



Research Article

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The cultural planning framework in universities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate cultural planning framework at universities using documentary (library) - analytical research method. The study sample consists of all information resources such as books, magazines, articles and International Studies. We faced two research questions titled 1) The investigation of cultural planning framework at universities and 2) Proposed dimensions and components of cultural planning framework which we sought to answer with extensive study. The results of the study indicated that cultural programming for universities is a systematic process which includes specific steps and each of these steps need attention to their overall dimensions. In general, with the overlap between different models of cultural planning in universities, we face steps such as context for planning, developing vision, mission and goals, internal and external assessment organizations, develop and prioritize strategies and evaluation which turn cultural planning into a systematic and hierarchical process.

Keywords: *cultural planning, universities, framework*

Introduction and Stating the Issue

The new and different situation of today's world draws a new application for universities which indicates the link between culture and universities. Some experts in higher education believe that in an era when the development of sustainable communities makes sense in the context of culture and genuine cultural identity of each community, universities as one of the most important cultural institutions, in addition to production and transfer of knowledge and training of experts, have the duty to maintain and strengthen the cultural and intercultural communications. In line with this new definition of the function of universities, the idea of "Civilization maker University" has been proposed to achieve high ideals of "the preservation and prosperity of the Iranian Islamic civilization" in our country too. (Heidari 2013:12). The main mission of the universities in Iran is advertency regarding categories of culture, preservation and development of Islamic culture and civilization. Cultural managers of the country, prior to cultural planning, must accept the fundamental principle of the reform and development through planning. With accepting this

principle, the next step is to find and apply appropriate models and methods of cultural planning. The discussion about cultural planning in the era of globalization requires the clarification of the concept of semantic scope, size and characteristics of the three so-called "plan", "culture" and "globalization" terms. The terms "culture" and "globalization" have their own subtleties. Williams, one of the co-founders of the School of Cultural Studies in Great Britain considers "Culture" among the two or three complex words in the English language. That is why these words must be used to explain several distinct strands of thought in order to distinguish several important concepts. (Williams quoted by Heydari, 2013). Cultural planners are faced with a wide range of people with different cultures and religious beliefs. Programming and cultural content should be appropriate to the level of audience so it can take activities in order to fulfill the ambitious goals. Iranian cultural similarities with Islamic countries and the Persian language in sharing a regional approach can turn Iran into a cultural hub in the Persian-speaking world. So that it is one of the major and decisive players in the global arena. Cultural planning is not limited to tourism and handicrafts introduction in the era of globalization and it is also important in the field of cultural practices. The important point of cultural policy is the presence in the world. This presence can happen in the form cultural goods and services. The most important tools in presence is manufacturing and exporting movies. According to the technical capabilities in producing movies the transmission of culture through cinema can be placed in the agenda which's prerequisite is having a global approach in film production. To participate in the global culture one should ponder epidemically and put the subtle and acceptable cultural norms and values in the context of visual culture. (Ghiyasi 2012) KhajeSarvari et al 2013 have investigated the performance measurement and analysis of specific social and cultural quality of universities in their study titled Drafting the General Model of Cultural Assessment of the Socio-Cultural Development in Universities and considers the mentioned model related to fields of cultural policy, adaptation strategies and realities of stakeholders in the operational structure of the separation of the two indicators, analyzing and explaining the proposed indicators, in the process of evolution and influence of mutual organizations and literature review. Karimian & Ahmadvand (2012) have investigated cultural identity and mission of the university to place culture at universities and the twenty-year outlook in an article titled Informational Society and written that the necessity of having an international manufacturer of information technology and communications as markers of national power is clearly emphasized In the National Development Plan to strengthen Islamic culture. Zakaei (2013) in his study titled Academic Cultural Studies in Iran: Achievements, Challenges and Horizons, says: although the cultural studies entering cultural circles and the academic interest in research and discussions have yet to hit traditional formation and clear, decisive and impressive gains, ideology, agenda, epistemological and methodological approaches and orientations have formed a different space for social science research. The author argues that variety of methodological and closer ties between theory and methodology and relying on a wider range of data analysis methods, in addition to creating a normal cycle of change and discontinuity in conventional social science research in Iran, will form new orders in the study of culture and society and build a bridge between the humanities and social sciences. Bashir and Haratinik (2011) in an article titled Conceptual Model of Moral and Cultural Assessment of Information Technology Solutions believe that today IT solutions are combined with human life and have altered his activities and many aspects of his life. This shift causes a new requirement that a demands a moral-cultural perspective and Kaladi and Falahminbashi (2009) in an article entitled The Investigation of Social and Cultural Functions of Universities from the Students' Perspectives, have emphasized on social and cultural mission of universities as one of the key mission of the universities along with the dedication to academic and research functions, and thus suggest that although the functions of teaching and research, including the production, dissemination and training of specialist knowledge and training are of great importance and parts of knowledge duties of the universities but the social and cultural functions of universities, including contributing to the growth and development of cultural, historical awareness, cultural, social participation and community revitalization, socialization, moral excellence, etc are also of significant importance and the necessity to pay attention to them have become a critical issue. Acknowledging the above, this study intends to investigate the universities' cultural programming.

Research purposes;

The overall goal; investigating the cultural programming at the university

Partial goals;

-Determining framework of cultural programming in universities

-Determining the dimensions and components for cultural programming in universities

Research questions;

- What is the framework for cultural planning in universities?
- What are the dimensions and components for cultural programming in universities?

Methods;

The study adopted a descriptive-documentation (library) method to analytically study the cultural programming of universities of Iran. The study sample of this research consists of all books, magazines, articles, studies in the field of cultural planning at the macro level and international studies and universities. Data of the present study was gained from the designed forms which investigates the cultural planning framework in universities by taking notes from researches and resources available.

Results;

What is the framework for cultural planning in universities?

Cultural activities on campus are one of the most sophisticated, yet the most important cultural activities because the university contains different and sometimes contradictory subcultures from all over the country. Thus to move in the right direction and prevent any deviation from the straight path a map and a detailed scientific program are urgently needed. "Discoveries and inventions are the research results mainly done with the direct help of in research centers and institutes of higher education. Thus, universities can play a critical role in the age of information and knowledge management. Production and dissemination of knowledge and its criticism is mainly a function expected of higher education institutions." (Moshref Javadi et al 2006). Some experts believe that higher education in the era when sustainable development of society takes meaning in the context of culture and identity of any society, universities as one of the most important institutions of culture, in addition to producing and transferring knowledge and training experts, have the duty to maintain and strengthen their cultural strengths and dimensions of intercultural communication. "Today, the universities are expected to rise and work in the elimination and reduction of social and cultural needs and gaps in knowledge; because the role of education and training of the labor market can be upon technical and vocational schools and institutes but it is only the universities who are to train people sensitive to issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental, social responsibility and are committed to upholding the principles of the human spirit. (Colingford, 2004: 250)

In one division, the statutory framework for cultural programming includes:

1. Providing Conditions to Planning: Planning, as a coordinated, comprehensive and continuous action in order to achieve long-term goals requires the creation of "organization determination" to be successfully done. In addition, it is necessary to establish or enhance the infrastructure for strategic planning. Therefore, the first and most important step is to promote strategic planning.
2. Setting the vision, mission and goals: After preparing the framework for the strategic planning, three steps of the mission, vision and setting goals are placed on the agenda of the Strategic Planning Council.
3. Environmental Assessment (inside and outside of the university) for planning: Clearly defining and developing effective strategies to expedite the organization's goals and remaining at the scene of the competition is not possible without detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the external opportunities and threats. In traditional planning, the process of acquiring knowledge about the situation is done in terms of two types of evaluation: 1- Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses within the organization and 2-Assessment of external opportunities and challenges (threats)
4. Strategy formulation and selection: The initial steps of the strategic planning process, as previously mentioned, are divided into two categories in terms of their role in promoting the program: The first set of measures can be considered as "directing" the planning process such as determining the mission, vision and

goals. The second set of measures are conducted in line with "providing program information resources" Such as SWOT analysis. However, these measures are a major part of promoting the strategic planning and the development of strategies, a stage in which exist the judgment of the heart and of the strategic planning process.

5. Making the strategies operational: To create a link between strategic and operational planning, middle managers and executives do an administrative and operational planning inspired by strategies and objectives set in the strategic plan and of course supervised by planners and administrators.
6. Assessment and review of the program: One of the reasons that cultural events and weaknesses of the relevant institutions in achieving the goals and desired outcomes is lack of consideration of cultural managers planning a vital part of the "assessment and review". Evaluation can be considered as "A systematic process of collecting and analyzing information in order to understand the goals of the program and offer reasonable solutions to enhance the quality and effectiveness." (Alckin and Dylock, 1990: 106-109).

Howell also knows cultural planning framework in universities of the world as following, which is highly paid attention to:

1. The cultural planning for colleges: A solution which is based on the knowledge, ideas and experience and is applied to prepare for the implementation of cultural programming. Howell cultural projects include the study of environmental planning, defining the mission of the university to identify strategic options and setting long-term goals for institutions.
2. Program execution which includes setting specific goals, activities, indicators, methods and desired outcomes, the use of evaluation results to improve academic programs and academic support services.
3. Third level, control which includes checking the intended outputs and assessing the intended outcomes.
4. Fourth level, revising and final presentation which includes revision based on control steps and final implementation of the plan

With a look at the cases mentioned above it can be found that the process of cultural planning for colleges is a long and systematic process which is a necessity for logical framework, cultural studies and knowledge of stakeholder interests, needs of target groups, assessing the opportunities and threats and such.

What aspects and components are considered for cultural planning in universities?

Since cultural planning is a process, its implementation must be based on the specific and predetermined steps. The following figure overviews of the steps of planning and implementation, as well as some of its main points. Factors that should be considered in a cultural planning are summarized as following:

In the context of the planning, attention to components such as getting the agreement of the officials and key decision makers is important. This means that in most universities, a different trend of planning is established and the graduates in these fields should have the skills and commitment to cultural performances. The other component is the formation of the planning council which due to the complex and multidimensional nature of the concept of culture, cultural planning is considered both difficult and specialized. Thus commitment and public participation in cultural planning is essential for the Council. Another component that must be considered for planning in the field of culture is the assessment of the readiness of the organization to implement strategic plans. In this regard, it can be said that determining the ability or capacity to implement a cultural program is of great importance; because the assessment is objective and realistic and done by an individual or group of individuals and turns the current status more rational and clear. The other dimension is agreement on how to secure the finances which must meet the research groups and executor fees. Another aspect to be considered in the context of providing condition is to determine the role and responsibilities of partners and setting a timetable for implementing the program.

In the steps of setting the outlook, mission and goals of the cultural framework for universities components such as the identification and analysis of stakeholders should be noted as a preliminary step before the development of the cultural program. The significance of this action plan is to the extent that in some texts it is considered as an independent step. Since the satisfaction of stakeholders is one of the most important factors in the success of an organization identifying them and analysis of their impact on the performance of the organization are primary measures. The other component is providing a mental imagery of dreams and the future looks which is called Success Vision Statement in Strategic Cultural Planning. In fact, an overall outlook is the prospect of the future in which the program strategies have been successfully implemented. In another dimension there is mission, which is the foundation on which other elements of the program are built. On the other hand, the mission statement represents a major impetus and direction of the organization which are expressed in motivating and inspiring forms. After having regard to the formulation of the vision and mission it is turn to the overall goals which should be considered in the process of cultural planning. The goals are in fact ways of achieving the mission and the vision of the organization. (Heidari 2013:103). Today, with the dramatic development of communication technologies, the local community has become an arena for interaction and even competition between cultures. Therefore, one of the main reasons for resorting to the use of strategic planning in the field of culture is its effective application in a competitive environment. George Selk, on the need for speed in the competitive environment stipulates that if your speed in action is not the conduct of a competitor, you are in a fragile condition and if your speed is less than the competitor's conduct you have come to an end (David 2007: 42). Clearly, defining and developing effective strategies to expedite the organization's goals and remaining at the scene of the competition is impossible without precise knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization and outside the organization. Usually strategic planning the process of acquiring information about the mentioned conditions takes place in terms of two evaluations. 1- Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses within the organization 2-Assessment of external opportunities and challenges (threats) which contains the third components of a cultural framework

In the systematic process of cultural planning, in the formulation and prioritization of strategies it can be said that reasonable and practical solutions and strategies are to achieve the goals of the organization. Development and implementation of a set of these guidelines will let the organization achieve its goals. But developing and implementing effective strategies and bridging will not be possible without sufficient nobility of internal strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats abroad. (Rezvani 2012:89). After determining the strategies, if the cultural planning team has performed with sufficient accuracy in the stage of preliminary studies, including civil and environmental analyzes, they will propose and prioritize some strategies. During this process and after considering the above mentioned components, to create a link between written culture and operational planning, middle managers and executives, inspired by the strategies and goals of the program and, of course monitored by planners and administrators the executive- operating programs are taken care of at the end of the assessment and review stage, one of the reasons that cultural events and weaknesses of the relevant institutions in achieving the goals and desired outcomes is lack of consideration of cultural managers planning a vital part of the "assessment and review". Evaluation can be considered as "A systematic process of collecting and analyzing information in order to understand the goals of the program and offer reasonable solutions to enhance the quality and effectiveness." (Alckin and Dylock, 1990; 106-109); the assessment of cultural programs can be classified in various aspects:

1. Evaluation of the operator as the resolver evaluation

In this respect, the assessment is divided into two types, internal and external. In the internal assessment, the beneficiaries of the program engage in the evaluation of programs implemented in their respective organizations. Even if the expert or experts outside the organization are used, since the design of the evaluation process is performed by stakeholders and program administrators, the assessment is considered of internal type. In the external evaluation, the evaluator is outside of the organization.

2. Evaluation in terms of the evaluation time

If the assessment is done after the program is performed it is called Summative or Final Evaluation. This type of evaluation is usually to review applications deals. Summative assessment can also be completed after taking a new strategic plan and beginning the strategizing or after a period of operational programs (Coffman 1996:224). But if the

assessment is a continuous process and the process is planned and implemented, the formative evaluation is on the agenda.

3. Evaluation of the program level

Evaluation of this term can be divided into two categories: strategic assessment and evaluation of the operational (tactical). Evaluation and revision of the strategic plan: evaluation and revision are the direct responsibility of those who are responsible for managing the strategic plan and since the internal and external factors that are the basis for the development of strategies, are constantly changing and evolving their related strategies should be regularly evaluated and revised. This could include a review of the fundamentals of strategies, the expected results and actual results achieved, and ultimately predicting the corrective measures in order to comply with the expected performance. Evaluation and revision of operational programs; In operational planning, managers' and planners' attentions are focused to increase the efficiency of the organization; meaning that the purpose is achieving the objectives faster and safer by improving the quality and quantity of procedures and administrative activities. In such a case, the main objective of evaluating the operational planning level is to determine the success or failure of the operational programs in order to provide a reasonable solution to increase the efficiency. Evaluate at the operational level is usually implemented using internal evaluation. In internal assessment, operational planning team evaluates the performance of different parts of their own (Heidari 137-145).

Conclusion

Perhaps planning cannot turn the untouchables in to accessible but the lack of planning can certainly make the reachable, unattainable. Therefore, achieving the cultural ideals of the Islamic Republic which are established before the Islamic Revolution requires the importance of cultural planning. Cultural programming allows a more precise management, organization and design measures and activities in accordance with the objectives and priorities. Basically planning is done on the accepted assumption that resources are limited and use of limited resources coupled with the daily routine will bring irreparable damage (A group of experts from the Secretariat of the General Council, 1997: 56). The universities work as agents of cultural strength and flexibility training. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the cultural planning in universities and cultural familiarity with the systematic planning. The result of the research indicate that attention to the concept of culture and its sustainability is not possible unless with the support of developing a systematic planning framework and its dimensions and components in any stage can include a wide range of factors; in the providing condition level of planning for example, the factors of getting the managers and decision-makers in the original agreement, Council strategic planning, evaluation, preparation for implementation of the strategic plan, an agreement on the financing, the role and duties of partners and setting timelines can be pointed out. Other components are also explained at each stage of planning.

Resources

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