



Structure-Strategy Dynamics in Higher Education Institutions of Nepal

Kedar Prasad Acharya¹

Submission:

Nov 26, 2025

Acceptance:

Dec 10, 2025

Published:

Jan 31, 2026

¹ University Grants Commission, Nepal

Author e-mail: kedar.acharya2056@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.3126/ed.v35i1.90367>

Abstract

The organizational structure is the framework that defines functions, authorities, roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for communicating and coordinating to achieve the desired goals of higher education institutions (HEIs). Designing strategies-planning the vision, mission, objectives, and actions intended to achieve the objectives for higher educational institutions and implementing them to achieve the objectives is a major task for every leader of HEIs. The organizational structure is a critical factor in strategic management. This study explores the implications of the strategy for the organizational structure of HEIs in Nepal. This research uncovers the strategy-and-structure maxim of HEIs in Nepal by studying the strategic plans of six universities and twenty-six campuses/departments by interviewing the HEI leaders, and studying their organizational structures. The results indicate that organizational structure and strategy not only are important but also closely related. To implement strategies, academic managers need to have a clear HEI structure aligned with the strategies they are pursuing to improve performance. The overall organizational structure of Nepali HEIs has been fixed by the University Act; the internal organizational structure has been created by the university itself, and gradual structural changes have been evidenced by the strategies being implemented by the HEIs. The relationship between the structure and the strategy is dynamic; the structure follows the strategy, the strategy follows the structure, and both move concurrently. However, the influence of the strategy over the structure has become more pronounced in recent years. Institutional leaders must hold a clear idea of the implications of the strategy and the structure and align them accordingly while managing HEIs.

Keywords: Higher education institutions, organizational structure, performance, strategy, strategic management

To cite this article:

Acharya, K. P. (2026). Structure-strategy dynamics in higher educational institutions of Nepal. *Education and Development*, 35(1). 66–76.
<https://doi.org/10.3126/ed.v35i1.90367>

Introduction

Higher educational institutions (HEIs) are organizations primarily responsible for knowledge generation and dissemination through teaching and learning. An organization mainly consists of people, technology, management, and structure directed toward accomplishing goals and objectives, mainly knowledge generation and dissemination (Acharya, 2013). In organizations such as universities and colleges, students, professors, employees, academic managers, and university leaders use technology to educate students and generate new knowledge through degree-oriented and other research. Technologies may vary from simple to modern. Universities and colleges are governed and managed by academic managers, and there

are planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling processes and systems in place.

Every HEI has its own structure called a "blueprint of universities and colleges". This blueprint outlines the roles and responsibilities, lines of communication, flow of authority and responsibility, and mechanisms of coordination within the institution. All these aspects people, management, structure, and technology build university or college organizations in the same way as other organizations are shaped and reshaped by their internal and external environments.

The main pursuits of higher education are scholarships and services to society. It intends to help students build their skills and gain the knowledge needed to excel in a

Copyright: The Author(s) 2026. This is an open access journals distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC). <https://cerid.tu.edu.np/>



particular career. To accomplish their goals, HEIs develop organizational structures by considering several factors. Generally, the structure is the formal distribution of roles and the administrative mechanisms that facilitate the control and integration of different activities.

HEIs have become increasingly complex, and these complexities derive from (1) the interactions of institutions with the varying demands of their external environments; (2) the increased structural differentiation and specialization of functions of academic and non-academic departments; (3) the variations in expectations and human needs of workers in and clients of the institution; and (4) the variations in norms and values within an institution, as mentioned by Bess and Dee (2007).

Organizational theorists (classical, neoclassical, contingency, and systems) mention different organizational structures and discuss how and why organizations change their structures. For them, the structure is simultaneously the formal distribution of roles and the administrative mechanisms that facilitate the control and integration of the different activities performed (Hall & Sais, 1980). The organizational structure of HEIs refers to how responsibilities and spheres of authority are divided between academic and administrative units and how coordination is realized among them (Kováts 2018). According to Mintzberg (1993), an organization's structure is the sum of how its labor is divided into distinct tasks and it is coordinated. This division of labor and coordination is crucial for the efficient functioning of any organization, including academic institutions. In universities, academic units are responsible for teaching, research, and community services. The administrative units, on the other hand, are responsible for managing resources, providing support services to students and faculty, and ensuring compliance with regulations and policies. To ensure effective coordination between these units, universities often have hierarchical structures with clear authority and communication lines. However, this structure can also lead to silos and a lack of collaboration among units. Therefore, universities must balance centralization and decentralization to promote collaboration while maintaining efficiency. This can be achieved through various mechanisms, such as cross-functional teams, shared governance structures, and regular communication channels between academic and administrative units. Ultimately, the success of any university depends on its ability to balance these competing demands while remaining true to its mission of providing high-quality education and advancing knowledge through research. Mintzberg (1993) argued that five coordinating mechanisms explain the fundamental ways in which organizations coordinate their work: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of work processes, standardization of work outputs, and standardization of worker skills. These should be considered the most basic elements of a structure, the glue that holds organizations together.

The structure is more than a formal structure of tasks, roles, responsibilities, and communications. Organizational

members belong to more than one society and bring their values and beliefs from external sources. Any organization is a structure within a structure because collaboration with other suppliers, customers, competitors, and the government is required. The working experience of organizational members and their behaviors are the curative factors for their success and failure. Thus, the structure is the conceptual and functional framework of an organization, as well as the configuration of its resources (Hall & Sais, 1980). In reality, formal and informal structures are intertwined and often indistinguishable (Mintzberg, 1993).

Modern theory posits that an organization is a system that changes with changes in its internal and external environment. Major external factors, such as the development of different segments of the macro environment, such as the development of technology, changes in the legal-regulatory environment, social and cultural changes, etc., the task-related environment, the complexity and dynamism of the sector (the higher education industry), and the level of competition in the sector, impact the functioning of an organization. Similarly, the size of an organization, its profile, and production technology are considered internal factors. As the environment changes internally or externally, organizations must adapt to these changes and initiate a unique set of activities to address them. We call such maneuvers we call "strategic." More specifically, the division of labor, distribution of authority, and applied coordination mechanisms are vital for the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization (Bess & Dee, 2007). As organizational work becomes more complicated, the favored means of coordination seem to shift from mutual adjustment to direct supervision to standardization, preferably of work processes, otherwise of outputs, or else of skills, before finally reverting to mutual adjustment (Mintzberg, 1993). According to neo-institutional organizational theory (Scott, 2008), organizations sometimes change to gain legitimacy by meeting social expectations.

The strategy is a statement of the vital missions of an organization, the goals that must be attained, and the principal ways in which the available resources are used. In higher education, traditions, customs, and habits tend to inhibit innovation in terms of structures and strategies.

Objectives of the Study

HEIs have been crafting and implementing strategies to bring about changes in the higher education landscape by avoiding inefficiencies. The primary aim of this research is to investigate the potential implications of the structure in the strategic management of HEIs in Nepal. More specifically, how the strategies bring about changes in the structure and how the structure impacts the strategies of HEIs are the main concerns of this study. This study intends to explore the relationship between the organizational structure and the strategy and their reciprocal influence.

Literature Review

The structure of an organization is shaped by the nature

and diversity of its products and markets (Chandler, 1962), the characteristics of the technology employed (Woodward, 1958), the nature and variations in the environment (Emery and Trist, 1965), and its size (Pugh et al., 1967). In addition, some authors (e.g., Chandler, 1962) assert that the strategy employed by an organization affects its structure. Several studies have revealed the interrelationships between structure and strategy (Chandler, 1962; Mintzberg, 1980; Saïas, 1980).

The earlier notion that structure follows strategy has a direct relationship between strategy and structure and is influenced by the nature and diversity of the products and markets of the organization (Chandler, 1962) and the indirect relationship between the characteristics of the technology employed, the nature of and variations in the environment, and size. According to Chandler (1962), the nature of the environment and the resources of the organization influence the strategy chosen at a specific time, which, in turn, determines its organizational structure. Then, the evolution of the environment and/or resources of the organization brings about new strategies and structures.

In contrast to Chandler, Hall, and Saïas (1980), who mentioned that the strategy follows the structure, Hall and Saïas (1980) stated that "In reality, structure is the result of a complex play of variables other than strategy: culture, values, the past and present functioning of the organization, its history of success and failure, the psychological and sociological consequences of technological development, and so on."

Similarly, according to Hall and Saïas (1980), unless the structure follows the strategy, inefficiency results, meaning that "unless the structure matches the strategy, inefficiency results". Likewise, there is reciprocity between strategy and structure. The structure follows the strategy as the left foot follows the right-foot (Mintzberg, 1993). He stresses, at least three types of actions can be taken to improve the strategy and the structure of the organization. The strategy and the structure can be modified simultaneously to make them compatible.

To this end, strategy, structure, skills, staff, leadership style, systems, and shared values should be integrated and aligned. These elements are categorized as hard and soft elements. Hard elements include strategy, structure, and systems, while soft elements include skills, staff, leadership style, and shared values initially developed by the McKinsey 7-S Framework (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Proponents of the Blue Ocean strategy, Kim and Mauborgne (2009), in contrast to the structure follows strategy analogy (structure shapes the strategy) and the strategy follows the structure analogy (strategy shapes the structure), mention that either a structuralist or reconstructuralist approach is good for dealing with the strategy and the structure.

The configuration between the strategy and the structure is critical to organization's success (Miller, 1986). Five structure types—simple, mechanical bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, organic structure or adhocracies,

and divisional structure—are commonly discussed in the literature.

Kováts (2018) states that a relationship exists between environmental factors (such as the size, complexity, and stability of the environment) and organizational responses (such as centralization and decentralization) in Hungarian HEIs.

Methods

The study was conducted by studying the strategic plans of six universities (TU, KU, PU, PokU, MWU, and AFU), five TU autonomous campuses, one TU decentralized campus, one TU central department, and 20 community-run campuses affiliated with TU. The data (both primary and secondary) were gathered and analysed thematically through information collected from the interviews with the university officials, including VCs, registrars, deans, campus chiefs, and department heads, as well as by studying the organizational structures of the respective universities and campuses. It focuses on the strategies pursued over the years and their structural changes. The study's results were drawn from strategy and structure and their reciprocal implications for each other.

Results

The organizational structure of HEIs is largely shaped by university acts, which delineate the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, and provide the overarching framework for institutional management. Key themes include governing bodies and strategic management, structural diversity and role variation, ambiguity and lack of standardisation in organisational structure, strategic decisions and their impact on structure, challenges related to expansion and duplication, the role of quality assurance and accreditation (QAA) in structural evolution, organizational structure as a strategic management factor, the role of organizational structure in strategic management, challenges associated with centralized versus decentralized structures, and the need for flexibility, adaptability, and strategic alignment.

The score for organizational structure ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.672$) reflects a moderately positive assessment of the existing structural arrangements. Organizational structure shows a strong association with strategic management practices ($r=0.758$), indicating that the distribution of authority, responsibility, and accountability is integral to strategy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, organizational structure is significantly correlated with organizational communication, organizational culture, internal governance, leadership and autonomy. The strongest relationship is observed with organizational communication ($r = 0.826$), underscoring the role of structural clarity in enabling effective coordination, information flow, and decision-making.

The integrated findings demonstrate that organizational structure functions as a core strategic mechanism rather

than a purely administrative feature. Structural ambiguity, excessive centralization, and weak standardization constrain strategic alignment and institutional responsiveness, whereas coherent, flexible, and appropriately decentralized structures – reinforced by QAA processes – support effective governance and strategic management in HEIs.

Discussion

In this section, I discuss the overall organizational structure of the universities, the organizational structure of the academic programs offered, the organizational structure for long- and short-term planning, and other aspects of organizational structure. Similarly, I also examine the strategies adopted by the HEIs over the years and their impacts on organizational structure and strategy.

Table 1: Organizational Structure of Nepali Universities

TU	KU	PU	POKU	AFU	MWU
University Senate Academic Council Institutes Faculties Faculty Board Subject Committees Affiliated Campuses Examination Reform and Coordination Council Central Examination Management	University Senate Academic Council School Faculty Board Subject Committees Affiliated Campus VC Office Coordination	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Faculty Board Subject Committees Curriculum Development	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Faculty Board Executive Council Faculty Faculty Board Subject Committee Curriculum Development	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Faculty Board Department (Agriculture, Animal Science, Vet nary & Fisheries, Forestry- and Subject)	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Board Subject Committees Research Committee Curriculum Development Center Affiliated Campus
Committee Office of the Controller of Examination Examination Management Committee at Faculty and Institute, Examination Controller Division at Institute and Faculty Library Development Committee Lab Development Committee International Relations Center Human Resource Development Council Student Welfare Council University Planning Council Degree Recognition and Equivalence Determination Committee Research Coordination Council VC Office Rector's Office Registrar Office Divisions (General administration, Information and public relation, personal administration, Finance, audit, coordination) Centers (Center for international relation, center for research, QAA center)	and Coordination Desk Global Engagement Office Community Engagement Office Registrar Office Finance Information Library Exam Management Services Confucius Institute	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Faculty Board Subject Committees Community Engagement Office Registrar Office Finance Information Library Exam Management Services Confucius Institute	Center Affiliated Campus Research Center Faculty Faculty Board Subject Committees Community Engagement Office Registrar Office Finance Information Library Exam Management Services Confucius Institute	Committee Curriculum Development Center Affiliated Campus Research Center Constituent Campus Service Commission VC Office Registrar Office	University Senate Academic Council Executive Council Faculty Board Subject Committees Research Committee Curriculum Development Center Affiliated Campus Research Center Constituent Campus Service Commission VC Office Registrar Office

Source: Field survey - 2024

Organization Structure of Universities

Nepal's universities have been established by separate university acts, and enjoy the high degree of autonomy in operation and management. Nepalese HEIs' overall organizational structure is defined by the University Act; however, the internal organizational structure is developed by the university itself, and some changes have been observed as a result of the strategy implemented by the universities and HEIs. Conversely, in several cases, the HEI strategy follows its structure. More importantly, it is evident that strategy and structure are often modified simultaneously to make them compatible. Table 1 shows the major organs of universities in Nepal. It is evident that universities have both there are common and unique organs.

The Senate

The Senate is the university's supreme governing body, which, *inter alia*, decides on academic programs, degrees, and affiliations, examines and approves annual programs, audits budget proposals, fixes the number of teachers, administrative staff, and employees; and determines the terms and conditions of their services.

Academic Council

The Academic Council is the main educational and academic authority of the university. The Vice Chancellor is the chair of the Council. It sets the standard of learning and teaching, curricula, the quality of teaching materials, types of examinations, methods of evaluation, the size of classes, and admission requirements. It also formulates policies on the standards of education and research, arranges for the awarding of honorary degrees, and prescribes minimum qualifications for teachers of various levels.

Faculty Board

The Faculty Board, under the chairpersonship of the Dean, serves as a major academic decision-making body for faculties and institutes. Overseeing the operation of educational and academic programs is a major responsibility of the Faculty Board. Among the universities, TU has a standing committee of the academic council, and the standing committee of the faculty board decides on matters before they go to the faculty board.

Executive Council

The Executive Council is the main decision-making executive body of the university, headed by the Vice-Chancellor. The Executive Council executes the decisions and directives of the Senate, follows the policy and guidelines of the Government of Nepal, prepares and presents annual programs, budgets,

progress reports, and audited reports to the Senate, accepts grants and donations, manages funds, manages assets (movable and immovable), disposes of property, provides oversight of programs and reports thereon; prepares draft rules and submits them for approval, appoints personnel as required, and fixes the terms and conditions of their services and presents them to the Senate.

Subject Committee

Under the faculty board, there are several subject committees headed by professors within and outside the university. The subject committee is a major body for crafting the curriculum for respective subjects, including its implementation.

Planning and Monitoring Structure

The university's acts mention the long-run planning of the universities, and the function has been entrusted to the executive council making the university Senate the approving authority. In the university structure, there is a separate planning unit. It was revealed that there is dedicated planning unit headed by a faculty under the direct supervision of the Vice Chancellor, which has been entrusted with planning, monitoring, and evaluation functions. This organ is mainly responsible for the annual developmental plan (physical aspects), whereas academic plans (teaching, learning, and research) are the responsibility of the concerned deans' offices. It is evident that a separate planning committee is created on an ad hoc basis for strategic plan preparation, and it is dissolved after plan preparation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The committee was set up under the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and headed by the faculty for preparing the long, medium, and short-term plans and programs of the university, including reviewing the implementation.

Table 2: Planning and Monitoring Organs of the Nepalese Universities

TU	KU	POKU	PU	MWU	AFU
TU Planning Council & Planning Directorate	Directorate of Planning and Development	Planning & Program Division	Plan Development & Monitoring Directorate	Academics & Planning Division	Directorate of Planning

Source: Field survey - 2024

Strategic Implementation Across University Boundary

A merely crafted strategy has no value if organizations fail to implement it effectively and efficiently to bring about positive changes in their performance. Therefore, it is imperative to take necessary actions directed at strategy implementation, including adjusting the structure to implement strategic plans. Thus, structure, on the one hand, is a mechanism to bring about change in the organization, and on the other hand, the organization is subject to change.

In higher education, some structures are permanent and cannot be altered without changing statutes. Some structures are fixed by the university and can be altered with the alteration of the strategies of the university or colleges. Evidence suggests that changes in strategy often lead to

alterations in the structure of the university and its organs. These changes are derived from the strategy adopted by the university. For example, Tribhuvan University's strategy of adopting a semester system instead of an annual system was intended to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This semester-based system has altered the traditional division of tasks between campuses, the dean's office, and the Office of the Controller of Examinations. Previously, the Office of the Controller of Examinations was responsible for conducting all types of examinations. With this strategy in action, examination related tasks are divided among campuses, the dean's office, and the controller of examinations. As a result, a separate examination unit can be found within the Dean's office, which has emerged as an organizational structure under all deans' offices. An

assistant dean is entrusted to look after the examination, which is also leading to the creation of new structures in the university setting. In several cases, we have identified the assimilation of structure and strategy. In such a situation, strategy and structure go side by side complementing each other's functions.

Implementation and Management of Academic Programs

Implementation of academic programs is crucial to teaching and learning. We found variations in the implementation of academic programs across universities and HEIs in Nepal.

First, the dean is directly involved in the implementation of academic programs, and serves as the administrative head of the faculty or institute. In most cases, the dean is involved in implementing academic programs such as Ph.D. In the case of KU, the deans are directly involved in implementing and running academic programs from the bachelor's to the Ph.D. levels. Campuses (either constituent, affiliated, joint constituent, or extended constituent campuses), central departments (in the case of TU, in addition to campuses), and schools (in the case of KU) are the centers of educational activities, and campus chiefs, department heads, and deans are their respective heads.

Table 3: Organization Structure for Teaching, Learning, and Research

Programs	TU	KU	PU	POKU	AFU	MWU
Other programs	International language (constituent campuses)	Chinese language through the Confucius Institute, Technical Training Center, KU High School, and PCL Nursing	-	-	-	
Undergraduate	Campuses (affiliated and constituent-62)	Schools (7), Affiliated Campuses (14), MBBS Extended Programs (2)	Campuses (affiliated and constituent)	Schools (4) and Affiliated Campuses and Joint Constituent Campuses (4)	Faculties-3, Constituent (8), and Affiliated Campuses (7)	Constituent (17) and Affiliated Campuses (1)
Post Graduate	Campuses (Affiliated & Constituent), and Central Departments except MPA,	Schools (6) except law	Campuses (affiliated and constituent-4)	Schools (4), Affiliated Campuses, and Joint Constituent Campuses	Faculties (3)	Constituent (11 Regular+1 Autonomous) and affiliated campuses (1), Independent Program MCID
M. Phil	Central Department of Public Administration (M.Phil. in Public Administration) and Faculty of Management (M.Phil. in Management);	Schools 3 (Management, Education, and Science)		Affiliated campus (1)	-	Faculty of Management (Management)
Ph.D.	Dean Office (Law, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences)	Schools (6) except law	Center for M. Phil. and PhD. (Management)	Council of Doctoral Studies (Management and Humanities and Social Sciences)	Faculties (3)	Faculty of Management (Management)

Source: Field survey - 2024

There is no uniformity in teaching and learning patterns and styles at universities. The actual sites of teaching and learning at TU are the Central Departments for the Master level (currently 43), headed by a department head. There are four schools, all of which offer master's degrees, and one additional school that offers bachelor's degree: the Dean's Office for the Ph.D. and Graduate School of Education. At KU, schools are the places of teaching and learning for all levels, headed by deans. In PU, teaching and

learning occur in its eight constituent campuses, headed by campus chiefs, and M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs are run at the Center for M.Phil. and Ph.D. studies. POKU has four constituent schools and four joint constituent campuses that run academic programs. AFU runs its academic programs through three faculties and eight constituent campuses, whereas MWU runs its programs through its constituent campuses. In addition to programs launched at university constituent organs, the university's affiliated campuses run

academic programs at the bachelor's and master's levels, and one affiliated campus of POKU runs M.Phil. program.

Organization Structure of the Constituent Campuses

Generally, constituent campuses are separate budget entities, and the campus chief works as the executive head of the campus. TU has the provision for the Campus

Management Committee for its decentralized campuses under the TU Decentralization Rules, 2055 B.S., and the Campus Management Committee as the supreme body, followed by the Executive Committee in the case of autonomous campuses under the TU Autonomous Campus Rules, 2062 B.S. (TU, 2055 B.S.; TU, 2062 B.S.).

Table 4: Organization Structure of TU Constituent Organs

Central Departments	TU Faculties/Institutes	TU Campuses	TU Decentralized Campuses	TU Autonomous Campuses
Department Head	Dean	-	Management Committee	Campus Management Committee
Subject Committee	Management and Development Council	-	Executive Committee	Executive Committee
Research Committee	Implementation Committee	Campus Chief and Assistant Campus Chief	Campus Chief and Assistant Campus Chief	Campus Chief and Assistant Campus Chief
	Dean/Assistance Deans (planning, administration, research, and examination)	-	-	Academic Committee
	Faculty Board, Faculty Board Standing Committee	Departments, Head of Department	Departments, Head of Department	Departments, Head of Department
	Examination Board	-	-	Recruitment Committee
	Research Committee	-	-	Examination Management Committee
	Subject Committee	General Administration, Account, Examination, Store, Lab/Library	General Administration, Account, Examination, Store, Lab/Library	General Administration, Account, Examination, Store, Lab/Library
	Planning, Foreign Aid, Human Resources, Projects, Examinations, Academic, Research/Publication, Personnel Administration, General Administration, Accounts, and IT.			

Source: Field survey - 2024

Besides these, there is an academic committee and an examination management committee as well, as per the autonomous campus rules. In terms of academic structure, the campus chief, assistant campus chief, academic departments, and the research committee (for master's theses) are the major structures of the TU constituent campuses, whereas the library/lab, finance, examination, and general administration (procurement, store) are the other administration units of the campuses.

Organization Structure of the Affiliated Campuses

Affiliated campuses in Nepal have been established and operated according to the universities' Acts. Community-based affiliated campuses are governed and managed with the participation of members of society—academicians, social workers, administrators, business people, representatives of different communal groups, and other organizations. The Campus Management Committee is solely authorized to implement policies and programs

formulated by the Campus Assembly in the interest of society. Apart from the affiliation granted by the university, there is no separate legal identity for the community-based affiliated campuses. The campus statute that guides the campus is approved by the campus assembly in the case of campuses having a Campus Assembly and a Campus Management Committee without a Campus Assembly. There is no legal provision for registration or approval of the statute for these campuses. Similarly, there is no prescribed organizational structure mentioned for the affiliated campuses in the university's acts and rules.

The affiliated campuses in Nepal evolved as per the necessity of the past, when TU could not meet the growing demand for higher education, and the campus's supreme organ, which looked after the campus, was Campus Management Committee chaired by the then-zonal governor. With this practice, the default decision-making and governing bodies of community-based campuses have been considered CMC. Over the years, eminent people

and organizations have contributed to the development and operation of the campuses, and these people are considered to be the general, special, and life members of the campus. The supreme structure later evolved into campus senate or campus assembly. In most cases, the campus senate or assembly chooses either a selection or election mechanism for its members, as well as the chairperson of the Campus Management Committee and the chairperson of the Senate or Assembly. Out of the twenty campuses sampled, seventeen have a Senate or Campus Assembly; two mentioned the Senate as the supreme organ but it does not exist in practice; and one does not have a Senate or Assembly. In the campuses, there is evidence of organs between campus assembly/senate and CMC. Out of the twenty community-based campuses under the study, four have organs between the Assembly/Senate and Campus Management Committee, namely the Audit Committee, Account Committee, Appeal Committee, and Campus Council.

The organizational structure of for-profit affiliated campuses is quite different from that of community-based campuses. The campus has been registered with the

Company Registrar's Office, and as per the provisions, the shareholders are the owners of the company, and they choose the board of directors. For university purposes, they have formed a campus management committee. However, the Board of Directors plays a vital role in the management and operation of the campus.

All internal bodies of the campus are formed in accordance with the provisions made in the campus statute and as approved by the Campus Assembly or Campus Management Committee. The campus statute defines the duties, responsibilities, and rights of different internal bodies within the campus. Regarding the other structure within the campus, the campus chief serves as the chief executive officer. The role of the campus chief may vary across three types of affiliated campuses: community-based, affiliated private campuses, and constituent campuses. Other organs within the campus largely remain the same across different types of campuses. For affiliated campuses, all financial, administrative, institutional, and appointment-related aspects are not linked to the university with which they are affiliated. However, there is a linkage to academic matters.

Table 5: Structure of Sample Affiliated Campuses

Name of structure	Frequency	Remarks
Campus Assembly	17	One campus with the name of Campus Council
Committee or any other organ below the assembly	3	Campus Council, Audit Committee, and Account Committee
Campus Management Committee	20	The CMC members range from 11 to 33, including internal and external as well as ex-officio members.
Committee under CMC	20	There are various committees and their scopes, and most of the committee's scope of work seems to be within the scope of the Campus Chief.
Campus Chief	20	One campus called its campus chief as principal
Assistant Campus Chief	20	Number between 1-3
Program Coordinator/Program Director	??	A program coordinator/in charge/Director position exists in the campus where new programs such as BBA and MBA have been added.
General Administration	20	
Account	20	
Library/Science Lab/Computer Lab	20	The library exists in all campuses, whereas science labs exist in campuses that run science programs (pure science or science education), and a few campuses have computer labs.
Examination	20	
Head of Department	20	All campuses have departments. In addition to these, a few have subject committees.

Source: Field survey, 2020-2024

The Campus Chief serves as the member-secretary of the CMC. There is evidence of intermediate organs between the campus chief and the campus management committee. These organs range from the Procurement, Construction, and Maintenance Committee to the QAA Committee. It was observed that there is no standardization in the name and composition of such committee. Most importantly, there is no evidence of a clear demarcation between the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the Campus Chief and such committees.

In the affiliated campuses, the Campus Chief, Assistant Campus Chief, Departments, and Research Committee

are the basic academic structures, whereas general administration (procurement and store), examination, library/lab, and the accounts office are the main administrative structures. Similarly, organs exist between the CMC and the Campus Chief where Campus Chief serves as the Chief Executive Officer in most cases. In some campuses, procurement, financial, planning, and monitoring aspects are foreseen by the committees created by the CMC, and such committees are led by a CMC member other than the Campus Chief.

In addition, several structures exist in affiliated campuses, such as the Research Management Cell (RMC), Internal

Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Public Information Cell (PIC), ECA Cell, and Student Support and Guidance Cell. Among these structures, a few have been created under the Campus Management Committee, and some have been established under the Campus Chief, which has had significant impact on the authority and responsibility of the Campus Chief as well as the control of the CMC over the activities of the campus. The other structures created by the campuses to satisfy the UGC requirements for funding include SHEP and HERP, quality assurance, and accreditation certification mechanisms.

Table 6: Committees, Subcommittees, and Other Organs of Community Based Affiliated Campuses

Committee/Subcommittee/ Structure	Committee/Subcommittee/ Structure
Academic Audit Unit	Internal Audit Committee
Accounts Committee	Internal Examination Cell
Alumni Association	IQAC
Appeal Committee	Library Advisory Committee
Campus Service Committee or Commission	Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee
Class 11 and 12 Management Committee	Parent Teacher Association
Discipline In charge	Planning and Monitoring Committee
ECA Cell/Unit	Procurement and Construction Subcommittee
Economic Committee	Public Information Cell or Unit
EMIS Unit	Quality Suggestions and Improvement Committee
Employment Cell	Research and publication subcommittee
Environment Committee	Research Management Cell
Executive Committee	Resource Management Subcommittee
Grievance Redressal Unit	Scholarship Selection and Recommendation Committee
Health & Sports Center	Self-Assessment Team (SAT)
HERP Committee	Student Quality Circle Cell
Human Resource	Student Support and Counseling/ Guidance Cell/Job Counseling Unit
Information Technology Unit	Tracer Study Unit
International Relations Unit	UGC Affairs

Source: Field survey, 2020-2024

Strategies and Structure of HEIs in Nepal

As literature suggests (Mintzberg, 1993; Martin, 1992), HEI structures play a crucial role in shaping strategies. HEIs have focused on developing and refining their structures, as they believe that structure is instrumental in strategy implementation. They consider it impossible to transcend existing structures: as for example, TU previously established four research centres based on the country's needs, given that it was the sole university in the country at that time. However, the context has evolved differently since then. TU is no longer the sole university responsible

for meeting the country's higher education and research needs, as many universities and research centres from both the public and private sectors have been established alongside the growth of the research and innovation sector. The authorities at TU find themselves either unable to devise strategies that go beyond the pre-existing structure or unwilling to change the existing structure to match the new strategies of the university. Consequently, the structure of the research centres compels them to maintain their existing form despite the need for restructuring them in response to changing times. In the past, TU constituent and affiliated campuses permitted academic programs up to the bachelor's level at the campus level and the master's level at the central departments primarily located in Kirtipur. However, this situation has changed significantly. Currently, numerous TU-affiliated and constituent campuses offer master's degree academic programs that are also available in the central departments, with a few exceptions. As a result, there is duplication of programs between the Central Departments and Campuses, while the structure of the Central Departments remains unchanged.

Implications of Strategy for Structure

The universities and campuses in Nepal have undergone significant structural changes in the past, influenced by various strategies. This section examines the structural changes brought about by the strategies adopted by Nepalese HEIs over the years. The strategic plans of HEIs, including Tribhuvan University (TU), outline several strategies that directly impact their organizational structures.

TU's mid-1990s strategic move involved decentralizing authority from the central administration, resulting in the introduction of the TU Decentralization Rules 2055 B.S. These rules led to changes in the structure of TU faculties and institutes, including the implementation of new governance mechanisms such as the Development and Management Council, Executive Committee, and Examination Controller Division. At the campus level, TU formed the Campus Development and Management Council and the Executive Committee.

Following the decentralization path, universities strategically granted autonomy to campuses/schools instead of centralizing authority at the university level. This change in strategy affected the existing organizational structure of both constituent and affiliated campuses. The TU autonomous campuses established a campus management committee, which included external and internal members in its decision-making body, along with an executive committee headed by the campus chief. Additionally, at the campus level, Academic Committees and Examination Committees have become responsible for examination-related activities.

TU's strategy to increase the pass rate through the introduction of a semester system led to a shift in examination-related responsibilities from the Office of the Controller of Examinations to the deans' offices. Consequently, the deans' offices had to establish separate examination units and appoint an Assistant Dean to oversee examination-related

activities. Previously, examination activities were managed centrally by the Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE).

The University Grants Commission launched the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Program to improve quality of universities and HEIs. Tribhuvan University responded to this strategy by establishing a Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, which required the implementation of additional structures such as the Staff Selection Committee. It appears that this strategy has brought about changes in the organizational structure of TU.

Quality assurance and accreditation activity focus has been evolving slowly in Nepal. Nepalese HEIs have established internal quality assurance cells within their institutions to oversee quality assurance activities. TU has established an internal QAA cell based on the UGC's QAA criteria for internal assessment. This process has led to the addition of various supporting structures in HEIs, particularly in affiliated community-based campuses.

TU's organizational structure was initially designed as a federal structure to serve higher education throughout the country. However, with the expansion of campuses across the country, TU's structure needs to be reevaluated. The role of Central Departments and Campuses (both affiliated and constituent) in the offering of programs requires a review of the structure and consideration of the strategy.

Previously, TU was the sole university in Nepal, and four research centers were established to meet the country's research needs in education, science and technology, economics and administration, and South Asian studies. However, with the growth of multiple universities and colleges affiliated with TU, the previously monopolized environment has changed. TU has been working to sustain these research centers, and the structure of these centers aligns with the strategy to maintain their relevance insofar as their respective research activities are concerned.

TU has granted autonomy to its constituent campuses to run programs on a self-sustaining basis. For example, the Faculty of Management's BBA program has been permitted to operate at TU's constituent campuses. These campuses appoint program directors and deputy directors under the campus chief's supervision. This structure emerged as part of TU's strategy to expand program offerings and promote internal privatization.

Similar evidence can be found in the School of Management under the Faculty of Management, TU. The school offers programs such as an MBA in Global Management and an MBA in Banking & Finance. The School of Mathematical Sciences has also been established under the Institute of Science and Technology as an autonomous school offering bachelor's and master's programs in contemporary international areas.

Moving to Kathmandu University, KU's formal structure, as per its act, does not mention about the Patronage

Committee. However, KU rules include provisions for the Patronage Committee. KU's strategy since its inception has been to formalize the role of the Patronage Committee in the university's decision-making process to maintain its original vision.

Although the 10-Year Action Plan of Kathmandu University does not include plans to establish more schools, the Kathmandu University School of Law was, nevertheless, established as a new school.

For Pokhara University (PokU), it intends to expand its international collaboration and networks, as outlined in its strategic plan. To achieve this, the university established an International Center. Additionally, PokU intended to establish additional campuses as part of its expansion strategy. However, due to the politicization of campus affiliations, the university resorted to a disguised strategy by creating joint constituent campuses. In many cases, the roles and responsibilities at the campus level are defined, but due to a centralized structure, campus authorities are unable to fulfill their roles independently.

In relation to Mid-West University (MWU), MWU aims to expand its academic programs across the Karnali province through the acquisition or amalgamation of previously operated community-based campuses under different affiliation. This expansion strategy led to changes in the organizational structure of the university, with the addition of an internal quality assurance unit, Program Review Team (PRT), Research Management Cell (RMC), and Education Management Information System (EMIS) units in the community-based campuses (CBACs).

The universities' organizational structures have changed according to the adopted strategies. Decentralization and autonomy have resulted in new organizational structures at the campus level.

The Agriculture and Forest University (AFU) has adopted an expansion strategy through the activation of affiliated campus provisions, granting affiliation to private sector campuses. Additionally, AFU has established its constituent campuses across the country with government support. These actions are related to expansion and can be interpreted as emergent strategies.

Regarding Purvanchal University (PU), it has been expanding its resource bases through affiliated campuses from the private sector. This strategy can be seen as both an expansion and a financing strategy through affiliation. The Resource Council, primarily inactive in terms of resource mobilization, plays a role in expanding PU's constituent campuses, offering programs in agriculture, environment and forestry, veterinary and animal husbandry.

The internal organizational structure of community-based affiliated campuses has undergone changes in many respects. The terms and conditions laid down by the UGC to obtain a QAA certificate and funds have a significant impact on the structure of community-based affiliated campuses.

It is essential to ensure that the organizational structure of universities not only exists but also contributes to the efficiency of the organization. If any organizational structure does not contribute effectively, it is imperative that it should be removed strategically. In the context of universities in Nepal, there is evidence of maintaining structures for the sake of structure while also considering the existing structures when adopting new strategies. An example of this is the TU research centers, which are facing challenges in terms of the availability of research budgets and researchers. TU's strategy is to reassess their roles and responsibilities as part of its structure.

Conclusion

The structure of HEIs in Nepal plays a significant role in guiding their strategy. Organizational responses indicate a clear trend: both academic and administrative structures have become more differentiated. Moreover, there is ample evidence that the strategy itself influences the structure of HEIs. This influence is evident in the establishment of numerous new faculties and administrative units, resulting in standardized processes and increased bureaucracy. In certain cases, strategy and structure also align harmoniously.

It can be inferred that the organizational structure has positive implications for strategic management. HEI leaders must possess a clear understanding of the structural implications when formulating and implementing strategies. This holds true within the Nepali context, as highlighted by Clough et al. (1971), who emphasize the need to establish new academic structures and adapt existing ones to better serve the evolving needs of scholarship and society.

Overall, organizational structure plays a crucial role in strategic management by influencing an organization's ability to achieve its strategic goals. When formulating strategic plans, organizations must carefully consider their structure and be prepared to make adjustments over time in response to changes in strategic goals and their external environment.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and constructive suggestions that have significantly contributed to improve the article.

References

Acharya, K. P. (2013). *Project management*. Asmita Publishers and Distributors.

Acharya, K. P. (2025). *Exploring strategic management practices of higher education institutions in Nepal* [Doctoral dissertation, Tribhuvan University].

Bess, J. L., & Dee, J. R. (2008). *Understanding college and university organization: Theories for effective policy and practice*. Stylus.

Chandler, A. D., Jr. (1962). *Strategy and structure: Chapters in the history of the industrial enterprise*. MIT Press.

Clough, G., Stein, B., Neurath, H., & Zierler, K. (1971). University organization. *Science*, 174(4016), 1279–1280.

Gornitzka, Å., Kyvik, S., & Larsen, I. M. (1998). The bureaucratization of universities. *Minerva*, 36(1), 21–47.

Gornitzka, Å., & Larsen, I. M. (2004). Towards professionalization? Restructuring of the administrative workforce in universities. *Higher Education*, 47(4), 455–471.

Hall, D. J., & Saïas, M. A. (1980). Strategy follows structure. *Strategic Management Journal*, 1(2), 149–163.

Hill, C. W. L., & Hoskisson, R. E. (1987). Strategy and structure in the multiproduct firm. *Academy of Management Review*, 12(2), 331–341.

Keats, B. W., & O'Neill, H. M. (2005). Organizational structure: Looking through a strategic lens. In M. A. Hitt, R. E. Freeman, & J. S. Harrison (Eds.), *The Blackwell handbook of strategic management* (pp. 519–541). Blackwell Publishing.

Kováts, J. (2018). The change in organizational structure of higher education institutions in Hungary: A contingency theory analysis. *International Review of Social Research*, 8(1), 74–86. <https://doi.org/10.2478/irsr-2018-0009>

Lombardi, J. V., Craig, D. D., Capaldi, E. D., & Gater, D. S. (2002). *University organization, governance, and the Center for Measuring University Performance*. Center for Measuring University Performance. <http://mup.asu.edu/UniversityOrganization.pdf>

Martin, M. (1992). *Strategic management in Western European universities*. International Institute for Educational Planning.

Mid-West University. (2075 [2018/2019]). *Mid-Western University autonomy rules*. Mid-West University.

Miller, D. (1986). Configurations of strategy and structure: Towards a synthesis. *Strategic Management Journal*, 7(3), 233–249.

Mintzberg, H. (1993). *Structure in fives: Designing effective organizations*. Prentice Hall.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H., Jr. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. Harper & Row.

Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Taylor, J. (2006). Big is beautiful? Organizational change in universities in the United Kingdom: New models of institutional management and the changing role of academic staff. *Higher Education in Europe*, 31(3), 251–273.

Tribhuvan University. (2055 B.S. [1998/1999]). *Tribhuvan University decentralization rules*. Tribhuvan University.

Tribhuvan University. (2062 B.S. [2005/2006]). *Tribhuvan University autonomy rules*. Tribhuvan University.