



Determine the Level of Strategic Planning Needs for Administrative Leaders in Public Schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office in Libya

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Abstract:

The current study aimed to identify the level of the needs of administrative leaders in the Qamines Educational Services Office for strategic planning and to identify significant differences attributable to the gender variable and the job title variable. The size of the random sample was 44 school principals and deputy principals, equivalent to 66% of the population size. The descriptive method was used, and the questionnaire was the main tool of the study. The study revealed that the level of strategic planning needs for administrative leaders in public schools was medium, and that there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of the sample members attributed to the gender variable and job title.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Needs Identification, Administrative Leadership, Public Schools, Qamines Educational Services Office, Qamines Libya

INTRODUCTION

The management of Libyan public schools represents a significant challenge within the broader context of education system governance. Effective and sustainable management of this sector is of critical importance to the long-term sustainability of the education system as a whole. It is evident that the education system in Libya is in a state of crisis. One of the contributing factors is the lack of progress in administrative work and student performance, which has declined year on year. This is due to widespread cheating and the absence of a coherent curriculum. Libya's exit from the global quality ranking is a consequence of this.

Strategic planning represents a crucial element in the enhancement of the administrative performance of public schools. It furnishes clear guidance to administrative leaders on the prioritization and setting of goals that will improve school performance. Furthermore, it shapes the future of schools and improves the overall educational process. Wanjala and Rarieya (2014) identified a number of factors that influenced the engagement of study schools in strategic planning. These included knowledge and awareness of strategic planning, leadership styles, financial resources, training and professional support.

By attaining a comprehensive understanding of the nature and concept of strategic planning, including the general framework of strategic analysis, school leaders in Libya can better navigate the complexities of the educational landscape, stagnation, and poor administrative, professional, and educational performance. A general understanding of strategic planning also includes an understanding of the importance of having a clear vision and mission, and the imperative of defining strategic goals and developing plans to achieve them.

Al-Yahmadi and Al-Mamari (2023) have recommended the implementation of training courses to elucidate the significance of strategic planning in the educational process within basic education institutions.

The challenges faced by public schools in Libya, which include stagnation, poor performance, an inability to respond to a rapidly changing environment, and the exit of public education in Libya from global competitiveness and quality, school administrative leaders are required to implement significant and radical changes and transformations in their current course. Strategic planning is essential to respond to these transformations, anticipate and adapt to changes in the educational landscape, promote comprehensive academic achievement, and provide a roadmap to improve educational outcomes and direct resources according to set priorities.

Strategic planning is the gateway to school development, improvement and change. It is the means to achieve quality and excellence in performance within a framework of accountability and rigorous accountability in the long term (Ibrahim, 2017).

In this context, this study aims to identify the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office, Libya. This would help them deal with changes in the external and internal environment and build a shared vision, mission and values while providing a framework to meet the needs of students, teachers and stakeholders so that they can realize their full potential.

Statement of the Problem

One of the strategies to enhance the quality of education is strategic planning. The study by Totah and Abdulali (2021) emphasizes the necessity of having a strategic plan in the school, its implementation and follow-up to ensure its success.

The findings of Maharmeh's (2021) study indicated a positive and robust correlation between strategic planning and organizational performance, with strategic planning also exerting a significant influence on organizational performance change.

Elgindy et al (2022) identifies a deficiency in the capacity of individuals to engage in strategic planning and the necessity to educate them in the acquisition of strategic planning skills.

O'Regan and Ghobadian (2002) found in their study that some strategic planning officials in schools lack awareness of how to prepare a strategic school plan in accordance with the stages of strategic planning. This is often associated with an inability to identify and overcome potential obstacles to strategic planning.

Strategic planning is a fundamental instrument for attaining predefined objectives in public schools and optimizing the efficacy of the educational process. However, one of the motivations for this research is that, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been no previous research on strategic planning in the pre-university education sector in Libya. Furthermore, there has been no extensive research on strategic planning for administrative leaders in public schools in Libya. Consequently, the various elements and aspects of strategic planning, including its importance, models and techniques, have not been systematically learned, studied or applied.

The interview conducted by the author with administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines municipality indicates that strategic planning is not used in the management of schools. There are several reasons for this, starting with the lack of awareness and training available to educational leaders about the importance and benefits of strategic planning. The focus of educational leaders on day-to-day matters and immediate issues can affect their ability to think and plan strategically. Furthermore, financial and temporal constraints may also impede the implementation of strategic approaches in educational institutions. The absence of governmental policies, regulations, and laws that are mandatory to build a strategic plan at the level of the Ministry of Education, education supervisors, and public schools represents another significant obstacle. These and other reasons lie behind the lack of adoption of strategic planning in the Qamines Educational Services Office, where public educational institutions currently lack a clear vision and a strategic plan to improve their performance. The objective of this research is to illuminate the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools within the Qamines Educational Services Office in Libya.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, the researcher postulates that the core issue of the study can be distilled into the following questions:

- Q1: What is the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office?
- Q2: Are there any statistically significant differences in the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office due to the gender variable?
- Q3: Are there statistically significant differences in the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office due to the variable?
- Q4: Are there statistically significant differences in the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office due to the variable?

RELATED WORK

The concept of strategic planning emerged in response to the rapid and sophisticated changes that occurred in the business environment during the latter half of the 20th century. These changes included a shift from a stable to a rapidly changing business environment and the emergence of high competition in the business environment (Al-Shamili: 2017).

Planning is the fundamental administrative function that precedes any process, regardless of its importance, as it represents the intellectual process that determines the path that educational institutions will take when making and implementing various decisions with the help of other administrative functions and processes. This process is considered the initial process of strategic planning (Elgindy et al, 2022).

In his 2021 publication, Abdulali proposes that a school seeking to achieve its full potential must adopt a strategic planning approach that is based on the pursuit of continuous development and improvement.

Strategic planning is a process that begins with the establishment of goals, followed by an analysis of the organization's external environment and the formulation of strategies, policies and

detailed plans that ensure the implementation of the strategies in a manner that leads to the achievement of the required goals. (Mleiha: 2016).

The term "school strategic planning" is defined as follows: "a future vision carried out by the school principal and teachers by studying and analyzing the internal and external environment, identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses, developing appropriate solutions to achieve the school's goals, and moving from the current situation to a better situation in the future" (Al-Shaer, 2007). Strategic planning is a fundamental aspect of success in a school. A significant proportion of schools appear to operate without strategic plans. In order for a school to be successful, it must align its operations with the expectations of its stakeholders. Strategic planning enables school administrators to anticipate future developments, identify key trends and directions, and respond effectively to them, while also adapting systems and structures to meet new challenges and circumstances (Kiprop et al., 2015).

The study by Toutah and Abdulali (2021) revealed that school principals unanimously agree on the importance of the strategic plan in developing the educational process. They also expressed a strong belief in its importance and demonstrated that the plan works to analyze the internal environment of the school, which helps in identifying the core and basic issues within it. From the definition, it is evident that school strategic planning is the process undertaken by a school principal and teachers to establish a future vision for the institution. This involves a detailed examination of the internal and external environments within the school in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses. The subsequent development of appropriate solutions is then aimed at contributing towards the achievement of the school's goals and the improvement of the school's current situation.

Educational institutions must possess a comprehensive understanding of the concept of strategic planning, its importance, and the policies required to implement the strategy. In addition, they must have an in-depth knowledge of the cultural nuances of the society, the economic and political aspects of the society, and the ability to form effective teams and define the basic characteristics and tasks of each of them. It is similarly vital for team members to be able to complete their tasks accurately and to identify the immediate and future needs of workers. Furthermore, they must be able to develop their own strategic planning skills and create a climate that encourages the development of strategic planning skills throughout the year. Strategic environmental analysis to diagnose the reality is one of the most important stages in the strategic planning process and one of its core components (Elgindy et al 2022). Strategic planning is a tool for facilitating the transition of a school community from its current state to a desired future state. An effective strategic planning process typically comprises a series of sequential steps or activities designed to ensure that the process is rational, informed, and highly inclusive.

Mentioned Knopf (2007) according to Cook (1990), five stages of school strategic planning: stage one– preparing for planning and change; stage two – developing the goals and outcomes of the strategic plan (or school improvement plan); stage three – Defining the process for implementing the strategic plan; stage four – Implementing and monitoring the plan; and stage five – Renewing the plan.

The final stage of the strategic planning process is the renewal of the plan. This stage is initiated during the first stage of the process, when the school or district engages in the following activities: The external environment is analyzed in terms of (a) economic and demographic trends, (b)

economic, demographic, social, political and educational trends, (c) national, state, regional and local patterns in the areas of the above trends, and (d) scenarios that predict future environmental events and their impact on the school. In addition, school responses are created for the most likely scenarios, within the limits of the resources and capabilities of the school.

2. Internal organizational scanning and analysis of strengths (or assets), weaknesses (or constraints), resources (or opportunities), and barriers within the school are identified.
3. An analysis of stakeholder perceptions and expectations. This involves identifying and analysing the needs and goals of the staff and students, as well as those of critical stakeholders (e.g., parents, businesses, others) in the community.
4. A Community Education Process that unifies the entire process (a) by facilitating comprehension of the data collected, the identified trends and scenarios, and the utilization of these data during the subsequent strategic planning stages among all internal and external stakeholders, and (b) by involving these stakeholders as equal partners in the change process to come. In stage II, the foundation of the strategic (or school improvement) plan is drafted by taking the results of the external and internal scans and sequentially developing a vision statement, a mission statement, strategic goals and desired outcomes. In accordance to the previous section, the strategic plan should have prominent sections focusing on each of the components of school effectiveness.
5. The behavioral Instruction linked to Academic Assessment, Intervention, and Self-Management Component is designed to facilitate the implementation of comprehensive positive behavioral support systems across educational institutions.

Schools suffer from several obstacles in the field of strategic planning, which negatively affects the achievement of future goals and the development of school performance, and by applying the best planning practices can contribute to improving the quality of education in schools. The study, which was conducted by Kiprop et al. (2015), concluded that the majority of school leaders lacked the requisite skills, leadership qualities, and commitment to strategic planning. The obstacles to the implementation of educational strategic planning are the powers granted to the principal within the rules and regulations and the facilities provided, such as the school building and human resources. In order to develop the necessary skills to implement educational strategic planning, the rules and regulations must be more flexible (Aalwani, 2014). Al-Yahmadi and Al-Mamari (2023) identify a further impediment, namely the dearth of enthusiasm among school principals for the application of strategic planning skills.

Al-Shaer's (2007) study identified the following challenges: the difficulty of anticipating the impact of external variables on future school activities and the principal's preoccupation with student and parental issues. Additionally, the co-location of schools in the same building and the scarcity of available resources in the school were highlighted.

The most significant impediments to strategic implementation are the dearth of financial resources, the absence of incentive systems, the lack of rewards and wages, and the inadequacy of human resources. These factors relate to the availability of competent human cadres to develop and implement strategic plans, interpret them, and monitor their objectives. Additionally, environmental obstacles, such as the location of the school and the lines of transport

to and from it, and organizational obstacles, including the refusal of employees to change and the presence of permanent opponents to any change, must be considered. Another significant challenge is the lack of effective communication between superiors and subordinates. This can result in a lack of participation in the development of strategic plans, which can in turn lead to a lack of interest in the organization's vision and mission (Totah, Abdulali, 2021). The researcher concludes that the majority of intellectual trends concur that individuals involved in the planning process represent one of the most significant obstacles. This is due to the fact that some school administrative leaders and other influential employees are not fully committed to the planning process.

The obstacles to sound strategic planning are relatively minor when considered in the context of the benefits that can be derived from the process. With experience and competence, the planner can overcome these obstacles and minimize their harmful impact. It is of the utmost importance to convince the members of the educational institution of the importance of the planning process. This will provide a solid foundation for the plan both during its preparation and implementation. However, the implementation of the plan within educational institutions may be hindered by a lack of clarity and confusion, particularly if the employees involved lack prior knowledge of how to manage conflict within the organization. Furthermore, numerous researchers have highlighted the difficulties inherent in predicting and obtaining accurate information, given the multitude of variables that can influence the direction of change. (Al-Shaer: 2007). The commitment of public-school administrative leaders to strategic planning is one of the main mechanisms to overcome the aforementioned obstacles, as this commitment contributes to providing the necessary direction to achieve the school's strategic vision. This commitment contributes to providing the necessary direction to achieve the school's strategic vision. The multifaceted complexities and challenges confronting public school principals in Libya, including the decline of public education in Libya from global quality rankings and other challenges currently faced by today's school principals, underscore the necessity for strategic planning to enhance the quality of education.

OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of strategic planning needs among administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office.
2. To identify statistically significant differences in the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office due to gender.
3. To identify statistically significant differences in the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office due to the variable of job title.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of the study stems from the importance of strategic planning in itself, which requires attention to it as a basic administrative behavior that administrative leaders in public schools must practice and adhere to as an important dimension of the personal skills of school principals that should be measured when evaluating them when assessing the success or failure of the educational institutions they manage because this dimension reflects the extent to which they enjoy the characteristic of strategic thinking. The theoretical significance of the study

lies in the importance of identifying needs that should be proactively addressed in strategic planning processes.

Scientific Significance

The scientific significance of this study lies in its contribution to the limited body of research on strategic planning in general education schools in Libya. This study links the findings to the needs of these schools, thereby providing a valuable contribution to the field. Furthermore, this study may add to the existing body of knowledge and scientific research. It may also direct the attention of the Ministry of Education in Libya to the importance of strategic planning and its link to the needs of schools. Those with an interest in the subject may be able to benefit from this study and its findings and recommendations in conducting further studies to develop and improve the performance of public and private schools.

LIMITATIONS

This study will focus on the of administrative leaders (school principals and deputy principals) in the Qamines Educational Services Office, Libya. The objective and spatial boundaries is determining the level of strategic planning needs for administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office in Libya. during the academic year 2023-2024.

SEARCH TERMS

Procedural Definitions

Strategic planning is the process of developing a future vision based on an analysis of the internal and external environment of educational institutions. This analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing educational institutions, allowing priorities to be set according to performance indicators. The objective is to move from the current situation to the future. The procedural identification of strategic planning needs is the result obtained by the examine through the strategic planning needs identification scale for this study.

Commentary

Public schools face numerous challenges and obstacles in the strategic planning. Some of the most prominent studies that have addressed these obstacles are Al-Harbi et al. (2015) Al Busaidi et al. (2017) Kiprop et al. (2015) Al-Shaer et al. (2007). Strategic planning represents a fundamental instrument in the domain of educational administration. It facilitates the generation of novel methodologies with the objective of optimizing the efficacy of management. Strategic planning represents a fundamental instrument in the domain of educational administration. It facilitates the generation of novel methodologies with the objective of optimising the efficacy of management and development. Among the most prominent studies that have addressed this topic are: Ali, et al., (2016) Qasim, et al. (2016) Al Zain et al (2020) Al-Khalilioui et al (2019) Elsayed et al (2023). It is of paramount importance to provide principals with the requisite strategic planning capabilities to enable them to deal effectively with the inherent challenges associated with their role. A number of studies have addressed these skills and capabilities, including the following: Fawaz (2019) Asiri (2023) Al Yahmadi, Al Maamari (2023). A number of studies have addressed the reality of strategic planning in schools such as the studies of Al-Akawi et al. (2021) and Al-Gha (2021). A review of existing literature reveals that few studies address the topic under consideration in the present study. This study differs from previous studies in that it addresses the concept of strategic planning in light of identifying the level of needs of public-school principals in the Qamines Educational Services Office. It is also the first study in Libya to identify the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools. The current study

benefited from previous studies in defining the study's problem and questions, defining the theoretical framework of the study, determining the type of study and choosing statistical methods to analyze the data, as well as using the descriptive method and using the questionnaire tool.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Community of Interest

The study population comprised 44 school principals and deputy principals of public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office, distributed among 14 schools. The gender distribution was as follows: males (41) and females (3). Table 1 shows this.

Table 1: Distribution of the study population by gender.

Proportion	Total	gender			
		Proportion	Female	Proportion	Male
%100	44	7%	3	93%	41

Study Sample

The study sample was distributed as follows: 29 school principals and deputy principals (66% of the study population). Of these, 26 were male (90% of the total sample) and 3 were female (10% of the total sample). The following table (2) shows the distribution of the sample according to gender (male and female).

Table (2) illustrates the distribution of the sample by gender (male and female).

Proportion	Total	gender			
		Proportion	Female	Proportion	Male
%100	61	% 36	22	%64	39

A distribution of the study sample by job title is presented below.

Table (3) presents the distribution of the sample by job title.

Proportion	Duplicates	Job title
52%	15	Manager
48%	14	Deputy Director
%100	29	Total

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized the descriptive research method, which is the most appropriate approach for this type of study.

Research Tool

Study utilized a questionnaire as its primary tool, comprising of 45 paragraphs. Each paragraph was evaluated on a three-point scale to determine the level of agreement, with options of 'no', 'a little', and 'a lot'.

The Validity of the Tool

The 45-item instrument was presented to a group of judges consisting of faculty members at the University of Benghazi.

The Stability of the Tool

The stability of the tool was assessed by calculating the stability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha equation. The resulting stability coefficient was 0.92, indicating high stability and sufficient achievement of the study's objectives.

The Final Version of the Instrument

The questionnaire was finalized into 45 items after it was designed and thoroughly tested to ensure its reliability and stability.

Final Application of The Tool

The study sample comprised 14 school principals and vice-principals. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the sample members during the autumn semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Statistical Methods

The study sample data underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Various statistical methods were applied, including frequencies, percentages, Cronbach's alpha, t-tests, arithmetic means, and standard deviations

RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Results Presentation

The First Question:

- **What is the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office?**

The Strategic Planning Needs Identification Scale consists of 45 items rated on a three-point Likert scale. The total score is calculated by adding up the individual's responses to each item, resulting in a range of strategic planning needs from 45 to 135. The highest score represents the greatest level of needs. The scale scores are distributed as follows:

Table 4: the domain and levels.

135 - 107	106 - 76	75 - 45	domain
High	Medium	Low	Level

Table 5: the arithmetic average of the total score.

Standard deviation	mean
14.72749	94.4483

The arithmetic mean of the total score of the scale used to identify the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders at Qamines Educational Services Office is 94.4483, indicating a medium level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders at Qamines Educational Services Office. This falls within the range of 76-106.

The Second Question:

- **Are there statistically significant differences in the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office according to the gender variable?**

To answer this question, the author employed the T-Test to test for statistical differences between the responses of the study sample members on the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office according to the gender variable (male and female). The results of this analysis are presented in the following table:

Table (6): Arithmetic means, standard deviations and t-test to test the differences between the responses of the study sample according to the gender variable.

T	df	Female		Male		Significance level
		Standard deviation	mean	Standard deviation	mean	
.687	27	21.38535	89.6667	14.25763	95.0000	.562

The data in the table indicates that the value of $T = 0.687$ is greater than 0.05 , which suggests that there are no statistically significant differences between the levels of strategic planning needs attributed to gender. This implies that the condition of equality of variance is fulfilled. In other words, despite the different nature of the sample in terms of gender, the level of strategic planning needs is perceived to be the same.

The Third Question:

- **Are there statistically significant differences in the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office attributable to the variable of job title?**

In order to answer the posed question, the researcher utilized T-test to ascertain any statistical disparities between the responses of the sampled members in relation to the degree of strategic planning requirements for administrative leaders within public schools within the Qamines Educational Services Office. This was conducted on the basis of the variable of job title, as evidenced by the following table.

Table (7): Arithmetic means, standard deviations and t-test to test the differences between the responses of the study sample according to the variable of job title.

T	df	Female		Male		Significance level
		Standard deviation	mean	Standard deviation	mean	
.130	27	15.524471	95.3571	14.43607	93.6000	.755

The data in the table indicates that the value of $T = 0.130$ is greater than the significance level of 0.05 , suggesting that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female variance. This implies that the condition of equality of variance is fulfilled. Furthermore, the table shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.05 in the level of strategic planning needs attributed to the gender variable. In other words, despite the differing nature of the sample in terms of job title, they exhibit the same level of strategic planning needs.

Discussion of the Results

The results of the discussion reveal the following findings: The level of identifying the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Qamines Educational Services Office is moderate. There were no statistically significant differences in the level of identifying the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Educational Services

Office in Qamines due to the gender variable. There were no statistically significant differences in the level of identifying the strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools in the Educational Services Office in Qamines due to the variable of job title.

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that identifying the need for strategic planning as one of the most important priorities for the development of public-school principals. Work on improving the professional development programs for public school principals in general education at the Education Services Office in Qamines by holding workshops on strategic planning for public school principals in Qamines. Promoting the concept of strategic planning and emphasizing its importance. Submitting a draft of law requiring public schools to prepare their strategic plans and holding principals accountable for progress towards achieving strategic goals.

Suggestions

- Conducting a comparative study on the planning needs of private schools in Qamines Educational Services Office.
- Conducting a study on the obstacles facing the administrative leaders of public schools in Qamines Education Control in applying strategic planning.

CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to identify the level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in the Educational Services Office in Qamines and to identify significant differences attributable to gender and job title variables. The level of strategic planning needs of administrative leaders in public schools was moderate, and there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of the sample members attributable to gender and job title variables. It is therefore recommended that school leaders in Libya should be provided with comprehensive training in strategic planning, in order that they may effectively lead their schools and set strategic priorities and goals. This should lead to improved operations and enhanced performance within the schools concerned. It can be concluded that effective strategic planning is a key factor in this regard, and that the knowledge and skills required to undertake this process should be made a priority for those in leadership positions within public schools.

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