

Potential Contribution of Blue Oceans for Growth of Universities: Case of Faculties of Agriculture in Public Universities in Zimbabwe

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Abstract : As new public universities are being applauded for being promulgated in Zimbabwe, there is need for comprehensive plan for ensuring sustainable competitive advantages in their niche mandated areas. Unhealthy competition between university faculties for enrolment hinders growth of the newly established universities faculties, especially in the agricultural sciences related disciplines. Blue ocean metaphor is based on creation of competitor-free market unlike 'red oceans', which are well explored and crowded with competitors. This study seeks to explore the potential contribution of blue oceans strategy (BOS) for growth of universities with bias towards faculties of agriculture in public universities in Zimbabwe. Case studies with agricultural sciences related disciplines were selected across three universities for interviewing. Data was collected through 10 open ended questions on academics in different management positions within university faculties of agriculture. Summative analysis was thereafter used during coding and interpretation of the data. Study findings show that there are several important elements for making offerings more comprehensible towards fostering faculty growth and performance with bias towards student enrolment. The results points towards BOS form of value innovations with various elements to consider in faculty offerings. To create valued innovation beyond the red oceans, the cases in this study have to be modelled to foster changes in enrolment, modes of delivery, certification, being research oriented with excellence in teaching, ethics, service to the community and entrepreneurship. There is, therefore, need to rethink strategy towards reshaping inclusive enrolment, industry relevance, affiliations, lifelong learning, sustainable student welfare, ubuntu, exchange programmes, research excellence, alumni support and entrepreneurship. Innovative strategic collaborations and partnerships, anchored on technology boost the strategic offerings henceforth leveraging on various offerings in this study. Areas of further study include the amplitude of blue oceans shown in the university faculty offerings and implementation strategies of BOS.

Keywords : blue oceans strategy, collaborations, faculty offerings, value innovations

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