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# **The Reality of Strategic Planning in Sudanese Universities from the Viewpoint of Teaching Staff Members: A Comparison Study between Public and Private Universities, Gezira State, Sudan, 2020**

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## **Abstract**

The chief objective of this study was to identify the reality of strategic planning in Sudanese universities by focusing on public and private universities in Gezira state. The study was based on primary data collected using a questionnaire distributed to 117 teaching staff members, 27 of them from Wad Medani Ahlia University, and a random sample of 90 teaching staff members was selected from the University of Gezira. The descriptive-analytical method was established by using the method of frequency and percentages for variables of a qualitative nature, and an independent sample T-test was performed to examine the difference between the public and private universities in terms of strategic planning. Also, a one-way analysis of variance was applied to test the differences in the level of teaching staff members' participation in strategic planning according to university type and employment category. The study found that the level of strategic planning practice in public universities is higher than in private universities. According to the most significant finding, the study recommended that private Sudanese universities should pay more attention to strategic planning and also should give more room for teaching staff members to participate in strategic planning processes.

**Keywords:** strategic planning, universities, teaching staff members, planning practice

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## **1. Preface**

This era is characterized by multiple complexities and a variety of factors that influence its different activities. This requires us to consider strategic planning as a way out of these complexities, as a scientific method that brings us a lot of benefits and makes us avoid many problems, so that the planning of the educational process is based on

principles determined by the surrounding environment in its various fields, on which the objectives of the plan and the method of dealing with them are based.

Otaibi (2009) states that strategic planning is considered the essential tool for dealing with today's world, this changing world with revolutionary scientific and technical developments, particularly in the fields of information and telecommunications besides the global economy that depends on knowledge.

Kotler and Armstrong (1999) stated that strategic planning represents the process of developing and providing strategic relevance between organization objectives and capabilities and changing marketing opportunities. Strategic planning puts the framework for the rest of planning activities as it includes a precise specification of the organization statement and setting supportive objectives that lead to the achievement of the statement, design of feasible actions, and coordination of operational strategies. Strategic planning aims at adapting the organization to benefit from opportunities produced by an external environment characterized by high rates of change.

Strategic planning is also a basic process for the realization of the organization's statement. The active strategic planning process provides the organization with a practical framework for making decisions relating to resource distribution and challenge confrontation, and benefiting from available opportunities. It is an organized process that seeks to specify the present situation of the organization and where it desires to be in the future (Namken and Rapp 1997).

## **2. Previous Studies:**

There are a number of studies that dealt with the topic of the reality of strategic planning at universities. One of these is the study of Tamimi (2016) which indicated that lack of financial abilities, lack of training, and lack of incentives are the most significant obstacles that limit the role of strategic planning in the development of education and training. The study of Abdulrahman and Shuwaikh (2015) concluded that there exists a positive part for the application of strategic planning in the improvement of the performance of the faculty through the dissemination of its culture in a way that serves the process of planning and development. Whereas the study of Ahmed (2015) has concluded that there is a severe deficiency concerning the availability of strategic planning in higher education institutions in Sudan as they lack useful features, principles, and standards to set statement, vision, and formulation of objectives. The study conducted by Abu Naseeb (2013) showed that the working staffs in the university have the awareness and recognition regarding the concepts of strategic planning and that they are not participating in it, there is no actual training for them, and there is no link between the strategic plan and the needs of the staff. The study of Kalthum and Badrana (2011) concluded that routine and administrative complexity in the university are the most critical obstacles of strategic planning. As for the study of Hagar (2009), it arrived at the

result that lack of participation in analyzing internal and external environment led to lack of achieving comprehensiveness in the planned construction of higher education institutions. Whereas the study of Aldigini (2006) arrived at the clarity of strategic planning concept for the university administration and that 75% of the study population practice strategic planning and there is a weakness in the formulation of some aspects of the statement, vision, and objectives. The study of Cowburn (2005) concluded that higher education institutions are good at setting strategic plans; however, they face difficulties in application. Also, the plans include objectives that are impossible to achieve in some cases, and that one of the obstacles of formulating a strategic plan is its dependence on government finance.

Through previous studies, it is evident that there is a significant variation in the reality of strategic planning in universities and that there are obstacles that block strategic planning, including poor financial abilities, lack of training for the purposes of planning, and also administrative complexities. In addition, some studies concluded that there is a lack of availability of strategic planning in higher education institutions and a lack of participation by the working staff in the process of strategic planning.

### **3. Study Problem**

The study problem is embodied in the following question: to what extent do the public and private Sudanese universities practice strategic planning?

Branched from this question the following questions:

- Do teaching staff members clearly participate in strategic planning?
- Is there an actual practice of strategic planning in Sudanese universities?
- Are there differences in the reality of strategic planning between public and private universities?

### **4. Significance of the Study**

The significance of the research comes from the importance of the role that strategic planning plays in higher education institutions, which is considered one of the pillars that help countries in economic and social development. This study can represent an addition to previous studies in this field by applying the research to Sudanese universities and compare public and private universities in this regard.

### **5. Objectives of the study**

#### **Main Objective:**

Study the reality of strategic planning in Sudanese universities and compare public and private universities in this regard.

#### **Sub Objectives:**

- To determine to what extent the teaching staff members participate in the strategic planning.

- To measure the actual level of Sudanese universities' participation in strategic planning.
- To examine the difference between the public and private universities in terms of strategic planning.

## 6. Study Hypotheses

- There are differences in the level of practicing strategic planning according to university type.
- There are differences in the level of teaching staff members' participation in strategic planning according to university type.
- There are differences in the level of practicing strategic planning attributed to the employment category.
- There are differences in the level of teaching staff members' participation in strategic planning in term of the employment category

## 7. Methodology of the Study

To achieve its objectives and answer its questions, the research relied on the descriptive-analytical methodology as it suits this type of research.

### 7.1 Sources of Data Collection

Data were obtained from the following sources:

Primary sources represented by the questionnaire, where a specific questionnaire was prepared about the reality of strategic planning in the Sudanese universities from the Viewpoint of teaching staff members and secondary sources represented by books and previous studies.

### 7.2 Study Population and Study Sample

The target population was represented by teaching staff members working at the University of Gezira and Wad Medani Ahlia University. All of the 27 teaching staff members in Wad Medani Ahlia University were selected as a part of the study sample. As for the teaching staff members at the University of Gezira, the sample size was determined according to a simple formula introduced by (Yamane, 1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Nd^2} \quad \text{where:}$$

$N$ : Total number of teaching staff

members in University of Gezira

$n$ : Sample size

$d$ : is the estimation error (margin error)

Applying the above formula at  $d=0.10$ , we obtain the following

$$n = \frac{950}{1 + 950 * 0.10^2} = 90$$

The questionnaire formats were distributed to 90 teaching staff members at the University of Gezira. The unreturned formats were 11, with a response rate of 88%.

### 7.3 Methods of Analysis of Study Data

#### 7.3.1 Validity and Reliability

Alpha-Cronbach reliability coefficient was established to measure the reliability of the study tool. Cronbach 1971 came up with a measure that is loosely equivalent to splitting data in two in every possible way and computing the correlation coefficient for each split. The average of these values is equivalent to Cronbach's alpha,  $\alpha$  which is the most common measure of scale reliability:

$$\alpha = \frac{N^2 Co\bar{v}}{\sum S_{item}^2 + \sum Co\bar{v}_{item}}$$

Where:

$N$  : The number of items

$Co\bar{v}$  : The Average covariate between item

$\sum S_{item}^2$  : The sum of the all the item variance

$\sum Co\bar{v}_{item}$  : The sum of the item covariance

The coefficient takes values that range between zero and one. If there is no reliability in data, the value of coefficients equals zero. In contrast, if there is total reliability in data, the value of the coefficients equals one. Any increase in the coefficients means an increase in the reliability of data, and thereby the results of the study sample can be reflected on the study population (Cronbach, 1971).

#### 7.3.2 Frequencies and Percentages

Primary data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed through the primary description of the study sample using frequency and relative distribution tables of variables with qualitative nature.

#### 7.3.3. Likert Scale

This scale was used with the purpose of identifying the trends of respondents' opinions about a specific variable that has a ranking scale, and the numbers are entered into the computer to express weights. Then a frequency table is presented to

reveal the distribution of opinions. The scale that expresses trends in these cases is known as the Likert Scale. A five-point Likert Scale was used (1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither agree nor disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree). The weighted average is calculated, and based on its value, the general trend of the statement of each axis is determined (Likert, 1932). The following table explains how the level is determined.

**Table (1) Likert Scale**

General Trend	Weighted Average
Disagree	1 - 1.79
Strongly disagree	1.8 - 2.5
Neither agree nor disagree	2.6 - 3.39
Agree	3.4 - 4.19
Strongly agree	4.2 - 5.0

Source: Likert (1932). A technique for measurement of attitudes

### 7.3.4 Independent Samples T-test:

To examine the difference between public and private universities in terms of practicing strategic planning, independent samples T-test was conducted. This procedure is used to test the null hypothesis of no difference between two variables against the alternative hypothesis of significant difference between the means of the two variables. We reject (accept) the null hypothesis if the p-value of T statistic is less (greater) than a specified significance level – normally 0.05, the standard formula of the independent-samples T test is given by

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1}{n_1} + \frac{S_2}{n_2}}}$$

where:

$\bar{X}_1$ : mean of the practicing strategic planning in the public universities

$\bar{X}_2$ : mean of the practicing strategic planning in the private universities

$S_1$ : standard deviation of the first sample

$S_2$ : standard deviation of the second sample

$n_1$ : the size of the first sample

$n_2$ : the size of the second sample

### 7.3.5 One-Way Analysis of Variance

For the purpose of examining the existence of differences at the level of practicing and participating in strategic planning attributed to the employment category, One

Way ANOVA was applied. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the natural generalization of the two-sample t-test to more than two groups. This procedure is used to test the null hypothesis of no difference between variables against the alternative hypothesis of significant difference between the means of the variables. We reject (accept) the null hypothesis if the p-value of ANOVA statistic is less (greater) than a specified significance level – normally 0.05-, the standard formula of ANOVA is given by:

$$F = \frac{MSB}{MSE}$$

where:

*MSB* : means of squares between groups

*MSE* : means of squares within groups

## 8. Data Analysis

### 8.1 Validity and Reliability

**Table (2) Value of Reliability Coefficients**

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach value
<b>Overall measure</b>	29	0.95

Source: Researcher from Field Survey (2020)

Table (2) shows the results of internal consistency for the measure of reliability coefficients of the study tool, the questionnaire. It is clear from the table that the value of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient was 0.95. This is a very high value showing that the questionnaire designed by the researcher if applied to an individual or a group of individuals several times, will yield the results or estimations. Thus the study questionnaire can be described as reliable.

**Table (3) Value of Validity Coefficients**

	Number of Paragraphs	Validity Coefficient
<b>Overall Measure</b>	29	0.97

Source: Researcher from Field Survey (2020)

Table (3) indicates that the value of the intrinsic validity coefficient is 0.97. It is a very high value showing that the questionnaire designed by the researcher proved its validity in what was designed to measure. It is proper for measuring the intended aspect and not measuring another one.

### 8.2 Basic Feature of the Sample

**Table (4) Distribution of the Sample according to Sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	64	60%

Female	42	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

It is noticed from table (4) that nearly two-thirds of the sample members were males, and more than a third of teaching staff members were females.

**Table (5) Distribution of the Sample according to Age**

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
18-29 years	34	32%
30-39	6	6%
40-49	34	32%
50-59	32	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From Table (5), we clearly observe that approximately two-thirds of the teaching staff members their ages were more than 40 years. This is an accurate indicator that reveals the experience of the sample members concerning the topic of the study.

**Table (6) Distribution of the Sample according to Academic Degree**

Academic Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	56	52%
Doctorate	50	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

Table (6) show that there is an approximate equivalent in academic degree distribution of teaching staff members between holders of master's degree and doctorate degree.

**Tale (7) Relative Frequency Distribution of the Sample according to Job Grade**

Job Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Lecturer	55	52%
Assistant Professor	7	6%
Associate Professor	44	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From Table (7), we find that the vast majority of the sample members were lecturers and associate professors with almost equal distribution between the two categories. A small percentage of them were assistant professors.

### 8.3 Participation in Strategic Planning

**Table (8) Participation of Teaching Staff Members in Strategic Planning**

Phrase	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Arithmetic mean	Participation level
Teaching staff members participate in formulation of university vision	13%	30%	21%	21%	15%	3.06	Moderate
Teaching staff members participate in formulation of university statement	14%	34%	24%	17%	11%	3.23	Moderate
Teaching staff members participate in the formulation of objectives of university strategy	16%	28%	26%	19%	11%	3.19	Moderate
Teaching staff members participate in preparation of executive plans	13%	33%	24%	16%	14%	3.15	Moderate
<b>Total arithmetic mean</b>						<b>3.15</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From table No. (8), we note that the level of teaching staff members' participation in strategic planning is medium, as we find that the highest of them is their participation in formulating the university's mission and in formulating its strategic goals.

#### 4.8 Practicing of Strategic Planning

**Table (9) Practicing of Strategic Planning by Universities**

Phrase	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Arithmetic mean	Participation level
The university has strategic goals	28%	48%	13%	7%	4%	4.16	High
The university mission is documented	29%	49%	15%	4%	3%	3.98	High
The university mission expresses its vision	25%	55%	14%	2%	4%	3.96	High
The university has mission stemming from its vision	32%	40%	20%	4%	4%	3.91	High
The university mission specifies and directs teaching and learning activities and managerial practices	22%	48%	15%	10%	5%	3.72	High
The strategic goals of the university are documented	22%	45%	20%	7%	6%	3.70	High
The university has documented vision	22%	46%	17%	9%	6%	3.69	High
The executive plans express the goals of the university	20%	45%	22%	8%	5%	3.67	High
Strategic goals express the university mission	18%	49%	22%	4%	7%	3.66	High
The university strategic goals are realistic and applicable	20%	43%	24%	8%	5%	3.65	High
The university mission is published and available for users	23%	43%	13%	14%	7%	3.58	High

The university has the required human resources for the implementation of the plans	21%	43%	14%	13%	9%	3.52	High
The university implementation plans are documented	19%	37%	24%	15%	5%	3.48	High
The executive plans are realistic and applicable	15%	43%	23%	12%	7%	3.45	High
The university vision is published and available for users	21%	30%	25%	19%	5%	3.34	High
Strategic goals are set based on the analysis of the present university situation and foreseeing its future	21%	31%	23%	16%	9%	3.40	High
The university has specific executive plans including all the activities and programs and implementation instruments	18%	31%	29%	16%	6%	3.40	High
University strategic goals are published and available for users	18%	33%	24%	17%	8%	3.35	Moderate
University executive plans are published and available for users	14%	37%	21%	21%	7%	3.29	Moderate
The university strategic plans conform with its abilities	13%	35%	24%	18%	10%	3.23	Moderate
The university has the financial resources necessary	14%	32%	22%	22%	19%	3.18	Moderate

to implement the strategic plans							
Prominent people from the local community participate in the formulation of the university vision	11%	30%	28%	20%	11%	3.10	Moderate
Prominent people from the local community participate in the formulation of the university mission	10%	29%	32%	17%	12%	3.07	Moderate
<b>Total arithmetic mean</b>						<b>3.55</b>	<b>High</b>

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From Table (9), we noticed the appearance of high levels of the practice of strategic planning represented by the existence of strategic goals, the presence of documented mission of the university that expresses its vision and stemming from its vision and specifying learning activities and managerial practices in the university and also the documented university strategic goals. We also find that there is a moderate level of strategic planning practice that appeared in the publishing of goals and implementation plans for users and in the participation of prominent people from the local community in the formulation of the university vision and mission and in the availability of financial resources necessary for the implementation of strategic plans.

## 8.5 Examine the Study Hypotheses:

### 8.5.1 Examine the First Hypothesis:

This hypothesis states that (There are differences in the level of practicing strategic planning according to university type). Independent samples T-test was used for two to examine this hypothesis.

**Table (10) Results of for two independent samples t-test for examining differences in the level of strategic planning practice according to university type**

University Type	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	t- Calculate	df	P.value
Public	79	3.70	0.67	3.37	104	0.001**
Private	27	3.12	1.035			

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

It is clear from table (10) that there are statistically significant differences between the mean of practice level of strategic planning for public universities comparing with private universities at a significance level 1%, which indicates that the practice level in public universities is higher than in private universities.

### 8.5.2 Testing the Second Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that (There are differences in the level of teaching staff members participation in strategic planning according to university type). Independent samples T-test was used to examine this hypothesis.

**Table (11) Results of independent samples t-test for differences in the level of strategic planning participation according to university type**

University Type	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	t- Calculate	df	P.value
Public	79	3.36	0.99	3.47	104	0.001**
Private	27	2.55	1.117			

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

It is clear from table (11) that there exist statistically significant differences at a significance level of 1% in the strategic planning participation level of the teaching staff members attributed to the variable: university type, where we find that the level of participation in public universities is higher than that of private universities.

### 8.5.3 Examine the Third Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that (There are differences in the level of practicing strategic planning attributed to the employment category). "One-way Analysis of Variance" was used to test this hypothesis.

**Table (12) Results of One-way Analysis of Variance for Differences in the Level of Participation according to the variable of employment category**

Source of Difference	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	(f) value	Probability value
Between groups	0.037	2	0.018	0.027	0.973
Within groups	69.986	103	0.679		
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.023</b>	<b>105</b>			

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From table (12), we notice that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of strategic planning practice according to employment category at a significance level of 5%. This shows evidence of conformity of teaching staff members' opinions with their different employment categories about the level of strategic planning practice.

### 8.5.4 Testing the Fourth Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that (There are differences in the level of teaching staff members participation in strategic planning in terms of employment category). One-way Analysis of Variance was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table (13) Results of One-Way Analysis of Variance for Differences in Participation Level according to the Variable of employment category**

Source of Difference	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F. Statistic	P.value
Between groups	2.041	2	1.020	0.853	0.429
Within groups	123.66	103	1.197		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125.307</b>	<b>105</b>			

Source: Results of Field Survey (2020)

From table (12), we notice that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of teaching staff members' participation in strategic planning according to employment category at significance level 5%. This shows evidence of equality of teaching staff members, with their different job grades, in the participation of strategic planning.

## **9. Results and Recommendations**

### **9.1 Results**

Through collection and analysis of data, the following results were arrived at:

- The level of strategic planning practice in public universities is higher than in private universities.
- The level of strategic planning participation is higher in public universities compared to private universities.
- There is no statistically significant difference in the level of strategic planning practice according to the employment category.
- There is no statistically significant difference in the level of participation in strategic planning by the teaching staff members attributed to the employment category.

### **9.2 Recommendations**

- Private Sudanese universities should give more concern to strategic planning.
- Private Sudanese universities should give more room for the teaching staff members to participate in strategic planning processes.
- Public Sudanese universities should pay more attention to strategic planning processes.
- Public Sudanese universities should allow more participation for the teaching staff members to contribute to strategic planning processes.

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