

The Effectiveness of the Strategic Planning of the Human Resources (The Educatinal System in the Sultanate of Oman as a Model)

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Abstract. The aim of this paper is to evaluate how effective is the Strategic planning of the human resources management in the Ministry of Education in the sultanate of Oman.

1-Introduction

The strategic planning is an essential and important phase of the institutions' performance stages because it is an essential requirement in the life of institutions to predict what will be the future conditions, especially as the activity of the institutions is done in variable and unstable conditions. So the efficiency in performance depends not only on the availability of the necessary financial resources to cover the performance expenses but on the availability of sound scientific planning identifies goals accurately and the methods of achieving them (Sirefi 2008).

The strategic planning is defined as "depicting the future visions of the institution and its mission and identifying its objectives in the long term and the dimensions of the expected relations between them and their environment which contributes to indicate the opportunities, risks and its strengths and weaknesses in order to make effective strategic decisions in the long-term, review and evaluate them (Moroccan, 2009). Therefore, the strategic planning in the institution is a comprehensive plan sets out how the institution achieve its tasks and objectives. Some experts argue that the strategic planning illustrates the nature, direction and objectives of the institution. Therefore, the strategic planning indicates several concepts according to the theories and input dealt with (Mintberg 1999).

Prayoon also pointed in his definition of the concept of strategic planning that it is "a system of matched efforts to make decisions and crucial steps as to what is the institution? What does it do? and why is it working? (Bryson 1995).

According to al-Khafaji, strategic planning is "decision-making concerning the identification of the mission of the institution, the formation of policies, setting goals and estimate the primary path which is used to implement the goals of the institution which determines its style, character and distinguishes it from other institutions. (Al-Khafaji, Abbas, 2004, pp. 158).

Some suggest that the strategic planning is the development and formation of long-term plans to

deal effectively with the opportunities and threats in the external environment of the institution in the light of the sources of strength and weakness of the resources owned by the institution in its internal environment. This includes the definition of the institution's mission, the formulation of objectives can be achieved, the formation and development of strategies and setting policy of the institution (Hanger, 1997).

This diversity in the concepts of strategic planning is due to the important of the strategic planning at the practical level of the institutions to cope with the future variables. However, these concepts emphasized that the strategic planning is a series of decisions and activities organized and based on information for the external environment and the internal environment of the institution, which enables specialists to achieve the desired objectives efficiently and less costly in the expected period of time.

2- Characteristics of strategic planning

Researchers focus on the strategic planning in contemporary administration as an important necessity to face the rapid changes and challenges faced by institutions because of many facts about the strategic planning. Some people believe that the most important advantages of strategic planning (Sheikh Fuad):

1- helping the institution in achieving the long-term objectives by translating the strategic plans and the set goals to detailed plans, programs and workable budgets.

2- distribution and optimal use of resources because they are used according to the plans.

3- helping the institution to increase the competitiveness because strategic planning focuses on studying the environmental factors constantly and taking the necessary arrangements

4- helping leaders to set priorities to deal with the major issues facing the institution and provides it with a better system for evaluating performance

5- making decisions by rational system

6- Identify the institution's mission and its strategic objectives and policies

7- Preparing the main strategy (central strategic plans)

8- Set helping policies to the implement and control the main strategic plan of the institution

9- managing the implementation of the strategic plan until that plan is converted to business results

10- doing the evaluation process and control in order to report what has been implemented and the efficiency to make sure the plans have been implemented and modify the negative aspects of the strategic planning.

Many researchers indicate that strategic planning is based on predicting the future starting from present and identifying alternatives that it cares to identify long-term goals or the means used by relying on databases to make informed decisions. (Higgins 1993).

So the most important characteristics of the strategic planning process is that it is an organized administrative process carried out by senior management. It is characterized by continuity as a result of continuous variables in the work environment of the institution both internally and externally.

Strategic planning is a process that starts from the goals of strategies followed by defining policies and then developing the future plans to ensure the achievement of the goals, so this process includes the planning efforts that must be considered. What are they? When will be implemented? Who will implement it? (James 2000).

And strategic planning in general is the responsibility of the senior management in the

institutions, but the effective strategic planning requires cooperation of all levels of management. The senior administration works on defining the role or the definition of the institution in the future and achieving adaptation of the institution with the external environment and all the outlines of the strategy and creating the necessary climate for management involvement at all administrative levels in the planning process. (1995 speech).

The participation in the development of strategic plans by the different administrative levels is important for achieving the desired coordination and integration and to ensure the success of the planning process. For example, the participation of the middle administrative levels in the strategic planning contributes to set workable plans because of their knowledge of the organizational capabilities and problems that can hinder the process of implementing plans in practice.

Also participating contributes to increase the level of commitment of employees to work to achieve the desired objectives according to the plans and works on the exchange of information, opportunities, risks faced by the institution and the internal strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it contributes to achieve effective coordination between strategic plans and operational plans , programs and budgets with the development of the employees' capacity in the institution to effective strategy (Kubaisi, 2005).

Despite the efficiency of the strategic planning to cope with all the variables in the work environment of the institutions, it faces different factors that affect it. In some institutions, when they design a system for strategic planning to deal with the crises, it is accepted only during the crisis but after this crisis it returns to the traditional systems. The planning requires distinct activity of mental, imaginative and creative abilities to deal with different problems in addition to the high cost. It is known that introducing any new system could be usually faced by internal resistance because it aims to change the nature of work which affects the effectiveness of the plans. Moreover, reality of the variables of the work environment and incapacity to predict the future accurately may limit the efficiency of the strategic planning.

3- Strategic planning for human resources

Human Resource Management is the most important administrations in organizations where the integration between them and the other departments in the organization for it helps to manage their needs of human resources, promotion, transfer and performance evaluation. There is also a complementarity among the activities included in the management of human resources such as the integration of the employment activities, manpower planning, research, recruitment, selection, hiring and measuring the efficiency of performance.

Among the most prominent definitions presented its concept for the management of human resources: the art of attracting workers, selecting, appointment, developing their abilities, improving their skills and creating the appropriate organizational conditions in terms of quantity and quality to extract the best of their energies as well as encouraging them to make the greatest possible effort and tender (Tiger, 1417).

In another definition of the concept of human resource management : Management that looks for individuals and planning of human needs and then research , selection, recruitment, training , skills development and puts pay systems (Hanafi , 2000).

Many researchers indicate the development of human resources management in modern organizations today: it differs in several aspects from the former definition when it was called the management of individuals. That's where the change has not only included the name of the individual management, but the content of the work of this administration, the scope of its practice, objectives and relationships that have had its own strategy as any other administration in the organization. It became a crucial part of the general strategy of the organization (Aqili, 2009).

Some researchers argue that the management of human resources represents management and

main job in organizations. It works to achieve the optimal use of human resources which works at through a strategy involve a set of policies and multi-practices agree with the strategy and mission of the organization and contribute to achieve them. (Rahman, 2009)

The management of Human Resources is one of the most important management functions because it concentrates on the human element which is the most valuable resource to the administration, the most effective element on productivity. Many private sector organizations are distinct at the international level with high efficiency in performance and profits because of the excellence of human resources.

The role of human resources management has developed from a traditional role to a strategic role where the difference between the two roles can be illustrated in the following Figure (1):

Dimension	the traditional role	the strategic role
Planning and formulation strategy	Participate in formulation of Operational plans only	participate in the formulation of the overall strategy of the organization and the link between the organization's strategy and human resources strategy
Authorities	linked only to carry out the traditional functions to Human Resource Management, Head of department / vertical authorities	linked to senior management in the formulation of objectives and strategies of the organization's mission / deputy manager of Human Resources
Decision-making	Make routine operational decisions only	Make strategic decisions
integration with the organization's functions	partial integration with other functions of the organization	integration of all functions of the organization and its employees
Organizational structure	functional organizational structure	Operational organizational structure
Outlook for workers	consider them expenses	Investment and consider them payoff

Source (29) Dora and Sabagh (2008) Human Resources Management in the twenty first century Amman. Wael Publishing and Distribution House (p. 119)

Some experts indicates that the strategic planning of human resources is divided into three major dimensions are (Abdul Rahman, 2010):

3.1 First: strategy of human resource management in the appointment:

The main objective sought by human resource management through this activity is to provide the needs of the organization's strategy of human resources balanced by the amount of required work with the labor force. This includes sub-strategies include attracting strategy, selection strategy, and recruitment strategy.

3.2- Second: strategy of human resource management after the appointment:

This is an activity for individuals who are employees in the organization. It also includes strategies of wages, incentives and performance evaluation.

3.3- Third: strategy of human resources:

The organization aims through this activity to develop of its human resources to keep up with evolution and find effective vitality in individuals to raise the efficiency of the outputs of the organization. The most important sub-strategies of it: training strategy, promotion strategy, occupational health and safety strategy. The following figure shows the process of strategic planning for human resources and the main objective it seeks to achieve which is represented in providing the needs of the organization's strategy of human resources balanced by the amount of required work with the labor force.

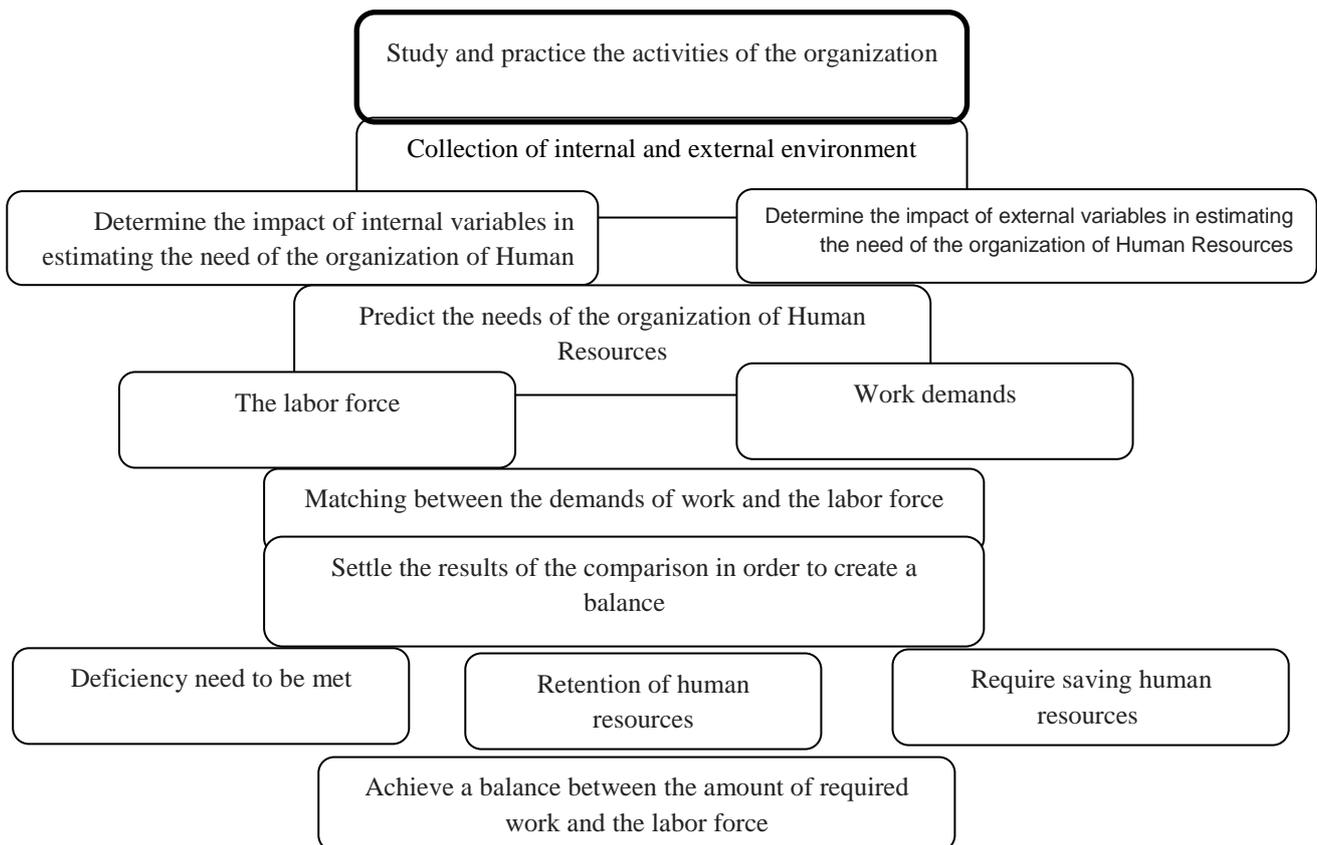


Figure (2) Source (31) Aqili , Omar Wasfi (2009) contemporary Human Resources Management Amman Wael publication and distribution House p.23

Human Resources Management (AbdelBasset, 2011).

3.4 The concept of Human Resource Management:

The human resource for the organization is like buildings, stock or cash on hand, and are thus represent an investment. The organization should manage it properly in order to use and develop this investment. In other words, it requires planning, organizing, directing and evaluating, as well as using the physical factors of production. In fact, there is much truth in that statement, which confirms (human beings are the most important asset owned by the organization).

The human are the pivotal variable in all organizations. Without it the physical assets lose their worth completely. The value of the human resources could increases as the value of money increases when deposited in a savings account. Thus the goal of human resource management is understanding and effective use of the relationship between the human resource, task carried out and productivity.

The process of human resource management gives special attention to satisfy the internal needs of both the organizations and individuals on the ability and efficiency of human resource managers in those organizations and that the main challenge here is to find an organizational environment that enables the individual to grow and develop. This environment is called the healthy organization and that is what the effective human resource management seeks to achieve.

Human Resource Management is defined (administrative activities related to the organization's access of human resources, developing, motivating and maintaining it so as to achieve the organizational goals at the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

It can be inferred from the previous definition of human resource management:

* The management of human resources involves practicing the administrative process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the human element in the organization.

*The existence of Specialist and distinctive activities which reflect the contribution of human resource management in achieving the organizational goals. These activities include: human resource planning to attract workers , training and organizational development, motivating employees , evaluating performance and improving the working environment.

*The ultimate purpose of human resources management is represented in achieving organizational effectiveness and the individual goals of the members of the organization at the same time.

* Human resource management practice role in circumstances, environment internal and external variables that must be taken into account to achieve the required effectiveness of the activities.

In conclusion, the Human resource management represents a system to manage the human element as it is the most important factor affecting the achievement of the organization adaptation to prevailing changes in the working environment, and then its ability to achieve specific goals.

Education in Oman is part of the system of global education. It is affected by what affect that system such as variables, developments and challenges. The most notably are - touched by literature and international conferences - the issues of privatization and modern technologies, demographics and globalization, the information economy, finance, quality and giving the teacher more power and academic freedom, in addition to a series of challenges and issues of the local nature.

Through the review of the reality of education in Oman, we could discern some of the challenges facing (Ministry of Higher Education 2004), including:

*Density of student in general education schools, with more than the number of students in some schools (40 students), which has a negative impact on the teacher's performance and student learning.

*Topography of Oman that make the delivery of educational services to some communities in Oman difficult and expensive.

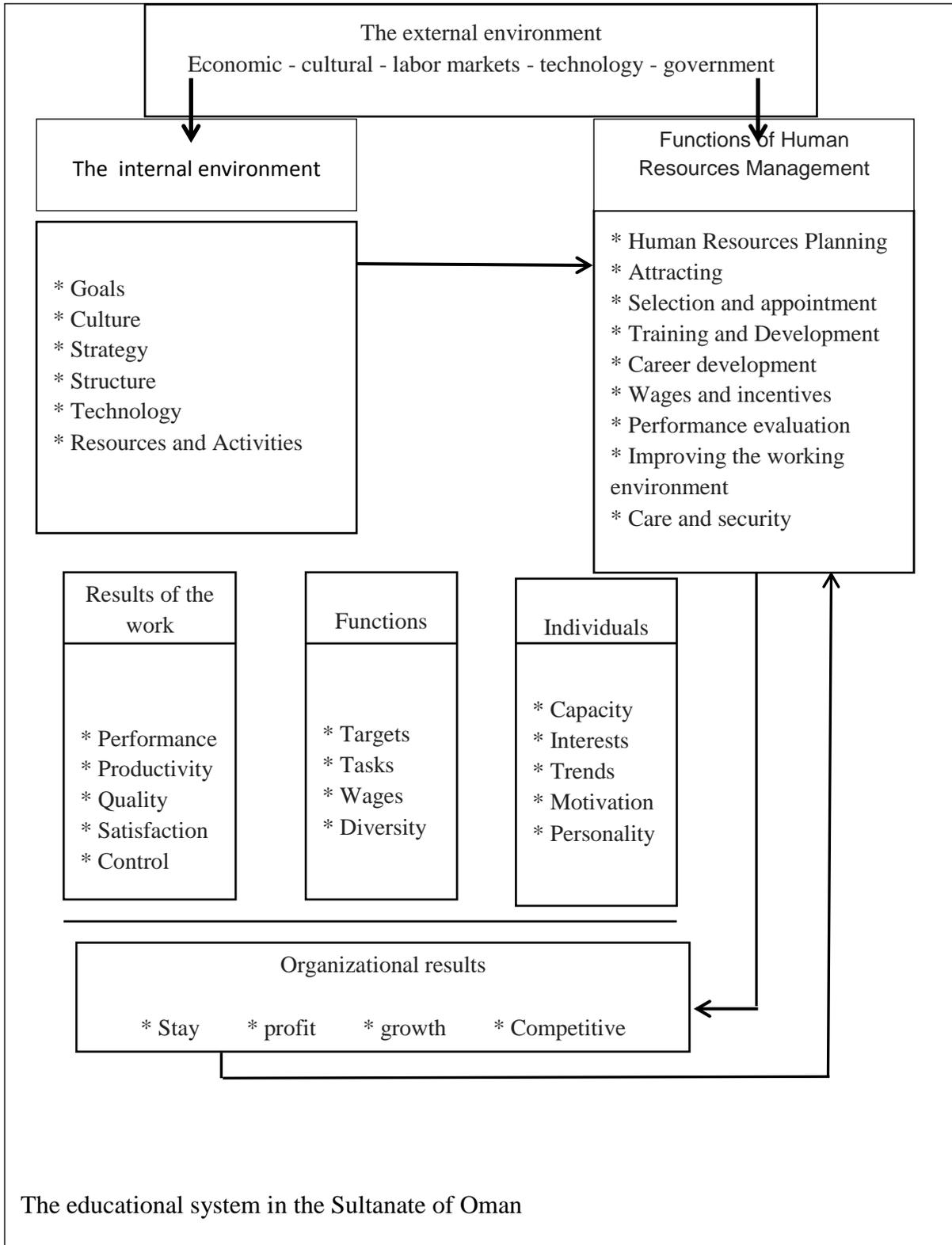
*Traditional patterns of training the educational staff and not taking the modern patterns based on multimedia, which helps to overcome the problems associated with the geographical distribution of staff, and reducing costs while ensuring quality.

*The lack of using technology in education , despite the adoption of many educational institutions for modern educational concepts such as focusing on the learner, self-learning and diversify of teaching methods and learning strategies.

*The presence of a large number of learners who do not have the required degree (bachelor's degree) in education in general education schools. Approximately 40% of the total teachers hold a diploma , thus affecting the effectiveness of their performance and the difficulty of communication with the modern developments.

*Continued to rely heavily on the government as a major source of funding for education , and limited other alternatives to support this source.

Figure 3: The dimensions of Human Resource Management



* The limited contribution of scientific research in the economic and social development. This is for several reasons, including the absence of an integrated national policy and the country should have a central institutional organizational role on it.

*Poor education quality in educational levels, where noticing the low adequacy of educational outcomes , especially in the basic skills of Arabic and English, and higher mental skills such as solving problem and critical and creative thinking..

*Despite the great efforts made by the Education Ministry in the establishment of educational buildings that match the educational features, but there is still a shortage of this type of buildings , as well as the lack of readiness of existing facilities to receive the requirements of educational technology , especially telecommunications and information technology.

*The need to enhance self-learning skills, study skills, IT skills and the culture of learning at the outputs of the education system at various levels.

*Lack of relationship between the educational institutions and the local environment.

*The weakness of the labor market to provide jobs for the different educational outcomes.

*Slowness in the application of mechanisms and procedures relating to quality assurance in education programs.

*High rate of illiteracy, as it was (22%) in 1996.

*How to raise rates of continuation in the educational institutions as fits with the generally accepted standard rates.

*Facing such challenges requires study, verification of its size and its effects, suggesting appropriate solutions to overcome them, and avoiding negative effects in a scientific manner and methodology as part of a strategy based on sound scientific basis. The preparation requires the cooperative efforts of all stakeholders, and to benefit from the experience and specialized expertise.

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