

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In February 1990, political organizations and movements were unbanned in South Africa towards reaching a negotiated settlement. Education was not isolated from this decision. Equal and legitimate education became a critical necessity.

The central core of the debates around a future educational dispensation is to create ways and means of moving from the present educational situation to a transformed education system that will not only be fair and just to all South Africans, but will also redress injustices of the past.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The world in which educational organizations exist, is constantly changing: changing in terms of the values and norms governing society and organizations; changing in terms of the relationships amongst organizations; and changing in terms of the character and culture of organizations. Numerous factors, such as political stability, legal systems and government attitudes towards organizations, enter into the formation process of an organization's strategy.

A crucial factor which influences educational change, is the range of stakeholders who have recently become involved in education (Bot, 1992 a:76). Where the state has monopolized the control and policy process in the past, alternative forces now want to contribute to the debate, addressing popular demands for an education system acceptable to all its clients (Benell, 1992:1). Unless the strategy of an educational institution is well matched to the full range of external considerations, its suitability becomes suspect.

The external environment of any organization is always relevant to its operation (Stoner & Freeman, 1978:63). According to Phala (1991:117) the external environment determines the right of existence of an educational organization. In general, colleges of education do not have a developmental relationship with their communities and their schools. As the major providers of teachers in South Africa, the theory and practice of these institutions are often quite disconnected from the needs of the environment which they serve (O'Connell, 1993:192). After decades of apartheid, the capacity of South Africa's teaching corps is limited in several respects, as is the capacity of teacher training and teacher training institutions (NEPI, 1993:235).

The new focus in education is on change, on rational decision-making and on action to shape the future of tertiary educational institutions through strategic management (Strydom, 1992:22). According to Hartshorne (1992:1), strategic management is a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the probable future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself and then develops organizational strategies, policies and procedures accordingly. Knowledge of an organization's external stakeholders is increasingly important to its strategy (Stoner & Freeman, 1978:235). It is vital that educational managers analyze their organization's external environment in order to be able to manage change effectively and to reposition the organization with regard to future growth and survival.

Although forecasts rarely predict with complete accuracy, an environmental analysis is necessary to anticipate future surprises and pitfalls which could affect an educational organization (Sunter, 1992:8).

Between now and the establishment of a more legitimate education system, education will be in an uneasy transitional period where opportunities will emerge to challenge, to negotiate and to take risks (Hofmeyr & Buckland, 1992:3). An analysis of the changing external environment will provide teacher training colleges with examples of how the environment could change. Once the external environment has been evaluated, performance gaps that

exist between the current and the desired position of the institution can be determined (Phala, 1990:116). If these gaps can be closed or narrowed, objectives with strategies to achieve them must be set. The new strategy must then be incorporated into the daily operations of the organization (Stoner, 1978:194).

The problem of this research, seems to be vested in the following questions:

- * What is the nature of strategic management and what is the role of an external environmental analysis in this process?
- * What are the emerging trends and challenges in the external environment of teacher training colleges in South Africa?
- * Are there any guidelines which can be followed in the strategic repositioning of teacher training colleges in South Africa?

1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to:

- * determine the nature of strategic management, with specific reference to the external environmental analysis of teacher training colleges;
- * assess the emerging trends and challenges in the external environment of teacher training colleges;
- * provide guidelines for the strategic repositioning of teacher training colleges in South Africa.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

A literature study will be undertaken with the aim of determining the nature of

strategic management and the role of an external environmental analysis in the strategic management of teacher training colleges. The emerging trends and challenges in the external environment of teacher training colleges will be presented through scenario sketches. If any gaps appear to exist between the current and the future desired position of teacher training colleges, guidelines for strategic repositioning will be determined. Possible changes in the strategy of teacher training colleges will then be identified.

DIALOG and ERIC-searches were undertaken to obtain relevant literature. The literature was evaluated in order to reach a definite conclusion.

1.5 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The research will be structured according to the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: Orientation

CHAPTER 2: The nature of strategic management, with specific reference to the external environmental analysis of teacher training colleges

CHAPTER 3: An analysis of the external environment of teacher training colleges in South Africa

CHAPTER 4: Guidelines for strategic repositioning of teacher training colleges

CHAPTER 5: Synopsis, findings and recommendations

1.6 CONCLUSION

In this introductory chapter, the problem under investigation has been introduced and conceptualized. The ensuing aims of the research have been

formulated, the methods of investigation discussed and an exposition of the division of chapters has been presented.

In chapter 2, the nature of strategic management, with specific reference to an external environmental analysis, will be discussed.