

Insights on Strategic Management Practices in Jordan: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

Strategic management and its practices have become the most important stream need to discuss and focus in business environment, due to its vital role in improving economic growth. Although many benefits and advantages can be obtained from using strategic management, but a lot of organizations still resist or employ it a little, since some of them think this method is only helpful for larger organizations and they didn't believe its benefits also for small-medium sized enterprises (SME) as well. The purpose of this study is to review the studies which discuss the strategic management concept and its role and impact on the organization in Jordan. The paper adopted the descriptive cross sectional research design. The study found that majority of the organization try to adopt different strategies to achieve its organizational objectives which may include competitive advantage, market share, corporate reputation and total quality of the operation. The study concludes that strategic management has a significant correlation with many factors, for instance competitive advantage and great performance. It is recommended that the management should have a long-term strategic thought towards the using of strategic management tools and employ the right resources to obtain the desired success of a business depends basically on the value creation, and skill of its top management and the strategic formulation and implementation within the context of ambiguity of the business environment. The study methodology is based on a systematic review of empirical studies on the usage of strategic management models and methods.

Keywords: Strategic management, Strategic planning, Jordan

1. Introduction

The strategic management, in the midst of globalization, has been discussed as one of the most vital activity that differentiates organizations from others. Strategic management plays a key role in achieving the whole organizational visions and objectives. Every organizations regardless their economic operations and types, they utilize the strategic management methods to assure that they match with their operations. Huynh et al. (2013) demonstrated in present business environments, the organizations are encountering an intensive competition internationally and locally. To stay alive and being improved, they have to adopt and implement strategic approaches in order to keep and maintain their competitive positioning and obtain more benefits. From literature review, it seems that there is no obvious definition even total agreement upon strategic management mechanisms. Dess et al. (2005) defined strategic management as group of analysis, decisions, and conducts which the organization behaves to establish and maintain its competitive advantage. This means concentrating on the way which the organizations can compete to generate competitive advantage in the business environment. Price (2006) classified the main constituents of strategic management into vision, mission, goals and blueprints. Mackie (2008) indicated that strategic management refers to a collection of processes including strategy forming, implementation, control and evaluation.

The strategic management is a periodical and continuous process. Pathak (2009) addressed the strategic management as a synthesis of decisions and actions, which aims to increase the effective strategies that also aim to achieve organizational goals in a competitive manner. However, Abu Bakar et al. (2011) stated the concept of strategic management that interested in making decisions and implement corrective actions to overcome organizational variances and achieve long-term sustainability. Furthermore, Mahoney (2012) indicated that strategic management pursue to organize the company's framework, financial and non-financial resources, competences, and the strategic ability of the company to build and sustain its competitive role. As well, Dudin (2013) illustrated strategic management as a process which includes preparing the vision, mission and objectives, analyze the external and internal business environment, stating a fit strategy and projects for business changes, in addition setting the means to control the strategy while the implementation and evaluation phases.

2. Definition of Strategic Management

Strategy is a basic term in the strategic management domain. This term comes from its root Greek word *strategos*, meaning leadership in the war and military science: it connects with planning the available resources to accomplish particular organizational goals (Kotler et al. 2016). According to Porter (1991: 97): "Strategy is the act of aligning a company and its environment. That environment, as well as the firm's own capabilities, is subject to change. Thus, the task of strategy is to maintain a dynamic, not a static balance." Strategic management can be interpreted as a collection of theories and frameworks, guided by tools and techniques, created to support company's managers

in behaving, planning and implementing strategically (Stonchouse & Pemberton 2002). Strategy tool can be defined as a plan, model, behavior, tool, tactic, thinking, or approach used to carry out strategic works (Stenfors et al. 2007). Combinations of strategic approaches and techniques have been designed to assist decision making process within strategic insights (Gunn and Williams, 2007). These methods are basically designed by experts for large and global organizations. Grint (1997) indicates that at least one new mechanism for shifting has appeared annually in the last four decades.

The concept of strategic management has been debated and discussed many, and it was not restricted only to its characteristics but also to its dimensions, and it expanded to the different measurements and ways of evaluations and monitoring. Various approaches and techniques have been employed by several strategists, researchers and business leaders to examine, evaluate and control strategic management activities and investigate its impact on the organization. Newbert (2007) utilized the Resource-Based Theory to test and monitor strategic management. Ritson (2011) used Porter's Five-Force method to state the basic environmental forces, and to evaluate any sector and analyze three main points: the present situation, opportunities and the threats. Hin et. al (2011) used Wheelen and Hunger Strategic Management Approach. The model is divided into four divisions: environmental scanning; strategy formulation; strategy implementation; evaluation and control. Arabzad & Shirouyehzad (2012) illustrated that a lot of models and methods used to measure the strategic management, one of these methods is Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT) which is a strategic planning model includes surveying the internal and external environment of business to state whether a particular objective is obtainable and the requirements should be getting to achieve these objectives. The organizations use all capabilities to carry out its strategic objectives and state the elements needed to make strategic decisions. Strengths and weaknesses factors are evaluated by the internal environment; meanwhile the opportunities and threats factors are evaluated by the external environment. Jalaliyoon, et. al (2012), for example, hire an analytical technique to assess and monitor strategic management in vehicle sector. Gupta (2013) used PEST analysis to evaluate and manage organizations' strategy. Another model used in scanning environment either internally or externally called PEST analysis which stands for Political, Economic, Social, and Technological analysis, which aims to identify a frame for macro-environmental dimensions. It is considers as a tool in business measurement which is a helpful to understand the market development or deterioration, as well the positioning and direction of business.

As mentioned early, several techniques and methods have been utilized through many scholars to assess the strategic management. The balanced scorecard (BSC) is a strategic planning and managerial model which all companies use to determine what they want to achieve, state the daily basis works that everyone is connect with the strategy, determine the most important products or services, evaluate the improvement towards strategic objectives. It was one of the most common methods used to measure strategic management. Basically it was used more in production side to analyze this concept which closely with products more than services.

3. Strategic Management Development (SMD)

Brown has defined strategic management development (SMD) as management developing involvements which are aimed to improve the strategic ability and enhance organizational performance (Brown 2005). (Brown 2004) has illustrated that SMD can interpreted as a motivation for strategically change, collaborating to the corporate and support a new strategic management technique and strategy as well being connected with altering the management and implementing the strategies. This relationship network presents how organisation strategy consistent with its environment, and accompanying with its performance. This network may symbol as a catalyst for the companies to update the SMD. This may assist in increasing commitment to strategic management, which can be viewed as a mediating factor in the forming a new strategic management process. Thus the development of improved ability in strategic management approach appears from SMD and through the modern strategic management model. The responsibilities of department which is responsible of strategic implementation such as professionals designing projects or sometimes be an informal part of development the modern strategic capacities. This approach is possibly most applied in conditions where commitment and competency in strategic management are low or weak and the interrelationship is rudimentary and imperfect. While the organisations obtain from understanding strategic management development which may change over time.

It is likely that the companies which have a weak commitment towards strategic management process will be slow in adopting the changing environment, or an experienced attempt to move the companies from low level of strategic commitment to higher one, this increasing may affect favourably in multiple aspects of organizational performance for example. Furthermore the level of commitment toward strategic management either dynamic or complex increases, it may indicate the organisations need to transit to higher involvement of strategic management. Another alternate interpretation for low level of commitment of strategic management can be interpreted in terms of the organisations strived strategies which are connected with minimum engagement of strategic management. Miles & Snow (1978) ask a greater level of strategic management commitment and competency. The companies might operate in similar environment characteristics, but have various aspects or levels of strategic management obligation, it was stated in the American banks examined by Newkirk et al. (1998). It was revealed that

organizational performance was the highest when the degree of strategic management and understanding the process of strategic planning was high.

Table I. Evolving role of SMD

Level of Strategic Management	Organisational Characters	Role of SMD
Weak (level 1)	Strategy involves only in low level of initial change strategic move little connecting with strategy making process change projects weakly managed	Adopt and inclusion an experience and knowledge of strategic management deeply discussion on strategic issues formulating a teambuilding consist of senior managers
Medium (level 2)	Dealing with models related to strategic decision making New knowledge of strategic management process Greater involvement Ambiguity over strategic pathway Disappointment with present strategy, i.e. performance	Reciprocal supporting role for managers Seminar for discussing projects and recommendations Facing issues doing a brainstorm of teambuilding Admitting of need for strategic management tools
Enhanced (level 3)	Establishing a mechanism for strategic discussion and decision making Agreement that strategic direction can become true Systems used to expedite strategic management process	Qualifications in strategic management can be improved Similarity of organisational strategy Defining a stage of teambuilding
Mature (level 4)	High committed into strategic management evident with culture and process Persistent check-up of high-level strategies Active carrying out of strategy	Strategic carrying out by teams and continuous of change projects Successful planning and development of strategic management qualifications

Source: (Tuckman 1965)

4. Theoretical Insight

The models and techniques for great planning have started to appear before release the publication of a book of Ansoff named "Corporate strategy", in 1965 (Hussey 2007). Based on some scholars in the end of 1970s, strategic management faced a decline in popularity and impact; this was because of the disability of strategic techniques to achieve what was anticipated of them (Glaister & Falshaw 1999). It is debated that the grasp of strategic management usage is essential for three different reasons. First, it may motivate the top management while employing strategic tools. Second, it indicated to spread processes promoting apply the methods. Third, it helps practitioners in shifting from a theoretical side to more practice-based side to understand of approach used (Gunn & Williams 2007). Many methods designed and developed by a group of strategists still not effective used and not adopted. There are various attempts to demonstrate the tools of strategy, but these attempts regard secondary. After thorough studies into the literature, a shortage of overall research purposed to strategic management methods was appeared. Several scholars have described a number of plans in strategic analysis by stating these plans as a framework for management. Prescott & Grant (1988) studied the usage of strategic methods. Meanwhile, Webster et al. (1989) comprised a list of most generally used techniques for strategic planning. The global competition has established a need to design beneficiary strategy and active decision-making process. Organizations pursue on growth and development and looking for more successful approaches of management with practiced knowledge. Wright et al. (2013) indicate that managers due to an ambiguity in the environment and the complexity of some aspects of the external business environment are expected to realize and foster a more complicated comprehension of merging markets, and need their handling tools for great decision making. In these conditions, companies can obtain more from adopting strategic management; its techniques have been used to improve the performance and effectiveness of them.

Strategic management has been discussed on the grounds that it was based upon theoretical dimensions and not on the fact of management. Developing the quality and implementation of strategic management methods is viewed as one technique to improve management practices (Whittington et al. 2003, cited by Jarzabkowski et al. 2013). So, the using of strategic management practices in organizations should be evaluated in practice-based environment. As an outcome, there is motivating question on the topic: Does manager use strategic techniques in their workplace? So the purpose of this paper is to review how extent strategic management applications commonly used by companies in Jordan and if the strategic tools used by managers can play a role in enhancing the performance for example or competitive advantages for companies. Basically, the strategic management techniques may provide many for the companies under the circumstances that manage has an obvious perception of present models and techniques (Afonina & Chalupsky 2013). The advantages of these strategies encompass: raise up awareness related to the business environment, strategic matters, opportunities and threats which may

assist to reduce the risk emerging in making specific decisions; creating priorities in large and complicated organizations and providing them a framework to assess the relative significance of several business investments; and helping in analyze the of complicated matters (Frost 2003). According to Gunn & Williams (2007) strategic management may be used to analyze the companies and their environment, or as a plan to develop communication, monitoring and coordination. Webster et al. (1989) debated that the using of strategic management increase the competences of top management such as analytical skill as well increases the efficiency which is the most important benefit of using strategic tools and methods in management.

A collective understanding of strategic management is an essential importance for corporate's managers due to its significance for competitive advantage for an organization to encounter a complex and ambiguous environment. Effective strategic managers can direct strategy to pay more attention and effort on basic preferences, provide the company with great vision to monitor and make decisions and works give the company a new meaning of organizational goals (Nutt & Backoff 1992). Strategic planning is connected closely with strategy formulation, a "disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson 2018, p. 6). It is a more important method that guides the most vital matters encountering the organizations in an attempt to achieve the objectives and adapt the environment changes and assure the organization's long-term sustainability (Poister & Streib 1999). Strategic management is the deep approach which the organization using in a strategic way on a continuing structure. Strategic planning also can be seen as a primary tool of strategic management, which also contains developing a strategy, carrying out, and control and assessment (Steiss 1985). Consequently, strategic management is an aim to develop "the entire set of managerial decisions and actions that determine the long-run performance of an organization" (Koteen, 1989, p. 18).

5. Advantages of Strategic Management

Adopting an effective, future sense, and applicable strategic management activities are considered as a tool for most of today's organizational challenges. Strategic management practices are rooted based on how extent the managers understand the competition environment, peer companies in the same industry, markets, prices, raw material importers, governmental regulations, financiers, investors, and customers over the world. These are considering also vital factors for success in present rapidly changing world. The benefits of strategic planning enable the companies to encounter the obstacles and challenges and design their companies for complicated situations (Carney & Geddes 2003). Strategic planning characterizes the process of moving from present condition to a desired and targeted positioning which is shaped the company's vision. The strategic management due to deep comprehension of the environment, it may support the organizations to foster and enhance its performance. In globalization era which attributed with rapid-changing universal environment as well the fast-flowing of information, melting of border between nations and increasing the competition, as well trade conventions are held between countries which aim to ease and facilitate the commercial relationship between them make the strategic management and planning one of factors should all companies should concern to achieve their objectives (Carney & Geddes 2003). The limitation of resources for most of developing countries impose them to think strategically in providing the productions materials necessary for survival and compete successfully, whereas many companies obtain the most of their important resources from external sources. These limitations of resources and incentives attract top management to create a competitive position for their companies. In today the knowledge based economic the strategic management as a competitive advantage for organizational objectives play also an important factor in the growth and development of countries (Toorani 2012). Thus, this strategic planning would act as a pivotal part of these organizations and helps them to develop themselves based on the environmental economic plans in order to achieve a great future. The need to adopt strategic management and survival in this competitive environment, impose these organizations to involve strategic management and planning in its operations in order to increase their capabilities to accept the changes in the environment and their ability to achieve customers' expectations and satisfaction (Ilembe & Were 2014). Strategic planning is a strategic method that should be utilized in total quality management to provide an obvious vision to supply the needs of society (Latorre & Blanco, 2013). The aims of the total quality are supplying a practice-oriented quality management and a comprehensive quality management. In this field, one of the general rules of management to develop the quality of management is to entrench the strategic planning in management because we cannot predict the changes in business environment, unless the companies have established strategic plans for themselves (Toorani 2012).

6. Review Strategic Management Studies in Jordan

There is no doubt among Jordanian empirical studies with the importance of adoption the strategic management in their visions and decisions, a study has clearly highlighted the need of strategic management tools and its highly impact on organizational performance for industrial sector in Jordan (Zaidoun & Waleed 2001). Moreover, the study founded several findings such as; the companies implementing and believing the strategic management process have a direct effect on their total performance. The hypotheses have been tested reveal that there is a direct

relationship between meeting the basics of strategic management capabilities and the performance of the Jordanian industrial public shareholding companies. The recommendation of the study invited to concentrate on strategic management concepts and provide a middle management in the companies with updated practices while doing administrative procedures in terms of strategic insights and modern administrative techniques. Moreover, the increasing in implementation of the practices of strategic management either in public or private sectors contains important terms in strategic management. As well, the study recommends the need for middle management in the companies to be connected with the main managerial functions related to planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring while their administrative activities, this connection has to extend to all managerial levels in the organization.

Alkhateeb (2003) demonstrates the strategic planning and organizational performance for medical sector in Jordan. The study purposes to recognize the organizational performance of the companies surveyed in this study, analyzing the most important indicators should be considered when carrying out the strategic planning, and testing the effect of the practice of strategic planning on the organizational performance. The study indicated that around 52% of the managers in the Jordanian companies in medical sector do not pay more attention to the scientific dimension of the strategic management. After testing the hypothesis, the findings showed that there were no statistical correlation between the practicing the strategic planning and the organizational performance for these companies. Hence, the study also recommended increasing the concentration of strategic planning dimension and found an equal opportunities of development and professional growth for all the employees regardless any considerations, to assure they achieve their duties satisfactory as well to raise their professional commitment levels and the organizational performance too, and to achieve more responsibilities and studies on the theme to enhance the nature of the correlation among strategic management and performance of the companies. A study by Al-Harithy (2006) aimed to state the level of prevalence of strategic planning indicators for the females in Saudi universities. Data were collected using the questionnaire which was self-administered distributed to the participants including several academic ranks like deans, heads of department and lecturers. Thus, the findings of the study revealed that the level of strategic planning indicators founded between females were rational in light of future vision, missions and strategic objectives. Additionally, Al-Dajny (2007) study tried to state the actuality of strategic management in the Islamic University in Gaza through analyzing the strategic methods using under the quality standards allowed by the National Board of Quality and Accreditation. Data were collected by questionnaire. The sample size of the study was 117 respondents. Findings of the study demonstrated the fact of the strategic planning term between the university management, as can be viewed that the most of the study population implement strategic plans. Results also revealed there was a weakness of analyzing some factors of the vision and objectives.

Bawadi (2008) research discussed and analyzed the internal environment of Hadramout University and the factors of strategic management therein. The aim of the study was to analyze the weaknesses and strengths of the composition of the internal environment of the Hadramout University, and the synthesis of the strategic planning in the university. The data method was used in the study was a questionnaire which sent to the respondents of the study (114). Therefore, the findings of the study revealed a total agreement in the sample of the study there was weakness in the internal environment components and the structure of strategic planning at the university. As well, the university was still eligible to adopting the strategic techniques to defeat the obstacles and challenges which it faces. Jaradat's (2012) study purpose to identify the degree of self-assessment skills between academic instructor at Jerash University in Jordan. To achieve the study's objective, a group of questionnaires were sent to 30 participants including deans and departmental heads in Jerash University. After the data collected and processed, the findings showed that the degree of self-assessment skills between the respondents was generally intermediate meanwhile planning, carrying out and assessing skills classified at higher level. Thus, the study introduces different recommendations, encompasses establishing training workshops related to the ways of self-assessment studies. Al-Hawamdeh (2012) investigated the degree of involving strategic planning skills amongst academic members in Jordanian private universities. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher developed a questionnaire and tested its validity and reliability. 150 respondents were the sample of the study who were selected randomly by using stratified sample from different universities (Jerash, Irbid, Philadelphia, Zarqa, Isra and Zaitounah). After processing the statistical analysis, findings revealed that the level of strategic planning proficiency amongst academic member in private Jordanian universities was moderate, high for the vision and aims and moderate for values, plans and environmental analysis. The study introduced a group of recommendations encompassing providing training workshops in strategic management methods and conducting evaluation researches for the strategic planning. Aldehayyat & Anchor (2008) paper was aimed to investigate the level of the awareness and usage of strategic tools and techniques for Jordanian public companies in several sectors like financial, service and industrial. The nature study was a cross-sectional research which discussed in-depth and analyze case study-type. The participants were asked to refer the models and techniques which they know of and what the tools they used in their companies. A set of 203 questionnaires were distributed to a population of 203 companies and only 83 valid responses were returned and fit to analysis. The main results of this study can be summarized: that the most

common tools and techniques used by Jordanian companies are financial analysis, PEST analysis which helps the companies to understand their own business environment, by scanning Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Technological factors, Porter's Five-Forces analysis which is a tool to analyze competition in the business. The managers for these companies have an awareness of most of these tools; and that the usage of strategy techniques connect closely to the size of the company more than to the its age or type of business.

Aldehayyat et al. (2011) purposed to grasp the usage of strategic planning tools and techniques by hotels in Jordan. A critical review of the present literature regarding strategic planning tools and techniques in both developed and developing businesses. The research was conducted through self-administered questionnaire Jordanian hotels in most two tourist cities namely, Petra and Aqaba. The outstanding results of this research are that the Jordanian hotels employ several of strategic planning tools and techniques and involve in the strategic planning process through these techniques. There was a significant relationship between the use of strategic planning techniques and size of hotel. The management of these hotels believe with the advantages and benefits of using strategic tools and techniques. Sharabati & Fuqaha (2014) study aimed to examine the impact of strategic management by using Balanced Scorecard (BSC) on organizational performance for Jordanian companies in pharmaceutical industry. To achieve the objective of the study, the data were collected from 13 companies, via survey questionnaire. The sample of the study was 140 managers; only 95 questionnaires were returned; only 90 were fit for further analysis. Different of statistical functions like descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA, correlation, simple and multiple regressions were used. To assure the validity of data collection instrument, a Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Cronbach's Alpha were used. The findings of the study showed there was a positive using the balanced scorecard for pharmaceutical companies in Jordan. Finding also indicated that there was a correlation between balanced scorecard organizational performance. The finding of the regression both simple and multiple revealed that strategic management has a direct effect on Jordanian pharmaceutical organizational performance. As well, the result showed the customer's perspective has the strong effect on organizational performance, followed by internal processes, learning and growth respectively.

7. Conclusion

The paper contents may help both academicians and practitioners to grasp the components of strategic management better, and adopt them within their organizations. Strategic management consist of significant factors, therefore it should take into serious consideration when setting the organizational strategy. The empirical findings of this paper built on the previous studies on the relationship between strategic management and other variables, so it may be used as guidance for further research about in this stream. Findings may be useful not only for organizations, but also for others, such as decision makers. This paper is one of the studies aims to review the existed literature on strategic management practices and approaches. The paper motivation was: Does manager use strategic tools in their companies? To answer the question we analyzed a review of empirical studies using narrative synthesis method. The paper findings reveal that managers use strategic management in their workplace. Undoubtedly, there are variations between companies based on their size, industry and level development of their countries as well. The results indicate also that companies of different sizes in developed countries used more variety of strategic management tools and techniques than large enterprises. The findings of some studies (Kalkan & Bozkurt 2013; Rigby & Bilodeau 2015) revealed that the using of strategic management approaches was more used in the larger companies. The most generally utilized approaches regardless of the extent of level development were SWOT analysis and Porter's Five-Force analysis. Meanwhile, the most used mechanisms in developed and developing countries performed key dimensions of success. Some of the approaches used in developed countries by companies were not used in developing countries, such as customer satisfaction. This paper proposed many avenues for future studies for more organized and data-collected researches about the roles and importance of screening the environment, global monitoring, organizational structure, national culture and other environmental dimensions on strategic management practices in Jordan. The study's results have benefits for managers of business corporates to improve their managerial strategies for outstanding performance in the Middle East countries attributed by rabid business environment changes and resource limitations.

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