

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN THE UAE

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Abstract

There is an intertwined relationship between Strategic planning and the enhancement of institutional performance. It is noted that many countries of the world have been establishing national bodies and institutions, including the United Arab Emirates, which established the National Authority for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management within the organizational structure of the Supreme Council for National Security on 14/5/2007, according to Federal Decree Law No. (2) in 2011. This study aimed to identify the effectiveness of strategic planning in enhancing the performance of government institutions in the UAE. To achieve this objective, the researcher adopted the descriptive analytical approach to analyse the data that was collected through the questionnaire. The sample of the study consisted of the senior managers at the National Authority for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster. The study reached several recommendations, the most important of which is that there is a need to increase interest in the implementation of strategic plans by adopting projects and developing the necessary operational plans to translate strategic plans into practices. It also recommended the Importance of linking the operational plans with the strategic plans, while providing the necessary financial support and allocations for the operational plans.

Keywords: Enhancing Performance, Strategic Planning, UAE

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is the essence of strategic management, and one of the administrative tools that enable business organizations to deal with the future successfully. It also enhances the ability of organizations to develop value-creation strategies, and thus deal effectively with all the challenges they face and achieve a better competitive and entrepreneurial advantage.

Interest has increased in the issue of strategic planning, which has become the future concept of organizations to deal with the crises they face. It shows what is going on in the internal environment of organizations, provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of that organization, help the managers understand the external environment, and increase the opportunities and threats that it faces, which enables it to anticipate the future and prepare for it by formulating a set of strategic alternatives that lead it to excellence and leadership in performance.

It is noted that many countries of the world have been establishing national bodies and institutions, including the United Arab Emirates, which established the National Authority for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management within the organizational structure of the Supreme Council for National Security on 14/5/2007, according to Federal Decree Law No. (2) in 2011. It stipulated the establishment of the National Authority for Emergency, Disaster and Crisis Management, in the interest of the wise leadership of the UAE to protect the lives of citizens and residents on the land of the

country, preserve property, and play a coordination role between the various sectors in the crisis management process.

The National Emergency, Disaster and Crisis Management Authority supervises the development of response capabilities by proposing and coordinating programs between the concerned authorities at the local and national levels and following them periodically, in addition to participating in preparing a register of risks and threats at the national and local levels, and updating it periodically in cooperation with the concerned authorities. The authority also coordinates the roles of the concerned authorities in the country when a crises occurs, and participate in preparing and coordinating emergency plans for vital infrastructure in the country and follow up on the implementation process in cooperation and coordination with the competent authorities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghazi study (2021) aimed to measure the impact of strategic planning on crisis management methods by applying it to five-star hotels in Cairo. It also aimed to analyze the relationship between crisis management methods, escape, confrontation, cooperation, and containment, and their relationship to strategic planning processes. The study adopted the descriptive analytical approach with quantitative and qualitative approaches, where 190 questionnaires were distributed to general managers in Egyptian five-star hotels. The results indicated that there is a statistically significant correlation and impact relationship between strategic planning processes and crisis management methods, which was negative between strategic planning and escape. There is also a positive relationship between strategic planning and confrontation, cooperation, and containment. The results also highlighted the important role of strategic planning in times of crisis to improve the ability of hotels to survive and thrive. Hence, hotels, and other institutions and organizations, shall use a strategic approach to crisis management by embodying strategic planning in crisis management.

Al-Sahmi Study (2019) identified the requirements of strategic planning and its role in reducing the damages of disasters and crises by applying it to the eastern region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study used the descriptive analytical approach; a questionnaire was distributed to a sample consisting of 280 officers working in the Directorate of Civil Defense in the Eastern Region. The results of the study showed a high level of general awareness of the officers about the dimensions of strategic planning and its role in security prediction while developing scenarios to confront disasters and crises and making rational strategic decisions. It also concluded that the basic requirements of strategic planning that is necessary to reduce disaster damage is to form a team specialized in disaster and crisis management, provide an operations room for disaster management, and give more powers and authorities to the disaster and crisis management team.

Abdel-Aal's study (2019) aimed to identify the crisis management methods of public school principals and their relationship to strategic planning. The study was conducted on a sample of 315 school principals in Gaza Governorate – Palestine. The study reached several results, the most important of which is that there is a negative correlation between the methods of escape and strategic planning for crisis management in public schools, as well as the presence of statistically significant

differences between the methods of crisis management and strategic planning due to the variables of gender, educational qualification, and number of years of experience.

Abu Hujair Study (2020) highlighted the strategic planning and leadership practices and their role in risk and crisis management in government institutions. The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach, and a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The study sample consisted of 112 executive managers in 18 governmental institutions in the city of Ismailia in Egypt, they were selected by random stratified method. The study reached several results, the most important of which is the presence of a remarkable direct correlation between strategic planning, leadership practices, and risk and crisis management in government institutions, and that strategic leadership practices are applied in medium proportions and rates by these managers. It also concluded that the most relevant and influential practices in risk and crisis management that were the least implemented by these managers are continuous learning, development of human capital, and the application of balanced organizational control. The study recommended strengthening the concept of strategic and leadership planning among managers. It also recommended developing the organizational environment variables starting from the organizational structure, then the resources of the institution and the organizational culture.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study, it aims to achieve its objectives through the descriptive analytical approach. This approach is appropriate to the nature of the study and its problem. Al-Bayati (2018) defined the quantitative approach as a method that relies on studying the phenomenon as it exists in reality. It is also concerned with describing it as an accurately and expressing it qualitatively or quantitatively. The qualitative approach describes the phenomenon and clarifies its characteristics, while the quantitative approach gives it a numerical description that shows the magnitude of this phenomenon, its size, or the degree of its association with other phenomena.

Al-Tal (2015) argued that the analytical descriptive approach is related to human studies that require analysis and interpretation in an organized scientific way to reach a specific social or humanitarian problem in which practical solutions can be found. It gives it a numerical description, and it also shows the amount or level of this phenomenon or problem under study and the degree of its connection with other phenomena as it relies on the basis of collecting information and data about the problem of the study. The researcher organized the data he obtained and in a way that serves the quality of this research to reach the results that help him understand the problem and generalize its results, after analysis, to the study community.

In collecting data about the phenomenon of the study, the researcher will rely on two main sources, Secondary sources, which are those related to the review of previous literature, studies, books, foreign and Arabic references, and scientific periodicals, in addition to the primary sources of data represented in the questionnaire tool, through which the researcher can collect all information and data related to the effectiveness of strategic planning in achieving institutional excellence in managing Crises in the UAE from the point of view of employees of the National Authority for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Management in the UAE, then analysing this data and drawing its results based on statistical analysis programs (SPSS) and then interpreting them in the light of the results of the study. Therefore, the researcher adopted the descriptive

analytical approach to analyse the data that was collected through the questionnaire. The sample of the study consisted of the senior managers at the National Authority for Emergency, Crisis and Disaster.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Historical development of strategic planning

The process of planning and preparing strategic plans is one of the important and proactive principles and processes in the science of crisis and disaster management. For example, our Prophet Mohammed, the first leader and teacher in the event of migration from Makkah Al-Mukarramah to Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, took care of these principles to achieve the Islamic objectives. He gathered Islamic human cadres, chose the suitable path and time, planned for supply, and camouflaged the enemy to avoid a clash. This is in emergency conditions, and it also calls for planning in normal and stable conditions.

Strategic planning is an important and essential function of management, because organizations' inability to implement strategic planning will expose them to unexpected bad situations that they may not be able to overcome. This constitutes an immense threat to the future and continuity of the organization, as they work in challenging and complex environment. There is also a speed of change and instability, especially in the extent of the organization's ability to manage various crises by adopting the approach of strategic management of its internal resources and its business environment together. All of this requires organizations to abandon the logic of traditional thinking to the logic of strategic thinking and perception. Al-Qahtan (2023) mentions that the historical development of strategic planning went through the following stages:

1. The first phase: It lasted between 1940-1959. It emphasized the concept of strategic planning, decisions with a strategic dimension, and the need to develop and improve public organizations.
2. The second phase: It lasted between 1960-1985. The focus was on the first level of change, during which strategic decisions were based on careful examination of institutional structures and the development of the general objectives of the existing institutions at the time in accordance with the interim objectives.
3. The third stage: It lasted between 1986 until the beginning of the nineties of the last century. Solutions were developed for the rigid models that were known at the time. There was a need for a difference in the overall view of the traditional work causes and the possibility of taking advantage of all available resources.
4. The fourth stage: the beginning of 1990 until now. In this stage, the practical applications of modern concepts of strategic planning began, which represent the third level of change, and the accompanying accelerated steps in facing new challenges. This called decision makers to have the ultimate degree of flexibility and the freedom of movement to adapt to all the changes and threats that institutions encounter.

4.2 The requirements of enhancing institutional performance in the UAE

These requirements seek to build and develop an institutional performance that favours opportunities for excellence and that reflect superior behavioural patterns.

They aim to provide the best conditions and tools for performance that adheres to the specifications and requirements of total quality, and is compatible with desires and expectations of customers. Ghanem (2018) explained these requirements as follows:

1. An integrated strategic building that expresses the main directions of the institution and its future outlook, and includes vision, mission, and strategic objectives that the institution works to achieve through setting policies.
2. An integrated framework of policies that governs and organizes the work of the institution, and guides those charged with performance responsibilities to the rules and principles of decision-making.
3. Flexible organizational structures for modification and adaptation to internal and external variables, organized on the basis of operations, taking into account the flow of information, the intertwining of work relations, the degree of decentralization, the expansion of delegation, and the use of communication and information technologies.
4. An integrated information system that includes mechanisms for monitoring the required information, identifying its sources, means of collecting it, and rules for processing, circulating, updating, saving and retrieving, and employing it to support decision-making processes.
5. An advanced system for total quality assurance, which defines the mechanisms for analysing processes and the basis for their identification.
6. An advanced human resources management system that shows the rules and mechanisms for planning, attracting, training, and developing human resources, directing and evaluating their performance, and the basis for their compensation according to performance results.
7. An integrated system for evaluating individual performance, the performance of work groups and teams, and strategic business units, for the purpose of evaluating achievements in accordance with the objectives and performance standards.
8. An effective leadership that sets the pillars and standards, provides the foundations for the proper implementation of operational plans and programs, and confirms the imposition of excellence management.

Abdel-Hadi (2023) added that institutions need to get rid of bureaucracy, encourage the spirit of competition, emphasize the values of innovation, enhance successful experiences and practices, use expertise and variables from abroad, and invest in individuals with talents and high skills. It is clear to the researcher from the aforementioned that there are several challenges that organizations may face in developing institutional performance, but it is possible to develop operational and strategic plans to overcome them. This comes through the development of an institutional culture favoring opportunities for performance excellence and building an integrated strategy that reflects the main orientations of the institution and its future outlook in light of a flexible institutional structure that is subject to change with the environmental conditions surrounding the institution.

4.3 Stages and mechanisms through which strategic planning enhances institutional performance

Enhancing institutional performance has become an urgent and very necessary requirement in the government institutions, especially since we are living in an era of rapid development and change, the era of the knowledge revolution and the unprecedented technological and technical progress in all fields, and this requires finding ways to adapt and keep pace with the changes and requirements of this era and deal with them in a sustainable manner. Therefore, it is important to enhance institutional performance, whether at the level of individuals or the institution, and direct these institutions and all their human and material capabilities in order to enhance performance. These stages are as follows:

1. Forming a team within the institution to lead the improvement and development of its institutional performance. This team shall carry out the necessary awareness processes to enhance performance. It shall also build a culture supportive of the significant development with the support of the senior management of the institution. It shall also set comprehensive perceptions and plans to achieve development to meet the aspirations of customers and society in general.
2. Self-assessment of the institution: There is no doubt that this stage is the most important and dangerous to enhance performance. The self-assessment also enables each institution to identify its current situation and its different capabilities, as well as its needs and requirements to enhance performance, based on the reference of quality assurance standards. At this stage, the performance needs to be strengthened and supported to ensure its continuity, and development to overcome all obstacles and turn them into strengths.
3. Setting priorities for institutional improvement and development: This stage comes after the self-assessment stage, in which the strengths in institutional performance and aspects that need development and improvement are known. In this stage, the institution discusses the causes of its shortcomings, and make appropriate decisions regarding development priorities, i.e. defining the starting point in development, and defining the next steps for it according to the importance, need, and public interest.
4. Designing and preparing the procedural plan to improve and develop the institutional performance: At this stage, a work team is formed to be capable of building such procedural plans with high professionalism, defining the timetable necessary to manage and implement these plans, and determining the levels of performance expected to be achieved by the end of achieving and implementing the plans on the ground, as well as determining work strategies, distribution of roles and responsibilities, and identification of targeted performance indicators in achieving the objectives of the plan and the time required for implementation and follow-up.
5. Following up and evaluating the performance related to the implementation of the procedural plan to improve and develop the institutional performance: At this stage, a performance monitoring and evaluation team is formed and the necessary follow-up mechanisms and tools are identified. The quality of performance and the evidence is to be followed up, ensuring its availability on the ground, and how to analyze and evaluate them in order to make appropriate decisions in their regard to ensure continuity of performance development to the highest possible level.

4.4 The role of strategic planning in achieving performance management in government institutions

Institutional performance is an intellectual framework that includes the main elements in guiding management in contemporary institutions to achieve excellence and create added value for all stakeholders associated with the institution, and develop capabilities to competition, development, and creativity, and achieving impressive results and achievements. Bashioh (2016) believes that enhancing performance in institutions is based on the logic that the enhanced performance shall enjoy of the following items:

1. Design work in a scientific way to determine the required performance, its method, and expected results.
2. Provide material and technical performance requirements to carry out the work according to the design.
3. Preparing the conditions surrounding the place of executing the work in accordance with the requirements thereof.
4. Providing the qualified individuals to carry out the work, and preparing and training them on the correct methods of performance.
5. Following up with performance and paying attention to what the employees do during work.
6. Monitoring and evaluating the results of implementation in relation to the approved objectives and rates.

The researcher believes that in light of the developments and changes in the institutional work environment in the United Arab Emirates, the process of enhancing institutional performance has become very important, because of the following reasons :

1. It is necessary to ensure the survival, continuity, and adaptation of government institutions to all changes around them.
2. It is necessary in light of the technological and smart progress that we live in.
3. It helps government departments to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of employees.
4. Enhancing performance contributes to raising the sense of belonging to the institution and strengthens the loyalty of employees towards the government institution or the department in which they work.

4.5 Recommendations

- The vision, mission and values of the organization shall be communicated through the traditional means known, such as publications, brochures, and internal notes, or through modern means such as internal e- mail, and the organization's website on the World Wide Web.
- Increasing interest in the implementation of strategic plans by adopting projects and developing the necessary operational plans to translate strategic plans into practices.

- It is important to link the operational plans with the strategic plans, while providing the necessary financial support and allocations for the operational plans.
- Involving employees, beneficiaries and the public when collecting the necessary data for strategic plans. Such participation provides factual data that contributes to predicting crises before they occur. This requires more transparency and participation in government work.

CONCLUSION

This study dealt with the most important perspectives related to strategic planning and institutional excellence. The researcher believes that the leader shall have a clear and appropriate strategic vision based on a future strategic plan that is compatible with the organizational culture, which contributes to the development of the human cadre. The strategic leader shall also be characterized by values, ethics, innovation and flexibility that work on bringing about continuous strategic change and development that leads to achieving quality and excellence in performance.

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