Impact of Strategic Management on Effective Implementation of Organisational Change in Public Sector Organisations – A Literature Review

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 04 November 2023 **Corresponding Author:** **Maureen Himbondo**	The purpose of this conceptual paper is to describe and contextualize the important, but yet under reported phenomenon, strategic management, and its role on effective implementation of organisational change public sector organisations. The author used extensive review of literature that encapsulates the key issues around public sector strategic management elements such as strategic planning, resource management and evaluation and control. This paper significantly contributes to the theoretical aspects as regards public sector strategic management. The paper argues that strategic management is critical for improving organisational performance as it forms a basis for resource allocation, performance evaluation, and recruitment of suitable staff and wide range of other management tasks.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is one of the modern management tools that introduces a rational technical perspective into highly politicized and bureaucratic government processes (Bugubayeva, 2017; Teczke *et al*., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021). It is a management process with elements such as strategic planning, strategy implementation and performance evaluation and incorporates strategic thinking and learning. Further, strategic management is a process that integrates all other management processes to facilitate a logical approach to establishing, achieving and monitoring and updating the strategic agenda in both public and private sector agencies. It is a management discipline that can aid any organization to produce fundamental decisions and actions when shaping the nature and direction of activities within the legal bounds (Kuipers *et al.,* 2014).

Considering that organisations, both in public and private sector operate in a complex and dynamic environment, strategic adaptation to environmental changes is required for organizations to remain afloat. As such, strategic management also provides a framework to enable any orgnaisation to align aspirations and capabilities in order to achieve anticipated orgnaisational goal effectively through strategic planning, efficiently through resource management and in an accountable way through control and evaluation. Organisations optimize their performance and effectiveness by adapting their strengths and externalities to the changing circumstance of the external environment. Therefore, success of any organization is dependent on how it exploits emerging opportunities and deals with associated threats, and this crucially depends on leadership's ability to cultivate a community, national and global mindset among managers and their followers (Teczke *et al*., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021).

Strategic management has become prominent on the agenda of several public organisations. Hence, it is important that more is learnt considering that little is known about how elements of strategic management can be applied to effectively implement organisational change and achieve strategic intent, especially in developing countries like Zambia. As such, the discussion of this paper is centered on analyzing the impact of strategic management on achieving organisational change outcomes and recommend measures that could be adopted to aid public entities to improve public service delivery and achieve value for public resources.

In this paper, the author discusses the impact of strategic management on achieving organisational change outcomes in the public sector orgnaisations of Zambia and recommends some measures that could be adopted to assist public entities improve service delivery and achieve value for public resources. In Zambia, public sector strategic management

was introduced as a tool to improve public service delivery in the process of implementing new reforms

Contextualizing Strategic Management in the Public Sector

In the context of public sector entities, strategy is a planned series of choices that government make to maximize public value. Governments around the world mostly operate on a limited set of resources with competing priorities forming competing needs. Therefore, in the public sector, strategy means a systematic use of public resources and power by public institutions for the purpose of achieving a public goal (Golovina & Polyanin, 2021). In other words, public service systems consider strategy as a concrete approach to align aspirations and capabilities of a public institution to achieve set goals, and how well it aligns organisational aspirations with its capabilities.

Strategic Planning in Public sector

Public strategic planning is as a deliberate disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. It is a management practice that consists of a set of practices meant to help decision makers and stakeholders address what is truly important to the organization, stakeholders, and the beneficiaries. For decisions to be effective and impactful, they must be made within the following decision-making dimensions in the process of providing an overall direction of the organization (Bryson. 2017).

Several studies have identified common approaches to effective strategic planning in the public sector (Nickols, 2015; Xiu-bao, 2021; Karlsson & Sumar, 2022 John & Bert, 2020). These include establishment of a basic mission statement in order to determine the fundamental purpose and guiding principles for program activities, defining the target group to be served by the organization by way of describing their needs and demographic characteristics, and defining goals and objectives an organization seeks to achieve for it to fulfil its mission and meet the needs of its target group. Other approaches are defining a program/service matrix by deciding programs and services that an organisation intends to offer to achieve the identified goals and objectives to serve the needs of its clients and fulfil its mission, and identifying geographical service areas by establishing geographical areas which the organization plans to serve through various programs and activities.

Change is life. Hence, any organization that successfully deals with it means choosing to grow and develop sustainably (Kovács et al., 2021; Erosa et al., 2015; Rismansyah et al., 2022). According to Erosa et al. (2015), any organization that fails to grow, fails to survive. Therefore, Kovács (2021) acknowledges that strategic management is one practice that organizations utilize to accelerate the speed at which people move successfully through the change process so that anticipated results are achieved faster. Similarly, Rismansyah et al., (2022) adds that if well applied, strategic management

is a tool that can help organizations benefit from organisational change. Such benefits include improved organisational outcomes and performance, enhanced employee satisfaction, morale, and engagement and improvement of service quality in the organization.

As a section of a society that provides services such as education, health, security, law and order, infrastructure management at all levels of government, the public sector has in the recent times extended its services to include watching over underprivileged sections of the community. These communities include prisons and correctional institutions. As a result of fluctuations in treasury support and competing needs of both internal and external organisational stakeholder, public sector organisations have equally continued to operate in a turbulent environment (Clark et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2022). As such, it is suggested that managers must progressively change and adapt to new operational dynamics to maintain an alignment between conditions of the environment and organisational capabilities (Kotter, 2013; Kuipers et al., 2014; Arimavičiūtė et al., 2015; Bugubayeva et al., 2017; Teczke et al., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021).

Thus, many public organizations have looked to the private sector for guidance to meet challenges necessitated by operating in a turbulent environment (Kotter, 2013; Kuipers et al., 2014; Arimavičiūtė et al., 2015; Bugubayeva et al., 2017; Teczke et al., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021). According to Bugubayeva (2017), strategic management is one such example of a private sector discipline that is seen as a potentially useful initiative to guide the public sector on how to cope with change to achieve success. Studies have shown that strategic management forms a basis for resource allocation, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, recruitment of suitable support, justifying decisions to legislators, explaining the organization to the public and performs a wide range of other management tasks (Golovina & Polyanin, 2021).

Considering that strategic management has now become prominent on the agenda of several public organisations with its relevance attributed to changes experienced in the environment they operate, studies suggest that so much is required to be learnt because little is known about how elements of strategic management can be applied to effectively implement organisational change and achieve strategic intent (Weiss 2016; Höglund et al., 2018; Safi & Syed, 2022). Hence, the focus of this article is to analyse elements of strategic management and how they can be applied to achieve effective organisational change in public sector organisations. The study will be structured as follows; literature review will follow after the introduction and end with a conclusion.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Strategic management is one of the modern management tools that introduces a rational technical perspective into highly politicized and bureaucratic government processes (Bugubayeva, 2017; Teczke *et al*., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021). It is a management process with elements such as strategic planning, strategy implementation and performance evaluation and incorporates strategic thinking and learning. According to Kuipers *et al*. (2014) strategic management also provides public entities with a framework to develop abilities to anticipate and cope with the fluctuating environment. However, Kotter (2013) argues that it is impossible for an organization of any size to manage outcomes for a long or short term in the absence of a well-established capacity for strategic management. He states that strategic management is a process that integrates all other management processes to facilitate a logical approach to establishing, achieving and monitoring and updating the strategic agenda in both public and private sector agencies. Kuipers *et al*. (2014) further points out that strategic management is a management discipline that can help an organization, whether public or private, to produce fundamental decisions and actions when shaping the nature and direction of activities within the legal bounds (Kuipers *et al.*, 2014).

2.1 Strategy

In organisational management, strategy is defined as a pattern in a stream of decisions to help an organization get to where it aspires to be in a given time period. It is basically a tool that can be used to shape the future of any organization through human involvement in getting the organization to a desirable end with available means (Mintzberg, 1994). Meanwhile, Kvint (2015) defines strategy as a system of finding, formulating, and developing a doctrine that will ensure long-term success of an organization, if executed well. The author adds that strategy serves as an organization's compass, pointing the direction to where it should go without disregarding where it is or where it is coming from, especially when there is uncertainty. Strategy acts as an organization's crystal ball, around which all the elements of business can focus and rally. Other than the private sector where strategy exists to maximize shareholder wealth and achieve competitive advantage, strategy in public sector exists to create value for public resources through creating collaborative advantage (Miles & Snow, 1978; Mintzberg, 1994; Kvint, 2015).

2.1.2 Strategy in the public sector

In the public sector, strategy is defined as a planned series of choices taken by government to maximize public value to achieve its ambition (Abdulwahid *et al*., 2019; Elbanna *et al*., 2016; Kabui *et al*., 2018; Ingrams *et al*., 2020). The word "choices" in this context implies that governments around the world always operate on a limited set of resources, that is,

finances, human capital, technology, time, processes, while at the same time, having competing priorities forming competing needs. Strategy here also means the systematic use of public resources and power by public institutions for the purpose of achieving a public goal (Kotter, 2013; Kuipers *et al*., 2014; Bugubayeva *et al*., 2017; Teczke *et al*., 2017; Arimavičiūtė *et al*., 2015; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021). In other studies, public service systems consider strategy as goals at the level of the political economy or at the geopolitics. However, in recent studies, Bryson and Bert (2020) describe public strategy as a concrete approach to align aspirations and capabilities of a public institution to achieve its set goals, and how well it aligns organisational aspirations with its capabilities.

According to Elbanna (2016), citizens expect governments to also prioritize requirements from other sectors of the economy such as education, health, and infrastructure development. Therefore, the authors assert that strategy in public sector is about understanding the choices or priories identified and ensuring that resources are spent on priority areas. This in turn is expected to result in achieving public value. Public value is about giving citizens what they need in terms of high-quality services. Research has shown that a well-executed strategy in this case is expected to lead to the government achieving its ambitions through quality public service delivery (Kabui *et al.,* 2018; Ingrams *et al.,* 2020).

Meanwhile, Lynch (2018) argued that strategies are required in any business context where there is need to align aspirations and capabilities regardless of the sector. Lynch submits that in public administration, strategy assists in demonstrating how aspirations will be achieved in a given context by understanding and appreciating current or needed capabilities. Therefore, the authors posit that quality of strategy in the public sector can be measured by how well aspirations and capabilities are linked within a given context.

2.2 Strategic Management

According to Kools and Bert (2020), strategic management is a defined set of ongoing activities and processes that organizations use to systematically coordinate and align resources and actions with a mission, vision and strategy throughout the organization. The authors add that strategic management activities transform the plan into a system that provides strategic performance feedback to decision making. They further states that strategic management enables a strategic plan to evolve and grow as required as other circumstances change. Its main elements are strategic planning, resource management and evaluation and control. Strategic management consists of analysis, decisions and actions an organization undertakes to create and sustain competitive advantage in the private sector and collaborative advantage in the public sector. In other words, Strategic management is about developing and implementing plans that espouse the goals and objectives of an organization (Wicks,

2014; Salma *et al*., 2023; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2017; Bert. 2017; Kools & Bert, 2020; Safi & Mahmood, 2021). In fact, it can be conclude that strategic management is mainly centered on responding to questions of "where do you want your business to go" (goals), "how is your business going to get there" (strategy) and "how will you get there" (evaluation).

2.3 Strategic management framework

The framework of strategic management is operationalized through three basic management objectives. Research has shown that scholars have, for the past 20 years, made efforts to establish mechanisms for integrating fundamental objectives of effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability in managing organizations (Roche, et al., 2014; Salma *et al*., 2023; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2017; Bert, 2017; Kools & Bert, 2020; Safi & Mahmood, 2021). According to Kools and Bert (2020), a continuum of strategic management is addressed by achieving effectiveness through *strategic planning* by "doing the right things"; efficiency through effective *resource management* by "doing things right"; and accountability through *control and evaluation* by "having employees held responsible for what is and not done."

Furthermore, Kools and Bert (2020), posit that strategic management is mostly about making future decisions of what an organization will do (strategic planning), suggesting ways on how it will be done and who will do it (resource management), and keeping truck and improving ongoing activities and operations (control and evaluation). They add that effective strategic management is about the effect of proper combination of the three management elements (planning, implementation and evaluation and control) when pursuing organisational objectives and goals.

2.4 Strategic planning

According to Kools and Bert (2020), strategic planning is a process of entrepreneurial and methodical decision making, with maximum knowledge possible, of the future and assessment of results to targets in a cybernetic feedback process. It is basically a responsive, long term policy tool which is based on benchmarks, capabilities and needs. In simple terms, Wan *et al.* (2022) assert that strategic planning is mostly about trying to work out a sensible way to get an entity from one stage to the next. They add that strategic planning is an organisational management activity that is used to prioritize, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and stakeholders are working towards a common goal, establishing agreements around intended outcomes/results and assessing and adjusting the organization's direction in response to the emerging changes in the environment. It is a tool that assists in producing fundamental decisions and actions shaping the nature and direction of an organization's activities within its legal bounds.

According to Wan *et al*. (2022), the primary outcome of strategic planning is to achieve operational effectiveness by "doing the right things". They indicate that this can be achieved through undertaking long-range planning. It is therefore, suggested that planners must pay particular attention to the extrapolation of expected developments into the future in order for top management to get a better understanding of where the organization is going. The extrapolation of the expected development must also include a future performance evaluation mechanism which would help an organization to compare what might have been the desirable objectives and goals and what was actually achieved (Luo *et al*., 2014). In strategic planning, Luo describes the difference between intended results and anticipated outcomes as a planning gap. Considering that forecasting is about making educated guesses of the future, Luo alludes that the primary purpose of planning is basically to support strategic decision making through formulation of alternative courses of action that will have long-term desirable organisational consequences.

Meanwhile, Leskaj (2017) noted that the primary objective of strategic planning is mainly to support decision making, while at the same time, establishing alternative courses of action that will have desirable consequences in the future. The author adds that strategic planning should be about exploring alternative courses of action and the impacts and consequences that are likely to result from their implementation. The author further points out that a strategic plan should provide explicit guidelines for dealing with uncertainties of probabilistic futures. Therefore, he suggests that strategic planning should be part of the continuous management process and must include allocation and management of resources, as well as performance evaluation and feedback.

2.4.1 Strategic Planning in the Public Sector

Research has shown that application of strategic planning in the public sector began in the late 1960s and 1970s, partly to respond to critics of comprehensive planning which was advocated by the government but seldom achieved intended results for over three decades (Hansen & Ferlie, 2016; Rhys, 2017; Bryson, 2018; Campbell *et al*., 2022; Safi 2022; Vandersmissen *et al*., 2022). In their book called Systematic Planning: Theory and Applications, Catanese and Steiss (1970) described public strategic planning as an alternative approach to traditional planning as a hybrid model which was suggested to focus on probabilistic futures with a combination of best features of more sophisticated analytical techniques and humanistic traditions of public planning. However, recent studies have shown that systematic planning has been proven to be a challenge to a generation of planners to attain a more systematic approach to decision making, while avoiding technocratic determinism (Campbell *et al*., 2022).

Several studies have identified common approaches to effective strategic planning in the public sector (Nickols, 2015; Xiu-bao, 2021; Karlsson & Sumar, 2022 John & Bert, 2020). These include establishment of a basic mission statement in order to determine the fundamental purpose and guiding principles for program activities, defining the target group to be served by the organization by way of describing their needs and demographic characteristics, and defining goals and objectives an organization seeks to achieve for it to fulfil its mission and meet the needs of its target group. Other approaches are defining a program/service matrix by deciding programs and services that an organisation intends to offer to achieve the identified goals and objectives to serve the needs of its clients and fulfil its mission, and identifying geographical service areas by establishing geographical areas which the organization plans to serve through various programs and activities.

2.5 Resource Management

According to the strategic management philosophy, another objective of applying strategic management practices is to achieve efficiency through effective resource management (Bhaskar, 2018; Mekonnen *et al.*, 2019). Kools and Bert (2020) define strategic management as a tool that can assist organizations to define activities and processes needed to systematically coordinate and align resources and actions with a mission, vision, and strategy. Therefore, the authors asserted that resource management is critical in ensuring that strategic management activities transform the plan into a system that provides strategic performance feedback to decision making.

According to Kitsios and Kamariotou (2017), effective resource management requires a continuous search for more productive ways to operate and assess the ability for organization to meet the conditions of the changing environment. Because resource management is what provides a link between organisational activities and actual performance, Kitsios and Kamariotou suggest that there are fundamental questions that organizations must raise to optimize its benefits. These questions should include what the organization is doing and why. The authors submit that such questions should compel institutions to examine their current practices and processes to identify activities that may prove to be erroneous and inappropriate or obsolete. According to Bert (2017), organizations must redesign existing processes to improve operations. This implies that it is critical for management to get to the root of things to avoid continuing sub-optimization of programs. Bert adds that it is necessary for organizations to also disregard existing structures and procedures to invent new ways of accomplishing critical strategic objectives. He further alludes that effective resource management can be achieved through continuous improvement of programs such as those facilitated by process redesign or process reengineering in order to achieve significant improvements in performance.

2.6 Evaluation and Control

According to Zhao *et al.*, (2022), control and evaluation is the final step within the process of strategic management. Studies have shown that state agencies often operate in unpredictable and unknowable environments, hence the need for sustainable control and evaluation to achieve effective program implementation. In this light, Koteen (1997) suggests that it is possible for management to avoid threats and difficulties to succeed in programs by using valuable mechanisms such as feedbacks. According to the author, management can take advantage of feedback to create alternative plans by addressing errors or lack of efficiency in the process of implementing strategic objectives.

2.6.1 Control

According to Gannon (2018), planning and control represent opposite sides of the same coin as they are interdependent. Gannon points out that where there is no planning, there is no control. This assertion implies that control cannot do much with regard to reducing the uncertainties surrounding activities if the organization does not have a plan. Therefore, the author asserts that long range plans may become little more than a record of good intensions, or worse yet, static fixtures that impede rather than advance the goals and objectives of the organization or community if adequate control mechanisms to monitor the continuously changing environment are not put in place. Thus, Koteen (1997) defines strategy control as a tool that organizations can use as prevention model against any possible threats to the success of the organization.

2.6.2 Evaluation

On the other hand, Koteen (1997) describes evaluation as a tool for measuring how far a strategic management system has become institutionalized in the organization. It has been argued that without a process of evaluation, strategy can neither be formulated nor adjusted to change circumstances (Dobson & Starkey, 1993). Research has revealed that there is need for management to undertake evaluation and learning process to achieve organisational change and development (Koteen, 1997). However, Ham and Hill (1984) observed that state agencies have complex goals and objectives, and this makes it problematic to evaluate how much an institution has accepted the idea of thinking strategically in its performance. Due to varying institutional mandates of public sector entities, Ham and Hill indicate that there is no explicit standard in determining whether the implementation is successful or not.

For successful implementation of strategy, Kabeyi (2019) also suggest that firms must review their capabilities and competencies as often as required. Kabeyi therefore, defines strategy evaluation as a process for organizations to adapt their strategies to the risk of changes in the environment to

prevent them from taking wrong decisions. The author added that strategy evaluation also assists entities to anticipate problems when there is change in the internal and external environment.

In the context of public sector strategic management, Kabeyi (2019) define strategy evaluation as a process of assessing the effectiveness of proposed and ongoing programs in achieving planned goals and objectives for the purpose of identifying areas that require improvement through program modification. They state that the primary objective of strategy evaluation should include possible termination of ineffective programs while taking account of possible external influences and internal organisational factors. For strategic management to be effective they suggest that the strategy evaluation process must also be focused on identifying the extent to which programs are implemented in line with predetermined guidelines (process evaluation) or the extent to which a program produces change in the intended direction (impact evaluation).

2.7 Organisational Change

According to Reese (2021), organisational change is a way an organisation adapts to its environment through a shift in behavior of the whole or its parts in one degree or another. They add that organisational change is an alteration in conduct, also known as transformation, with a purpose of keeping an organization up to date and viable. Transformation in this context is much more about improving organisational performance through redirecting efforts towards the satisfaction of the major stakeholders. They further point out that organisational change involves a step by step process of restructuring an existing organization by removing what no longer works, maintaining what works and implementing new systems, structures or cultural values, where appropriate.

2.8 Change management

According to research, managing change can either be referred to as the initiation of change in a systematic or planned manner with the aim of implementing new processes and strategies or how an organization responds to change which it has little control over (e.g. changing economic conditions, new governmental legislation, social or political upheaval etc.) (Carnevale, 2018; Mergel, 2019; Rosenbaum, 2018; Razmak *et al.*, 2021; Mitchell *et al.,* 2020; Hopwood, 2020). According to Bakari (2019), change management is conducted to effectively implement new strategies and processes in an organization. Hopwood (2019) states that change can either be triggered by internal or external events of the environment of an organization. He adds that organizations can either be proactive or reactive in the way they respond to change.

2.8.1 Change Management in the Public Sector

Study has indicated that public agencies, like any other, also operate in a turbulent environment due to issues such as changes in technology, fluctuations in funding, competing internal and external stakeholder needs (Kuipers *et al.*, 2014). According to Teczke *et al.* (2017) public organizations must also ensure that they adapt and fit in their environments to optimize organisational performance and effectiveness. They noted that dynamic environments necessitate changes in organisational activities, processes, and values to remain afloat. They therefore, suggest that the success of any organization is dependent on how it exploits emerging opportunities and how it deals with associated threats, which depend crucially on effective change management practices and leadership's ability to cultivate a global mindset among managers and their followers (Teczke *et al*., 2017; Golovina & Polyanin, 2021).

3.0 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

This section of the review is focused on highlighting some strategic management practices adopted in the public sector to effect change and improve organizational performance during strategy execution.

3.1 Strategic Management Practices in the Kenyan Government Ministries

Mwando and Willy (2016) conducted a study to determine the role of strategic management practices on change implementation. The study was guided by three objectives: the influence of leadership styles, communication styles and employee skills on change implementation in the government of Kenyan Ministries. The study used descriptive research design where 95 respondents were the representative of the entire population from 18 ministries. Questionnaires were used as the instrument of data collection. The data collected was analysed using SPSS and regression analysis method used to establish the hypothetical relationship between variables. The study established that leadership styles, communication styles and employee training were not common strategic management practices to influence change implementation in the ministries. The study concluded that the ministries should recruit managers who can analyse the business environment, formulate, implement and evaluate strategies. Ministries should also adopt structures that are flexible to changes and encourage employee training to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, Mwando and Muturi recommend that ministries should introduce changes by developing a plan that will outline how change will be implemented gradually with minimal systemic and individual resistance.

3.2 Strategic management Practices at Parliament of Kenya

Guchu (2014) also conducted a study to establish the strategic management practices undertaken at Parliament of Kenya.

The study was carried out through a case study design where the unit of study was sought to find out the strategic management practices at the Parliament of Kenya. The study made use of both primary and secondary data. The respondents of the study were ten (10) managers drawn from various departments. They included the Human resource Manager, Accounts Manager, ICT Manager, Legal Officer, Public relations manager, and budget officer and many others. Both the primary and secondary data were qualitative in nature. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The study established the strategic management practices in Parliament of Kenya by reviewing the evaluation of strategic management practices, the organizational performance and the challenges facing strategic management practices. The findings established that strategic planning processes were reviewed constantly in order to improve performance and performance measures.

The study revealed that employees were often excluded in the discussion of action under strategic planning process. The process of planning was only the responsibility of a few selected members of executives and the so-called experts. The Kenyan parliament perceived the process as a high-level exercise. The nature of the approach, however, made the organization's most important assets, its managers, and employees, which the author dubbed "the fingertips of a company- ignore your sense of touch at your own peril", get disconnected from the system.

In terms of the implementation of the strategic plan, the study revealed that the specific implementation process varies from one organization to another as it largely depends on the specific strategic plan. In Kenya's parliament, strategic implementation process relied greatly on middle managers, who are also principal owners of strategy execution. The challenge that was however, identified is that middle managers were not involved in strategy development as it was essentially a responsibility of senior managers. The study revealed that managers play a crucial role in strategy management practices. They contribute content and act as the link between organizational levels.

Guchu (2014) acknowledged that the process of strategic management is a continuous one and must change as the organizational goals and objectives evolve. Additionally, he observed that strategic planning can help to improve the performance of the organization by committing to the strategic planning procedures to reduce risk. He also acknowledged the importance of a clear vision and mission because none of the subsequent steps matter if the organization is not certain where it is headed. The author further noted that the important part of strategic planning is always monitoring and adapting the plan to survive changing and unanticipated conditions. Therefore, he suggested that strategy should include a clear set of long-term goals; it should define the scope of the firm and it should have a clear statement of what competitive advantage it will achieve and sustain. In addition, he asserted that strategy should represent the firm's internal context that will allow it to achieve a competitive advantage in the environment in which it has chosen to compete.

3.3 Strategic management practices in the Middle East Countries

A similar study was conducted by Tamimi (2018) on Applications of Strategic Management Practices in Public Sector within the middle east countries. The study was archival-desktop research on available literature on strategic management in the last two decades. The author's main objective for undertaking the study was to investigate how Middle East countries practice strategic management. The study was limited to the available literature from strategic management theory and application within public sector in some of the Middle East countries. According to the author, the study was one of the first attempts to analyze and interpret strategic management practices in the Middle East region.

Using content analysis techniques on variables, public reforms, and strategic planning elements (planning, implementation, and evaluation), the author found that most of the Middle East countries were struggling to practice strategic management for various reasons. The study revealed that much as there was a positive impact of strategic management practices on public organizational performance, there was an array of issues that needed to be addressed to achieve effective and efficient public service delivery. The issues included public reforms and decentralization successes within public organizations.

In this study, the author noted that public reforms and decentralization were two critical scientific management approaches for bringing radical changes in the prevailing administrative conditions and practices to transform traditional public administration into more effective strategic administration. According to the author, improving public sector administration must be characterized by strategic thinking, decentralization of authority and responsibilities, research, initiatives, and innovation based on long-term planning processes. Therefore, the author pointed out that these processes are fundamental for strategic management practices as they enhance transparency and rid-off routine public administration work. The author concluded by stating that the processes of balancing authorities and responsibilities helps in rationalizing resource allocation at all levels, thus leading to efficiency and effective public service delivery.

On the other hand, Tamimi (2018) noted that Middle East countries were not the only ones that did not pay much attention to effective strategic management. His study revealed that other developing countries like Nigeria, which is one of the richest and largest countries in Africa did not effectively apply strategic management tools in their public

administration. This was similar to a study that Olaleye and Afinotan (2014) conducted which investigated the strategic management practices in local government management system in Nigeria. According to the authors, the Nigerian local government system lacked public administration reforms and a weak strategic management precondition within government departments which caused weak institutional public management systems and lack of long-term vision.

In the same light, Gideon and Georgina (2016) investigated strategic management practices in Abia State-Nigerian local government. Their study revealed that there was a lack of essential organisational policy for guiding or giving proper direction to public strategies. The authors also found out that other reasons behind weak strategic management included lack of training, improper leadership style and a weak focus on top management interest which resulted in weak government performance and blurred organizational vision and relations.

3.4 Strategic management practices in Oman

A similar study conducted by Common (2008) on application of strategic management practices in Oman's public administration revealed that the country was highly resistant to reform tendencies for many reasons. These reasons included a highly centralized political system and organisational cultures which enhanced resistance for change. In Oman, these two issues complicated the conditions for strategic management in public organizations and decreased the utilization of strategic management tools at the organisational level. The study also revealed that much as managers were generally aware of some strategic management practices and tools, most of them failed to use them frequently. In addition, the study revealed that there was uneven awareness of the strategic management tools and techniques in management within the same organization. The study's findings further pointed out that 30 percent of the targeted organizations rarely or never used strategic planning tools and techniques. The study, on the other hand revealed that most organizations were moving towards strategic thinking and future planning using various types of strategic management tools and techniques.

3.5 Strategic management practices in Saudi Arabia

A study conducted in Saudi Arabia by Common (2008) revealed that Gulf States appear to be highly resistant to administrative modernization despite the apparent vibrancy of these international trends, which leads to serious challenges to the concept of public reform issues and decentralization. A similar study which was conducted by Otaibi (2015) concluded that Saudi Arabia consumed large amounts of money on modernizing their bureaucratic public management systems though developments were very slow due to cultural and structural setbacks. These resistance

elements and drawbacks created unsuitable environment for strategic management implementation.

Another similar study by Hasm and Aamery (2006) revealed that the central government of Saudi Arabia failed to apply strategic management practices due to lack or absence of strategic management specialists. This resulted in reduction in motivation to develop strategic plans. This meant that most public agencies in Saudi Arabia did not have written vision or mission statements, which exaggerated the problem and enlarged the management gap. Therefore, the study concluded that failure to apply strategic management practices in Saudi Arabia was mostly attributed to weak training, lack of competence and capability in future thinking and lack of competition within government agencies.

3.6 Change management practices

Some studies have been conducted on how public sector entities have incorporated change management practices in executing strategic plans to improve public service delivery and attain optimal value for public resources. The studies include the following.

3.6.1 Change Management Practices in Indonesia's Government

According to Dilmy (2017), Indonesia had, for a long time, adopted a spoils-based system for managing its civil service organizations which resulted in low Government Effectiveness Index. The Indonesian Government Effectiveness Index is a tool that the civil service uses to assess the quality of the public service, the quality of public policies generated and implemented, the quality of civil servants or human resources, and the degree by which political intervention take place in the bureaucracy. The Indonesian government initiated appropriate administrative policies to enhance the effectiveness of their existing system. The case study demonstrated that Indonesia did to improve national bureaucracy by adopting a 'merit system' which mainly emphasized on people's competencies, qualifications, performance and track records in recruitment, promotions, transfers, and any other human resource management decisions. The case study also indicated the context applicable to the country during the time of change, the impact, and the resistance of embracing the merit system.

The study revealed that the central government in Indonesia enacted and implemented a new law as a change initiative to bring in the desired change. The case study also revealed how the government effectively managed the challenges such as resistance from government agencies, provincial and local authorities during an effective implementation of the enactment. To mitigate these challenges, the government reduced the power of heads of agencies, governors and local-government heads and introduced an open-selection system process for appointing high-ranked officials. The change management initiative also mandated the process to have majority of selection-panel members to come from outside of

the agencies or government institutions to ensure independence of panels and fairness.

Dilmy (2017) also elaborated how the Indonesian government successfully managed challenges and difficulties they faced in adopting a merit system in its bureaucracy. The study revealed that the government enacted a new law on civil service management called 'merit-based' approach in managing the personnel in the Indonesian bureaucracy and was put into effect in January 2014. The government also established an Indonesian Civil Service Commission (CSC) as a merit-based watchdog. The effort to build a merit-based culture in the bureaucracy has, since then, encountered and overcome many stumbling blocks.

The case study demonstrates how the Indonesian government managed resistance to change by government authorities to guard the implementation of the merit system throughout the country. Also using a case study demonstrates that the researcher portrays the actual situation that was then taking place to bring forth an intervention, the CSC, to bring forth the difficulties and challenges faced in supervising the implementation of the merit system.

3.6.2 Malaysia

Ibrahim (2018) carried out a case study called *Reducing Unnecessary Regulatory Burden Initiatives, Malaysia* to provide insight on the government of Malaysia's initiative on managing change to ensure ease of doing business in Malaysia. It was noted that there were unnecessary regulatory burdens which presented an obstacle to the country's economic growth such as market entry barriers to new firms, slow employment growth and discouraged foreign investors. The country realized that it was extremely important to reduce unnecessary burdens experienced by companies in complying with regulatory requirements as it would lead to companies saving millions of dollars in regulatory compliance costs. The country also realized that reducing unnecessary burdens would also lead to reduction in operating costs by regulators who were enforcing and administering the regulations. The study revealed that the Malaysian government developed a methodology to resolve a specific regulatory burden faced by businesses which provided a practical and implementable solution in line with the principles of good regulations for removing the unnecessary regulatory burden without jeopardizing the government's social and economic goals.

To make it easier for regulators to understand and acknowledge the existence of the burden, the methodology involved both the regulators and the affected firms in developing the solution to help arrest the problem. The study revealed that the methodology and approach developed by the Malaysian government to reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden proved to be effective and practical to be implemented across all sectors and agencies. Hence, other countries benefited from this success story by replicating the

methodology for transformation and change management initiative.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has revealed that strategic adaptation to environmental changes is required for any organizations to remain afloat. Dynamic environments necessitate change in organizational activities, processes and values. As such, organizations are required to adapt and fit their strengths and externalities in the macro environment in order to optimize organizational performance and effectiveness. Resistance to change is one major barrier to effecting new strategies. Hence change can be a real threat to any organization fails to prepare for it.

Strategic management is one of management disciplines that is seen as a potentially useful initiative to guide the public sector on how to cope with change to achieve success. This is so because it forms a basis for resource allocation, performance evaluation, conflict resolution, recruitment of suitable support, justifying decisions to legislators, explaining the organization to the public and performs a wide range of management tasks. Thus, strategic management practices enable any organization to align its mission, goals and strategies with the external environment, one of the key fundamentals for a successful organisational change management. If well applied, it can lead to improved organizational performance, enhanced employee satisfaction and morale, improved public service delivery, the main reason most governments world over have been establishing and implementing new reforms.

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