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## An Investigation on Strategic Management Success Factors in an Educational Complex

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### Abstract

One of the topics that has received an increasing attention in the last two decades is the need and importance of educational transformations and changes. Identifying and recognizing the starting point of this transformation and strategic management success factors attracted a great deal of attention. This study aims to investigate strategic management success factors in an educational complex. It is considered that strategic management should be proposed in productive and commercial institutes and enterprises, while the schools as institutes that human beings are their main inputs and outputs are the best options for the implementation of strategic management. The added values of schools are knowledge, skill, and awareness which require scientific purposeful planning to change into a high-performing school. Strategic management in schools influences on their planning, predicting changes, and managing. They also can take advantages of the existing threats, turn them into opportunities, and use all school resources to utilize the opportunities through recognizing environmental opportunities. Putting everyone in properly determined position encourages staff to perform their jobs and duties properly and makes them motivated.

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### 1. Introduction

In the most societies, an institution which is known to train future human resources or next generation is Department of Education and Training. Sociologists believe that making people more sociable, training more

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desirable citizens, producing skilled and efficient human resources, and training highly skilled economists depends more on the investment in universal education.

In fact, Department of Education and Training is an institution that pays particular attention to transforming an ordinary man into perfect man and promotes cultural, social, and political developments (Navid Adham, 2012). The importance and impact of this institution in growth and development of hidden talents is not hidden to anybody in society. Nowadays, the main training center for kids, are schools, so that the students learn correct way of life and the way of looking at the world and other people in this environments. Most of those who work in the field of education and training including teachers, administrators, trustees, learners, parents, employers and other community members know that education and training must be transformed. Making fundamental changes and transformations is an undeniable issue in our education and training system, because our society, students, local communities, and values have changed significantly over the last few years while our educational system is still the same for those students and local communities. Given the fast-changing world, previous patterns education and management lost their effectiveness and do not meet the increasingly needs and demands of today's society. Therefore, minor changes cannot make transformation in the educational system for instance adding or removing a lesson in the curriculum or putting one or more courses cannot meet the competitiveness needs of the workforce in today's turbulent world. Training characteristics such as labor discipline, self-sufficiency, and citizenship education need curriculum planning and strategic educational planning from strategic perspective (Kaufman & Herman, 1991). Considering the direct relationship between people's life and fate and the future of their country if an accurate management is taken, a bright future will be ahead; otherwise, many problems such as degradation of one or more human lives, delivering individuals with undesirable behaviors to the society, dropout or academic failure, appearing psychological and behavioral problems among students and parents, delay in doing things, absence of security and peace of mind in the school will appear in schools. Our graduate students as our potential future managers do not often learn social and cultural skills appropriately and therefore they cannot learn the basic principles of management in their schools that's why a new systematic approach to strategic management in schools is considered as an undeniable issue. With development of such kind of management system in schools, a particular perspective can be made which finally leads to progress (Ariazand, 2011). Strategic management in schools which are located in developed countries has been effective for developing improve the school is effective. Also in the schools implement strategic management helps to clarify the future direction (Kisembe & Were, 2014).

## 2. The Review of Literature

The use of strategic management in many areas has been able to increase the efficiency of institutions and centers and plays an effective role in their success. William Darden from Hershey National Track Company takes its success into account of strategic management. Alfred Thomas Chandler, professor at Harvard University, published its studies over large American corporations and explained their senior executive managers' strategic decision-making process. He also demonstrated that how strategic decisions can lead to excel in a competitive environment (Fardar, 2000; Ghaffarian & Zavareh, 2011). The results have revealed that the use of strategic management increase the efficiency of car companies, for example Bahman Khodro Company increased the number of its produced cars up to 6000 units in 2013. Furthermore, customer satisfaction level increased to 73 per cent in this year.

Design and implementation of strategic management can be considered as a major step in the management of agricultural sector of the country and improve the economy of rural areas as well as country's export sector and bringing foreign currency, for example lack of long-term planning in the country's tea industry causes that only 100 to 110 from 177 tea factories in Gilan and Mazandaran become active in 2008 and the rest (about 40 per cent of tea factories) have been closed or worked part-time (Naseri, Moradi, & Malihi, 2008). Moreover, the research of Council of Agriculture and Natural Resources showed that we can reduce the water use from 40 to 50 through implementing and operationalizing strategic plans can reduce water use from 40 to 50 percent (Shahrestani, 2015). Education is one of the most important topics in the field of education; therefore, much research has been done on the development of strategic management at educational centers. The impact of the strategic management on higher education system includes content, teachers' capabilities, teaching methods, assessment of academic achievement, academic resources, and physical environment of universities (Shahab Fard, Arab Mokhtari, & Rajae Pour, 2010).

Coleman (2004) pointed out that if universities run well, they will be more efficient to provide higher education for students. The success of some developing countries such as Japan is that its training provides opportunity for even the slowest learners to achieve a relatively high level of efficiency. Bloom (1968) stated that 98 per cent of students can progress as well as 25 per cent of good ones on the top part of the pyramid. Deming (1994) believed that there was a direct relationship between students' progress and the quality of an educational system. Therefore, it is the responsibility of management that to understand educational system' different levels with all their complexity. Focus on students is considered as the prerequisite to changes in school management. The overall benefits of focus on students are increasing students' satisfaction and fostering effective and deep learning rather than surface learning in the classroom (Toorani, 2012). Strategic management cannot merge and spread in Iranian school management effectively, although much research has been done in this case, there are still many gaps in spreading and applying management in schools. This study aims to investigate the strategic management success factors due to the importance of strategic management and the impact of its improvement in the educational process in order to affect people's thought and helps them improve, optimize, and implement strategic management at schools and educational centers in a way that promote schools' educational and cultural levels.

### **3. Transformation Management**

When we are talking about transformation, different definitions come to mind. Transformation is dramatic change in form or appearance. It is a structural approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state to fulfill and implement strategy or vision (Darvaneh & Rezaei, 2011). The concept of transformation stated for the first time at the late 1950s and early 1960s as a strategy for improving an organization. Organizational transformation discussed about individuals and the organizations in which they work and speaks about some planned changes which encourage individuals, groups, and organizations to act better. The issues such as low employee morale, low productivity, poor quality goods and services, conflict between individuals, unclear short-term and long-term goals, inadequate leadership style, group poor performance, poor organizational structure, poor task design, carelessness to environmental demands, poor customer relations, and conflict between unites' objectives are very important in the realm of organizational transformation (Wendell, Bell, & Zawacki, 2011). Burke and Schmidt (1971) argued that transformation is a change process in which organizational culture moves towards one particular type of culture in which some collective processes are institutionalized (Navid Adham, 2012). Showing tendency toward a especial culture does not signify that other cultures should be disregarded.

#### *3.1. Fundamental Transformation*

Fundamental transformation of education and training system means providing a base for radical, comprehensive, systematic, prospective transformations based on Islamic theological teachings in accordance with Iranian culture (Navid Adham, 2012). Reformation and change in any educational system is a continuous process. In current situation of Iran, fundamental and comprehensive transformation in education and training system is considered as an inevitable necessity. Some of the reasons which explain the need for fundamental transformations in the Iranian education and training system are lack of awareness on basic characteristics of Islamic educational philosophy, deficiency in developing a comprehensive training system of human competencies, keep pace with slow or relatively inconsequential changes, shortcomings in responding to the needs of the society, inefficiency in fulfilling social, cultural and national and international needs, low efficiency and effectiveness of education and training system, minimalist role of it in the development process of country, inefficient executive management system of education and training, and underestimating the education and training system and considering it consumable. Transformation management is the planned activity throughout the organization which is run by top managers in organizations and increase the effectiveness and health of the organization through planned changes. Cummings and Worli (1993) divided practical advices about transformation program management into five main activities which improve the efficiency of management (Khanifar, 2011; Wendell, Bell, & Zawacki, 2011) which is presented in Figure 1.

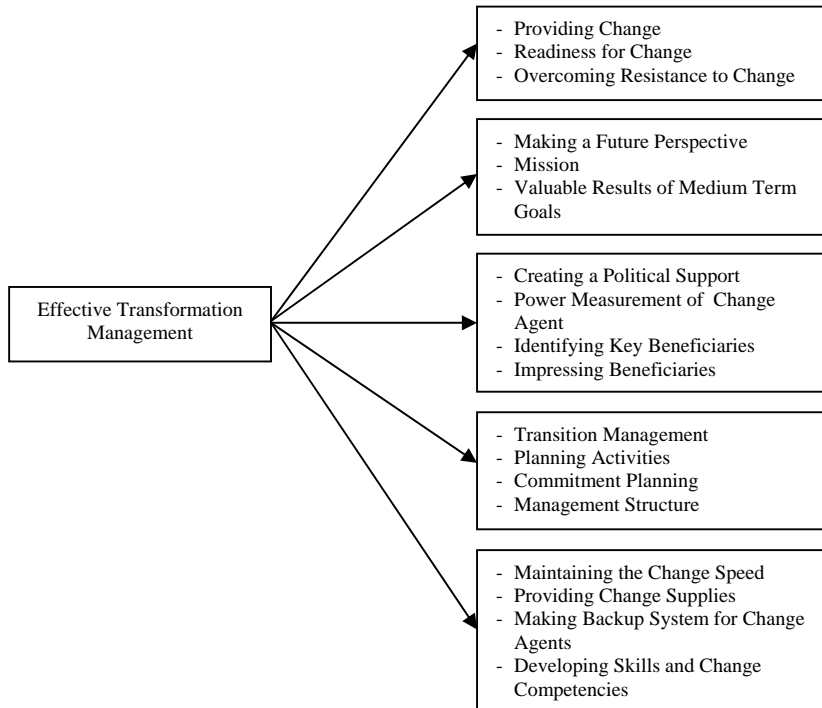


Fig 1. The activities of efficient management.

According to Figure 1, making future perspective, mission, valuable results, long-term and short-term objectives which are elements of strategic management; therefore, the onset of effective transformation change can be strategic management.

**4. Advantages of Strategic Management**

Using a dynamic, forward-looking, and holistic discipline, strategic management is considered as a solution for too many today's organizational issues. Strategic management foundations are located based on managers' understanding of their rival companies, markets, prices, raw material suppliers, distributors, government, creditors, shareholders, and customers in all over the world. These are critical success factors for business in today's rapidly changing world. Strategic thinking enables organizations to face and adapt their management to future conditions. Strategic plans describes the process of reaching from existing situation (organizational mission) to a desirable situation which is outlined the organization's future. Due to excellent recognition of the environment, they can help organization to boost its performance. In today's fast-changing global environment which information flow, increasing competition resulting from the removal of borders, and trade barriers are it's the most important characteristics, higher education institutions change slowly into the institutions which are lead by the competitive market drivers and trading requirements. Today, many institutions supply a high percentage of their resources from external sources and economic and commercial enterprises and institutions. These limited resources and incentives to attract top students have created a competitive market for these institutions. In today's knowledge based economy, higher education institutions as development center for human resources play an important role in the growth and development of countries. Therefore, strategic planning would appear to be an important part of these institutions and helps organizations adapt themselves to the environmental and educational macroeconomic policies in order to achieve a better future. Desire for survival in this competitive environment, make these organizations turn on to strategic management and planning to increase their ability to adapt to change in a rapidly changing environment and their ability to meet customers' expectations and satisfy them (ILembe & Were, 2014). International student

mobility at each level in well-known universities has created a process that leads to fundamental changes in the competitive environment for attracting and retaining top-level students and graduates. Philip Coombs (1974) believed that if a change is going to occur within the field of education and training, this transformation should be started from management education. Strategic planning is a strategic tool that should be used in comprehensive quality schools to provide a clear vision to meet the needs of schools and society (Latorre & Blanco, 2013). The purposes of the comprehensive quality school are providing a process-oriented quality management and a comprehensive quality management. In this regard, one of the fourteen general principles of management to improve the quality of schools is to embed the strategic planning in schools because we cannot manage the changes in school processes, unless the school has created a strategic plan for itself (Toorani, 2012).

#### *4.1. The Importance of Strategic Planning*

In educational systems, strategic planning application provides an opportunity for planners to act proactively not just reactively to welcome the future and look at human, technology, and the environment as a whole. In strategic planning, the future that we want our off springs, grandchildren, and therefore to have should be defined at first by partnership and collaboration of wide range of educational partners including beneficiaries and concerned stakeholders. Then, the learning systems for making such kind of future can be designed. In other words, the image of an ideal educational system (destination) should be given at first, and then an agreement is achieved through technical review, analysis, and successive modifications. Through investigating strengths, weaknesses, and current opportunities and threats inside and outside of the organization, the current status of the educational system is recognized (Kaufman & Herman, 1991).

The comparison between desired and existing situations clarifies the educational systems' needs related to the results including products, outputs, and outcomes while sub-requirements are measured with regard to relationship between input and processes. Operational programs develop and implement after distinguishing the needs (targeted educational goals or performance criteria) and quasi-needs (sources, methods, techniques, and procedures) (Latorre & Blanco, 2013). Strategic thinking is the prerequisite for strategic planning. Strategic thinking means reasonably thinking in the three different levels, namely beyond the macro scale, macro scale, and micro scale. With such kind of thinking even if our action will be in macro level (classroom or educational institute); therefore, our thinking can convey to citizens in society on beyond the macro level scale. Strategic thinking stated that think on the macro level and act on the micro level. In strategic planning, when we want to define educational system results (destination) by considering the mentioned three levels, the image of desired citizen in a society on beyond the macro level comes to mind.

The characteristics such as self-maintenance, self-reliance, self-confidence, discipline, hard working, rationalism, aesthetics, innovation, environmental protection, respecting for international peace, honoring the cultural and ethnic heritage, pleasure of reading, increasing productivity and competitiveness which are emphasized in this level can be used for designing learning system and curriculum at macro level to form of teaching-learning goals. Then, the performance criteria for each target should be written. In planning teacher training system, appropriate training procedures should be highlighted and given in order to help teachers who are teaching in the classroom (micro level) as objective evidence to change quantified schools into qualified schools (Kaufman & Herman, 1991).

Planning in schools is not a chance or an accident, but we can also consider it as an effort or process, therefore; process-based management tries to add strategic planning into the daily performance of comprehensive qualified schools (Okwukweka Chukwumah & Obiageli Ezeugbor, 2015; Okwukweka Chukwumah, 2015; Toorani, 2012).

## **5. Effective Factors on Organizational Growth**

According to the published studies were conducted in Iranian organizations, some of the factors which determine project success or failures were listed. The organizational success factors can be categorized into three different groups including human resources field, organizational culture field, and implementation and exploitation of modern

technologies which are presented in Table 1(Leshkar Bolouki, 2013). It is suggested to consider implementing these organizational success factors in schools; therefore, it is necessary to present the definition of a successful school and its listed fields in school environment.

Table 1. Three Different Organizational Success Factors & their Sub-Categorizations.

Human Resources Field	Managers Group: Existence of Senior Management's Serious and Continuous Support Other Working Groups: Existence of Change Culture and Unwillingness to Return to the First Step
Organizational Culture Field	Existence of Strategic Thinking Existence of a Correct Image of Reengineering Affairs Lack of Organized Resistance against the Presented Results' Implementation in Study Design
Implementation and Exploitation of Modern Technologies	Paying Attention to Information Technology in Process Design Exploiting Specific Methodology for Projects Absence of Being Idealistic and Making Proposed Designs and Improvements Applicable Suitable Timing

## 6. Successful School

According to the previous findings about the characteristics of successful schools, some common features of such kind of schools were recognized such as having particular goals in addition to predetermined goals of Ministry of Education and Training, utilizing hardworking and interested teachers and administrators, acting cooperatively (intellectual and financial), having specific regulations for the school, having the educational and scientific insight, paying attention to form independent students, raising self-reliant and efficient students, paying same attention to all courses, focusing on exercise, nutrition, and health, paying significant attention to studying and reading, noting to practical and laboratory activities, and avoiding politics (Kaufman & Herman, 1991; Sarbah & Otu-Nyarko, 2014; Toorani, 2012). To achieve a successful school, we should pay more attention to these factors in human resources field. (Gholamhosseini, 2011; Gholamhosseini, Sadeghi, & Mehrabi, 2012; Okwukweka Chukwumah & Obiageli Ezeugbor, 2015).

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of all schools is providing excellent specialized instruction for each student. Previous findings revealed that effective learning requires common goals and values that encourage the people to work and understand together. Strategic management and planning provide the proper ground for defining the roadmap of any educational complex to develop success in schools. In general, the most important strategic management success factor in any educational complex is its human resources which make it possible to achieve a successful school.

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