Programs for	3	Guard against Inbreeding	2	
students/ international collaboration		(training within) Lack of ICT Facilities	3	
Gainful employment after	3	Admissions quota	3	
study		Lack of consistent funding	3	
Professionals (adds to the	3			
·····		of program		
development of Nigeria)		Abscondments of	3	
Involvement with	2	foreign		
and a status		scholars		
University responsibilities		Other competitors	2	
Acquire professional/	2	No specialized programs	2	
		Low infrastructure	2	
academic qualifications				



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Opportunities	Rating	Threa	Rating
		ts	
(Architects/Ph.D.)			
Students compete favorably	3		
Interdisciplinary research	2		
Diversification into other	1		

programs and specialization

Rating (1 = Minor/Low, 2= Medium 3 = Major/High); Source: Author's Fieldwork

The purpose of SWOT analysis is to look at the internal and external factors as one entity. Based on the findings from the summary of the SWOT tables showing the Strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; from the strength, the department has the advantages of its high staff strength, which includes nine of the academic staff at the professorial cadre. Another advantage is the accredited programs and the admissions demand. It also has other factors that make it stand out. However, the department can do better in other areas with low ratings, as shown in the strength table. The main departmental strength lies in the quality of scholarly output due to the number of staff available.

Based on the weaknesses shown in table 3, the department would need improvement in many areas, such as having joint research with other faculties and departments within the university. Another area is Strengthening the post-graduate program, which is said to be poorly coordinated. Other areas are improved curriculum, online resources and others, as shown in table 3.

The external factors of opportunities and threats were also evaluated and rated. It was discovered that the department also exhibits several opportunities and include the chances of collaboration internationally for students to compete favorably after school and be gainfully employed. The department can also break into other areas of specialization and interdisciplinary research. The ratings were also assigned in order of importance.

The department is also facing problems, as also revealed in table 4 and includes the lack of ICT facilities, making students go to available cafes outside the campus. Due to the limited number of spaces, there is a limit to the number of students that can be admitted yearly. The department will need to look critically into the facilities and studio spaces that can be addressed and put to proper use to increase the number of students intake; otherwise, the department will continue losing their students yearly to other neighboring universities.

With the constant abscondment of scholars sponsored by the university and not returning to their jobs, there may eventually be a dearth in staff, mainly because the federal government strictly does employment. Other areas that pose as threat are revealed in tables 4.

C. Outcomes of Combining SWOT and PESTLE

In combining SWOT and PESTLE analysis, the analyses show there is a connection between the two. There are threats from the PESTLE and SWOT related and means that more attention needs to be paid and tackled them. In both instances of analyses, the lack of infrastructure, employment issues, payroll and salary issues will need to be addressed.

VI. STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the combined analysis of SWOT and PESTLE, the following strategies are recommended.

- The department would need to provide more students accommodation within the campus to enable students to work more in the studios, to imbibe the studio culture. Living off campus is usually stressful and students spend more. Moreso, many of the Universities around have their students accommodation within the campus. This ca discourages parents from choosing the department in preference to other schools.
- By recommendation from the department on behalf of staff, the university should look into the payment structure for improvement; to reduce the hardship, which serves as distractions of staff away from the responsibility of teaching, and preventing them from putting in their best.
- Provision of ICT facilities and online resources to improve learning. Digital age is the in thing; the department need to improve on the computer laboratories to discourage students using more off campus cafes.
- Better staff welfare and teaching environment to guard against staff abscondment.

Many of the staff that go on scholarship abroad do not return back to their jobs. Mainly because of the non-availability of adequate teaching materials, enough offices and comfort and the pay. These can be improved on to discourage abscondment after study leaves.

• Introduce collaboration and multidisciplinary research locally, nationally and internationally.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study identified four types of analysis tools and evaluated the performance of architectural education combining six elements of PESTLE and four factors of SWOT and identified the external and internal factors of the selected department of architecture, because it will take care of both internal and external factors to check the progress and whether the set goals are being achieved. The research came up with strategies and recommendation to improve the selected department of architecture.

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