

# SURVEYING THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SCHOOL EXCELLENCE

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## Abstract

*In this present century, it is likely that school administration will continue to grow by interfacing with new and important domains such as planning and implementing appropriate program, developing goals, policies, and materials necessary to support the administration in order to achieve school excellence. It is agreed that school excellence is being achieved due to explicit strategy and committed administration. Surveying the practice of strategic planning for school excellence is a research that attempts to understand the concepts of strategic planning. It provides a process model for school managers to integrate into school development plans. This enhances the school manager's efforts in combining goals, policies and other administrative activities into an action plan. The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of strategic planning practices in schools. This research is quantitative in nature that employed Factor analysis in explaining five strategic planning factors for school excellence. Thus, findings from 81 respondents planning-team of sub business unit of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM); International Islamic School (IIS) Malaysia would be of benefit to school managers, stakeholders and as well as customers for school excellence.*

**Keywords** *Strategic planning, Strategic choice, Strategic implementation, SWOT analysis, Strategic management, School excellence*

## Introduction

The historical background of strategic planning can be traced back to military organisation. There are a number of studies that have been conducted in this field of strategic planning. Most of them were carried out in different sectors like business, profit and non-profit organizations, and other government agencies. They have provided some ideas on the conceptual processes in strategic planning for the benefit of organizations. Strategic planning is a priority element and a managerial tool for top executives of an institution. This enhances the school management plan for the future as it tries to overcome challenges which may influence institution achievement. However, schools could be categorized into non-profit and profit making establishments (Bryson, 2004). Non-profit schools are those that are financed by the government and do not necessarily give returns while profit making schools are either self-managed or involve share-holders. Nevertheless, Brunt (1987) states that there is considerable resistance to equate the schools activities with any other organizations. This is because institutions (especially profiteering institution) have customers who are always demanding and hence, schools need to satisfy them because they determine the future of the institution (Andreas & Petros, 2002). Thus, strategic planning is a managerial tool that fit in dealing with any rising turbulent and other challenges confronting the educational environment (Preedy, 1997).

### **Concepts of educational planning**

Educational planning is an effective and efficient managerial procedure which brings change through cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous individual contributions. Hord et al (1987) point out that change in the educational sector is considered a process, not an event, and is accomplished first by individuals. Thus, educational planning is of two concepts, which are identified by Ogunu (2001) as “education” and “planning”. Education is a process that involves learning societal norms and traditions on a continuous basis in a well organised environment in order to be able to function effectively in the society. These are valuable aspects that are needed by the society for intellectual improvement.

Planning, on the other hand, is the process of preparing a set of decisions for future actions directed at achieving goals by optimal means. Planning is a formalised process to produce explicit and an articulated result, in the form of an integrated system of decisions, Ogunu (2001) asserts that planning is the process of clarifying, identifying and analysing the organisational needs to achieve future targets either by short term planning, medium term planning, long term planning, micro level planning, macro level planning, fixed term planning, rolling term planning, operational planning, or strategic planning. Moreover, Leonard, Timothy & Pfeiffer (2008) describe planning as the process of establishing objectives and choosing the most suitable means for achieving these objectives prior to taking action for school excellence. Further, planning is anticipatory decision-making. This is a process of deciding before an action is required. ‘Planning’ is one of the important functional elements needed by the school management for internal and external actions. Besides that, Beeby (1967) states that educational planning is the management activities of foresight in determining the policy, priorities and costs of an educational system, having due regard for economic and political realities, for the system’s growth potential and the needs of a nation and the pupils served by the system. As a result, planning in education is to ensure that the demanding interests and needs of the various groups like students, parents, staff and members of the school community are harmonized with the external environment. Having identified this basis, Adesina (1981) points out the educational planning is the process of applying scientific or rational procedures to educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. This is consistent with Luther’s (1937) definition that planning is a process of working within broad framework that needs a method for accomplishing the purposes set for the enterprise. It means that planning should be based on broad objectives which are important in an educational organisation with a specific procedure identified as strategic planning which infuses past aims and objectives to achieve new ones for school excellence.

For school managers to achieve excellence, the strategy should be identified as a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions, and resource allocations that defines what an organisation is, what it does, and why it does it (Bryson, 2004). These are the items necessary for school managers to explain in order to achieve the goal of excellence. A strategy is used to describe the steps taken by an organisation in achieving its objectives and mission (Byars, 1991). Meanwhile, Fidler & Bowles (1989) believes that strategic planning is the process for creating and choosing a particular strategy to respond to future events. In view of these, strategic planning is the blueprint which is

related to other decisions in school management. It is a managerial tool that is relevant in the educational sector both profiteering and non-profiteering for effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Previous research on strategic planning**

Strategic planning models are the structural design that serves as a guide to future achievements by educational managers. Models are steps readily designed for execution and integration into school's administrative functions. Andreas & Petros ( 2002 ) states that, one of the prominent solutions to cope with overwhelming and challenging situations confronting the management of educational sector is the institutionalising of the strategic planning process. Besides that, Drucker ( 1967 ) argue that plans are nothing unless they are generated into action if school manager follows the appropriate design model for future excellence. Several theoretical models have been developed to explain and illustrate the strategic planning process in the education sector. These research models are based on strategic analysis, strategic choice and strategic implementation as the main aspects of the planning process. Johnson and Scholes ( 1998 ) strategic planning process model is divided into three stages and three steps. They are classified as conceptual stages and action steps.

The conceptual stages are consisting of strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategic implementation. The action steps include deciding how to plan, how to choose and how to implement. The conceptual stages represent the strategic planning process while the action steps are from strategic management process. Bryson and Alston ( 2005 ) represent the ABCs of the strategic planning model, which summaries what strategic planning is all about. Besides, the letter A in the model defines the vision, mission and goal, B represents strategy formulation, and the letter C represents strategy implementation. However, Gray ( 2008 ) differentiates strategic planning from strategic management. She categories the procedure into seven steps. The first five steps are strategic planning and the remaining two steps are strategic management tasks. It was concluded that strategic planning is part of strategic management , where strategic management entails both strategic planning and implementation, and is the process of indentifying and executing the organisational plans. Similarly, Hairuddin and Mohamad Bustaman ( 2009 ) came with another model that emphasise on institutionalizing strategic plans and implementing the action plan for school excellence, It emphasises the procedure to carry out strategic plans in school through explicit management of action plan for school excellence.

Finally, this research proposes a model which comprises all the methods employed by recent researchers into one coherent framework. This is to provide a clear picture on the application of strategic planning and to answer the research question to what extent the management practices the strategic planning for school excellence.

### **Institutionalising the planning function ( IPF ) in schools**

This stage is where the school management is about to prepare for planning. It is the point where the strategic planning team such as the administrative staff / principal of the school take formal responsibilities for institutionalising strategic planning. Cook ( 1995 ) posits that the planning team is the most important element of the planning process . Grant &

Thomas ( 2004 ) sees institutionalising the planning function as planning to plan which is a critical component of the strategic planning processes ( Cook, 1995 ; Valentine , 1991 ). Orientation can be conducted for teachers and other functional staff of the school at this upon strategic planning process in order to verify the current position of the school for effective and efficient achievement ( Bryson , 2004 ; Valentine , 1991 ) .

### **Establishing the strategic foundation ( ESF ) in school**

This is a stage where the top executives formulate vision and mission statement that are essential for establishing objectives and formulating strategies. These are answering statement on purpose. It is essential for the managers and leaders in schools to agree upon the basic vision that the institutive strive to achieve ‘ what we want to be’. Besides that, a short vision statement provides the foundation for school excellence. All staff should understand and contribute provides in developing the statement because the vision and mission requires enthusiastic approval by all. There are many benefits in formulating the vision and mission statements. David ( 2009 ) reiterates that there is double return for institutions that have a formalised mission statement on their shareholders’ equity compared to those institutions without a formalised mission statement. Thus, a strategic foundation in school establishes a unity one for an institutional climate.

### **Conducting the strategic (Situational) diagnosis (CSSD) in school**

This is a stage where a clear mission statement provides a basis for generating and screening strategic options. The strategic team in the school answers: ‘what is proposed, why is it proposed, and how are the proposals going to be implemented’. Through environmental scanning, these statements should be able to answer the questions. The result is referred to as plan formulation. Besides, the plan must be a set of decisions appropriate for institutional approval and must provide a line-point for action by the various administrative staff responsible for implementing these decisions. According to Holmes and Davies (1994), if strategic planning is successful, then it will help the institutions to stand firmly on their strengths of the opportunities to minimise the effect of threats. This can be achieved by applying the strategic situational diagnosis approaches which entails SWOT analysis. As quoted in Onugu (2001), there are criteria in carrying out strategic situational diagnosis as follows:

**Diagnosis:** Once the instutional objectives are defined, the next step to be taken by the school management is to ascertain whether the current educational effort is adequate, relevant and conductive to their outout. To do this, the school strategic planners need to match the output of educational effort with the institutional objectives.

**Formulation of policy:** The diagnosis of the existing education situation would highlight defects and deficiencies which are to be corrected so as to ensure relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Corrective action has to be based on a policy which has to be spelt out to indicate the general framework within which decisions are to be made. A set of policies framed to remedy each of the defects and deficiencies revealed by the diagnosis will form the institutional policy. **Costing of future Needs:** This is to calculate the cost future needs. This can be done through the implementations of the best available cost data. This gives

an indication of the total financial outlay for needs to be satisfied. Dobson and Starkey (1994) suggest that a resource audit can be analysed by employing SWOT analysis. SWOT is one of the management tool that stands for Strengths and Weakness; they measure the internal environment while Opportunities and Threats measure the external environment of the organization.

### **Developing strategic plans (DSP) in school**

Strategic plans could be developed by formulating, evaluating, and making the planning options (choice). The executives have the outline the plans to generate options through analysing the courses of action that is by evaluating the option before making a choice (Fidler, 1996). According to Hairuddin and Muhamad Bustaman (2009) developing the strategic plans is one of the procedures to make choices. Dobson and Starkey (1994) suggest the following strategic plans development before deciding on choices:

***Suitability:*** This is the ability to overcome the difficulties by identifying strategic planning options appropriateness.

***Establishment of Priorities and Target Testing:*** At the time of analysing the data collected for planning purpose, it will be of use for the school management that involve planning activities to take stock resources for educational development. By extrapolating the past trends, an idea of the resources required for the next planning stage is conceived.

***Feasibility Testing:*** The targets are set according to the needs that have been identified from strategic analysis and the priorities assigned. But another necessary aspect which the strategic planners need to consider is to ensure whether they are consequences of the risk before selecting the particular option. Moreover, acceptability involves the school's values. Hence, by developing the strategic plans, it would allow management to decide the most appropriate direction or suitable strategy in which the institution must move for implementation.

### **Managing strategic planning implementation (MSPI) in school**

The implementation of action plan begins when individual plans are taken up for execution. As the educational action plan is being implemented, the machinery to evaluate the stage of improvement and detect deviations is set in motion. According to William and Jack (1986) most strategic planners in academic institutions are highly skilled and talented in planning promising activities but are disappointed when planning fails to achieve the target expected from them. This is because the school management does not implement the plan developed accordingly. Managing strategic plan implementation is necessary for maintaining the right choice of action plan. It enhances revision for the future years. Finally, an action plan is the end-means of strategic planning. It contributes to school excellence through effective and efficient implementation of the target option.

### General Conceptual model of the study

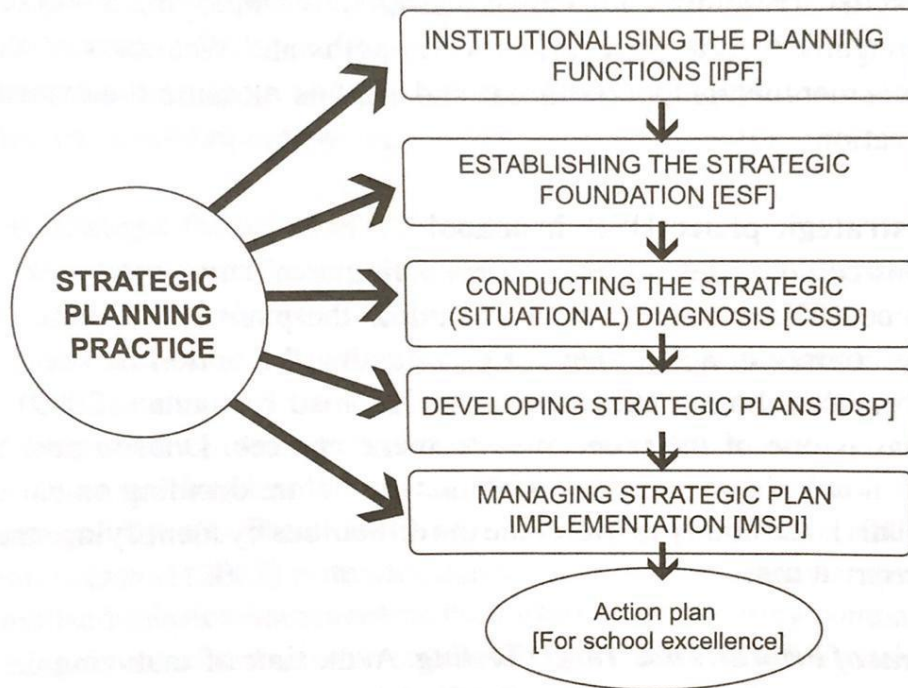


Figure 1 Adapted from Johnson & Scholes ( 1988 ), Bryson & Altson ( 2005 ), Fidler ( 2002 ), and Hairuddin & Mohamad Bustaman ( 2009 ).

#### Research Methodology

Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire which was adapted from researchers conducted by Hairuddin & Mohamad Bustaman ( 2009 ) in their previous study. The instrument comprise 50 items related to the practice of strategic planning for schools. Each item is a descriptive statement, which requires the respondents to make a choice from 5-points Likert Scale ; 1 = Not attempted , 2 = Need improvement , 3 = Good , 4 = Very good , 5 = Excellent . It was made up of six sections. Section one intends to elicit background information of the respondents. Section two deals with institutionalising the planning functions and it consists five items . Section three emphasises establishing the strategic foundation consists of eight items. Section four deals with conducting the strategic (situational) diagnosis and consist sixteen items. Mean while, section five deals with developing strategic plan and it consists of seven items. Finally, section six of this research questionnaire emphasises managing strategic plan implementation consists of seven items.

#### Data Analysis and Results

To understand the population of the study, demographic data were requested from the survey participants. The population of strategic planning team at International Islamic School consisted of 81 subjects with a total number of 25 ( 27 % ) males and 56 ( 61 % ) females. Majority of the respondents ( 76.9% ) were academic while the remaining ( 12.1% ) were non-academic. During the administration of the Instrument , it was observed that some academic staff were combining administrative task with teaching . Besides that, majority of the respondents ( 86.4% ) were above 25 years while the remaining were

Below 25 years ( 13.1 % ). The demographic data, show that the strategic planning team in IIS did not only comprises local respondents ( 70 % ) , but also involved Internationals ( 29 % ). Majority if the respondents ( 76 % ) with postgraduate qualifications were higher than (23% ) those with undergraduate qualaifications. Futhermore, most of the respondents (50%) have less than 5 years experience while ( 49% ) had above 5 years of planning experience. Also the illustrates that the majority of respondents ( 60.8% ) were from social science department and ( 25.9% ) were from science. The remaining respondents ( 13.6 % ) were from the administrative department. Thus, respondent’s number shows that the strategic planning team in IIS involved all the departments of the school.

**Table 1 DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS**

	Items	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Status</b>	Non-academic	11	13.6
	Academic	70	86.4
<b>Gender</b>	Male	25	30.9
	Female	56	69.1
<b>Age</b>	Below 25yr	11	13.6
	Above 25yr	70	86.4
<b>Nationality</b>	International	24	29.6
	Local	57	70.4
<b>Qualification</b>	Undergraduate	19	23.5
	Postgraduate	62	76.5
<b>Experience</b>	Below 5yr	41	50.6
	Above 5yr	40	49.4
<b>Departments</b>	Social Science	49	60.5
	Science	21	25.9
	Administrative	11	13.6

This study examine five constructs : Institutionalising the Planning functions ( IPF ), Establishing the Strategic Foundations ( ESF ) , Conducting the Strategic ( Situational ) Diagnosis ( CSSD ), Developing Strategic Plan ( DSP ) , Managing the Strategic Plan implementation ( MSPI ) and their contribution to the practice of Strategic plan IIS excellence. The Statistical Package for Social Science ( SPSS ) Version 16.0 ( SPSS Inc., 2007 ) was used for the descriptive statistics, reliability and Factor Analysis. Content validity thus, was conducted through the permission of the deputy director, Postgraduate and Research , Institute of Education , IIUM. Besides that, experts in the field of Educational Administration and planning were consulted for validation of the instrument / items and verified the inter-items correlation of the variables to the extent that the variables were suitable for Factor Analysis.

### **Reliability Analysis**

Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test were conducted for the IPF , ESF , CSSD , DSP and MSPI to determine consistency across the variables. Responses from 64 respondents were received for the pilot test ; eight in- complete responses were removed , resulting in usable

Responses of 56 for the pilot study. To establish the content validity of the instrument , the technique of Factor Analysis ( FA ) was applied on the data collected , the experts verified the inter-item correlation of the construct for actual test. The results from the pilot study enabled the researchers to identify the the ambiguous words and to set the Cronbach's alpha at .7 ( Julie, 2007 ) . Besides that , 81 responses were received fot the actual research. With regard to 26 variables / items found reliable in the pilot study , the researchers employed and computed the same variables based on 81 responses received for reliability analysis. The total items used and the result of the present research reliability are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 **Reliability of the Constructs**

Constructs	Factors/variables	Cronbach alpha
CSSD	CS2, CS15, CS13, DS1, CS5, CS8, CS11	.850
MSPI	ES8, MS1, CS12, CS16, MS4, MS3, CS4, CS10	.809
IPF	IP3, IP1, ES5, IP5	.694
ESF	MS7, DS4, MS2, ES1	.652
DSP	CS3, MS5, CS6	.665

N=81

CSSD =  $\alpha = 8.50$  and MSPI  $\alpha = .809$  demonstrated high reliability, while IPF  $\alpha = .694$ , ESF  $\alpha = .652$  and DSP  $\alpha = .665$  were below .7 . Hence, in reference to Hair *et al.*, ( 1998 ) it was asserted that .60 and .70 were deemed as lower limits but still were still accepted for the reliability of data analysis and interpretation for educational purposes.

### FACTOR ANALYSIS

After assessment of the suitability data for factor Malaysia, factor analysis was employed with Varimax. Rotation was done to identify the underlying factors. Only the factors with eigenvalues of 1.0 and greater were retained. With reference to Hair *et al.*, ( 1998 ) factor loading and total number of responses ( 81 ) enables the researchers to set the criteria ; that all items less than .5 should be deleted. As a result, there was an indication of good inter-correlation among the items that ustified the uses for Factor Analysis. The correlation matrix result of the intial analysis shows some correlation of  $r = .3$  or greater while its p value was  $p < .05$  . Through the initial analysis, the researcher observed that the study was statically significant. Communalities revealed that there were some items which extracted lower than .5 . Similarly , items ES5 was loaded on F1 and F5 and items DS1 was loaded on F1 and F2 . Thus, the researcher set the criteria again ; that all item . 55 below should be deleted. Consequently, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value was significant at .000 this shows that factor analysis is appropriate and is supports the factorability of the correlation matrix ( Julie, 2007). In contrast, the overall MSA i.e. Kaiser- Meyer – Olkin Measure of sampling Adequacy was .464. it was not accepted for educational purposes.

The variables that were loaded at .55 below in rotated matrix were computed again in order to meet the overall MSA , KMO of .60 above ( Hair et al., 1998 ) as an assumption considered appropriate for Factor Analysis ( Julie . 2007 ; Tabachnick & Fidell 2007 ) .Thus



The computed variables revealed good inter-correlation and its correlation matrix showed correlations of  $r \geq .3$  or greater while its  $p < .05$ . Besides that, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value is significant at .000, this shows that factor analysis is appropriate and it supports the factorability of the correlation matrix (Julie, 2007). Table 4 shows the acceptable overall MSA (Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) of .626

Table 4 **KMO and Bartlett's Test Result**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.626
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	936.432
	Df	253
	Sig.	.000

Thus, five components recorded of 5.819, 2.722, 2.042, 1.857 and 1.579 respectively. Total variance explained was 60.95 per cent of variance. Finally, table 4.4 shows the final variables for answering the research questions.

**Table 4.4** Numbers of factors Extracted

items	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
CS8	.729				
DS2	.721				
CS9	.651				
CS13	.646				
CS15	.635				
CS14	.580				
CS3		.799			
CS4		.744			
MS5		.678			
CS12		.666			
ES8		.616			
DS3			.742		
ES3			.712		
CS2			.706		
ES5			.654		
IP1				.715	
IP3				.714	
IP4				.669	
IP5				.651	
MS2					.814
ES4					.791
ES1					.570

Extraction Method : Pricipal Component Analysis, N= 81

In order to simplify the findings of this research, the percentage rate of degree of performance indicates the extent of practices the strategic planning in IIS while the Mean and Standard deviation ( SD ) elucidate more on the extent. However, a high percentage rate indicates very good, while a low percentage of degree of performance indicates that practices of strategic planning at IIS need improvement. Thus, the tables show the extent IIS practises strategic planning for school excellence.

**Institutionalising the planning functions ( IPF ) for school excellence**

**RQ 1 :** *To what extent does IIS institutionalising the planning functions for school excellent ?*

**Table 4.5.1** Descriptive statistics for Research Question 1

Items	NA 1	NI 2	G 3	VG 4	E 5	Mean	SD
(IP1) Do top executives (Principal/HOD) take formal responsibility for institutionalising strategic planning?	--	4.9% (4)	25.9% (21)	46.9% (38)	22.2% (18)	3.86	.818
(IP3) Does your school provide enough resources (physical and staff support etc) for development of strategic planning practice for school excellence?	--	18.5% (15)	32.1% (26)	27.2% (22)	22.2% (18)	3.53	1.038
(IP4) Does your school consistently follow a define set of procedures in its strategic planning process?	--	3.7% (3)	43.2% (35)	46.9% (38)	6.2% (5)	3.56	.671
(IP5) Does your school staff whose work might be affected significantly by strategic plans participate in the planning process?	--	38.3% (31)	24.7% (20)	34.6% (28)	2.5% (2)	3.01	.915
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.49</b>	<b>.861</b>

DP ; N A = Not attempted , N1 = Need Improvement , G = Good , VG = Very Good , E = Excellent , N = 81

Almost the strategic planning team expressed their opinion that the top executives took formal responsibility for institutionalising strategic planning functions for school excellence. Majority ( 46.9 % ) expressed that institutionalising the planning functions in IIS is very good, other ( 25.9% and 22.2% ) expressed ; good, and excellent respectively. Although, only few (4.9% ) expressed that institutionalising the planning functions need improvement but none emphasised that institutionalising the planning functions were not attempted. Moreover, almost 66 respondents ( 32.1% good , 27.2 % very good , 22.2 % excellent ) accepted that IIS provided enough resources for the development of strategic

Planning practice for school excellent. Only 15 respondents (18.5 % ) were of the opinion that resources provided for the development of strategic planning practice need improvement. Similarly, degree of performance from the table above revealed that nobody expressed that IIS were not consistently follow a define set of procedures in its strategic planning process for school excellence. Only ( 3.7 % ) respondents emphasised that it's set of procedures need improvement. Moreover, majority ( 38.3% ) expressed that IIS need improvement ; on school staff whose work might be affected significantly by strategic plans participated in planning process. Two participants (2.5% ) respondend to excellent while other ( 24.7% , 34.6 % ) expressed good and very good respectively. However, the finding from this research indicates that the extent to which IIS institutionalising the planning functions for school excellence is very good. With moderate mean score of 3.49 and standard deviation of .861 provides that IIS took formal responsibilities for institutionalising the strategic planning functions for school excellence :

### Establishing the strategic foundation ( ESF ) for school excellence

**RQ 2 :** *To what extent does IIS establishing the strategic planning foundation for school excellent ?*

**Table 4.5.2** Descriptive statistics for Research Question 2

Items	NA 1	NI 2	G 3	VG 4	E 5	Mean	SD
(MS2) Does your school clearly assign lead responsibility for action plan implementation to one person?	4.9% (4)	----	32.1% (26)	24.7% (20)	38.3% (31)	3.91	1.07
(ES4) Do longer-term goals (3–5 year) and short-term objectives (1year) support school's vision and mission?	---	4.9% (4)	18.5% (15)	14.8% (12)	61.7% (50)	4.33	.949
(ES1) Does your school have a mission and vision statement?	----	3.7% (3)	27.2% (22)	27.2% (22)	42.0% (34)	4.07	.919
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.11</b>	<b>.981</b>

DP ; N A = Not attempted , NI = Need Improvement , G = Good , VG = Very Good , E = Excellent , N = 81

The results from the above table shows that almost all the respondents ( 38.3 % excellent , 32.1 % good, 24.7 very good ) expressed excellently that IIS clearly assign lead responsibility for action implementation to one person which establishing the strategic planning process for school excellence. Only ( 4.9 % ) respondent expressed that leading responsibility for action implementation to one person by IIS was not attempted. In addition, Majority ( 42.0% excellent , 27.2 % good and 27.2 % very good ) emphasised that IIS have a mission and vision statement. Although , ( 4.9 % ) respondents expressed that IIS longer - term goal and short tem objetives which support school's vision and mission need improvement. Nevertheless, majority ( 61.7 % ) believes that longer – term goals and

short-term objectives support the school's vision and mission for school excellence. In addition, it was clearly shown none of the respondents who emphasised that leading responsibility of IIS need improvement.

Thus, finding from this research indicates that majority affirmed that establishing strategic foundation at IIS is very good with high mean score of 4.11 and standard deviation .981 . Besides that , IIS establishing longer-term goal and short-term objectives with moderate high mean score of 4.33 and standard deviation of .949 which support the strategic foundation for school excellence.

### Conducting in the strategic ( situational ) diagnosis ( CSSD ) for school excellence

**RQ3 :** *To what extent does IIS conducting the strategic ( situational ) diagnosis for school excellence ?*

Table 4.5.3 Descriptive statistics for Research Question 3

Items	NA 1	NI 2	V 3	VG 4	E 5	Mean	SD
(CS8) Does your school have knowledge of and access to sources of information about its parents, stakeholders and other external environmental factors?	----	9.9% (8)	44.4% (36)	43.2% (35)	2.5% (2)	3.38	.699
(DS2) Does your school consider strategic plans options?	----	----	23.5% (19)	38.3% (31)	38.3% (31)	4.15	.776
(CS9) Does your school strategic analysis based on profit operation objectives?	----	13.6% (11)	48.1% (39)	33.3% (27)	4.9% (40)	3.30	.766
(CS13) Does your school regularly assess its human resources development programs (recruitment, training, promotion)?	2.5% (2)	22.2% (18)	23.5% (19)	29.6% (24)	22.2% (18)	3.47	1.141
(CS15) After completing its external and internal analyses, does school's strategic analysis review the mission and goals in light of apparent threats/opportunities and strengths/weaknesses?	----	8.6% (7)	24.7% (20)	27.2% (22)	39.5% (32)	3.98	.999
(CS14) Does your school's strategic management information system provide explicit access to internal data to administrative units?	2.5% (2)	6.2% (5)	12.3% (10)	21.0% (17)	58.0% (47)	4.26	1.058
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.78</b>	<b>.907</b>

Almost all the respondents ( 44.4% good, 43.2 % very good and 2.5 % excellent ) express that IIS have knowledge of and access to sources of information about its parents, stakeholders and other external environment factors. Few respondents ( 9.9 % ) observed that the sources of information about its parents, stakeholders and other external factors need improvement. Moreover, majority ( 23.5 % good, 38.3 % very good and 38.3 % excellent ) responded that IIS strictly considered strategic plans options based on the situational condition of the school environment. Futhermore, majority of the respondents analysis based on profit operation objectives. Although, few ( 13.6 % ) asserted that the school strategic analysis was based on profit operation still need improvement. Similarly, huge numbers of respondents ( 23.5 % good, 29.6 % very good , 22.2 % excellent ) expressed that IIS regularly assess it human resource development programs, while some ( 22.2 % ) expressed that it need improvement. Others ( 2.5 % ) were clearly expressed that it was not attempted.

Moreover, almost 74 respondents ( 24.7 % good, 27.2 % very good, 39.5 % excellent ) accepted that after completing its external and internal analyses, school's strategic analysis reviewed the mission and goals in light of apparent threats/opprtunities and strengths/weakness for school excellence. Others, ( 8.6% ) provided that this attempt still need improvement. Similarly, degree of performance from the table above shows that majority believed IIS strategic management information system provided explicit access to internal conducting strategic ( situational ) diagnosis is very good while the mean and standard deviation score were moderately high ( Mean =3.78 , SD = .907 ). Thus, IIS considered both internal and external factors for achieving school excellence.

#### Developing strategic plan ( DSP ) for school excellence

**RQ 4 :** *To what extent does IIS developing strategic plan for school excellence ?*

Table 4.5.4 **Descriptive statistics for Research Question 4**

Items	NA 1	NI 2	G 3	VG 4	E 5	Mean	SD
(DS3) Does your strategic plan consider customer's (students) education achievement possibilities?	---	9.9% (8)	14.8% (12)	39.5% (32)	35.8% (29)	4.01	.955
(ES3) Does the school staff understand this vision and mission statement?	---	6.2% (5)	12.3% (10)	7.4% (6)	74.1% (60)	4.50	.937
(CS2) Does the external analysis identify the threats and opportunities for school excellence?	---	23.5% (19)	22.2% (18)	28.4% (23)	25.9% (21)	3.57	1.117
(ES5) Do your school strategic planning goals list qualified measurable performance indicators?	----	11.1% (9)	2.5% (2)	13.6% (11)	72.8% (59)	4.48	.989
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.14</b>	<b>1.000</b>

DP ; N A = Not attempted , N1 = Need Improvement , G = Good , VG = Very Good , E = Excellent , N = 81

Almost all respondents ( 35.8 % excellent , 39.5 % good, 14.8 % very good ) expressed excellently that IIS considered customers towards educational achievement. Only ( 9.9 % ) of the team suggested customers consideration need improvement. In addition, Majority ( 74.1 % excellent , 12.3 % good , 7.4 % very good ) understood the mission and vision statement of this institution. Although ( 6.2 % ) of respondents expressed that the school’s vision and mission need improvement. Moreover, majority ( 22.2 % good, 28.4 % very good and 25.9% excellent ) expressed that the external analysis identify the threats and oppurtunities for school excellence. While few respondents ( 23.5 % ) expressed need improvement. Thus, the result indicated the majority ( 2.5 % good , 13.6 % very good and 72.8 % excellent ) accepted that IIS strategic planning goals listed qualified measurable performance indicators for school excellence. Findings from this research were clearly showed that developing of strategic plan at IIS is very good. Besides that, it strategic plan considered customer’s education achievement. Thus, high mean score of 4.50 and standard deviation score of .937 shows that the staff vividly understood the vision and mission of IIS in developing the strategic plan for school excellence.

### Managing the strategic plan implementation ( MSPI ) for school excellence

**RQ 5 :** *To what extent does IIS managing the strategic plan implementation for school excellence?*

Table 4.5.5 Descriptive statistics for Research Question 5

Items	NA 1	NI 2	G 3	VG 4	E 5	Mean	SD
(CS3) Does your school’s strategic analysis detail include the audience geographical target?	23.5% (19)	38.3% (31)	1.2% (1)	34.6% (28)	2.5% (2)	2.54	1.256
(CS4) Is your school performance and operational characteristics compared on a regular basis to its perceived “competitors”?	----	24.7% (20)	30.9% (25)	23.5% (19)	21.0% (17)	3.41	1.081
(MS5) Does your school organised system for monitoring and evaluating the action plan for proper implementation?	2.5% (2)	6.2% (5)	22.2% (18)	33.3% (27)	35.8% (29)	3.94	1.029
(CS12) Do your school’s strategic analyses include quality of customer services and employee productivity?	2.5% (2)	8.6% (7)	29.6% (24)	35.8% (29)	23.5% (19)	3.69	1.008

(ES8) Do management and higher-level staff whose responsibilities are affected participate in setting goal for school excellence?	---	22.2%	35.8%	3.7%	38.3%	3.58	1.213
	---	(18)	(29)	(3)	(31)		
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.43</b>	<b>1.117</b>

DP ; N A = Not attempted , N1 = Need Improvement , G = Good , VG = Very Good , E = Excellent , N = 81

Majority ( 38.3 % ) respondents express that school strategic analysis detail includes the audience geographical target need improvement while ( 23.5 % ) expressed not attempted. Meanwhile, those respondents who expressed good ( 1.2 % ) and excellent ( 2.5 % ) were fewer to very good ( 34.6 % ). So also, majority ( 30.9 % good , 23,5 % very good , 21. 0 % excellent ) expressed that IIS performance and operational characteristic in planning were always compared on a regular basis to its perceived “ competitors” . On the other hand, some ( 24.7 % ) express that this issue need improvement. Few respondents ( 6.5 % ) observed that organised systems for monitoring and evaluating of action plan was not attempted. Meanwhile, the majority ( 22.2% good, 33.3 % very good, 35.8 % excellent ) expressed that IIS organised system for monitoring and evaluating the action plan for proper implementation.

Moreover, majority ( 29.6 % good, 35. 8 % very good and 23.5 % excellent ) responded that IIS strategic analysed included the quality of customers services and employee productivity Degree of performance from the table above shows that majority ( 35.8 % good, 3.7 % very good , 38.3 % excellent ) of the management were higher – level staff whose responsibilities might positively be affected by participating in setting goal for school excellence. Only, ( 22.2 % ) express that higher-level staff whose responsibilities might be affected by participating need improvement.

Findings shows that, the extent in which IIS mananging strategic planning implementations need improvement. It strategic analysis detail which includes the audience geographical target revealed low mean score of ( 2.54 ) while all the items has high standard deviation of 1.000 above indicates items not well distributed. Thus, it can be concluded that IIS planning implementation need improvement for school excellence.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This present study was embedded in strategic planning theories; Ancient Chinese Strategic theories (Marx and Engels, 1992) with related researcher theories and models that explain the process of strategic planning in educational sector (Johnson & Scholes, 1998; Bryson & Alston, 2005; Fidler, 2002; Hairudding, 2009). The aim of this research is to investigate the extent to which IIS practices strategic planning for school excellence. This was investigated by follow the present research conceptual model which emphasised on institutionalising, establishing, conducting, developing, and managing the practice of strategic planning for school excellence. The finding from this research; was consistence with Selznick (1957) who concluded that effective leaders should be able to define and defend the institutional values and its distinctive mission of an organisation. Moreover, the finding from establishing the strategic foundation for school excellence related to the study carried out by Krug, (1957) whre he invented 4C- planning model which emphasised on Cooperative, Comprehensive, Continuous, and Concrete in an organisation. Hence, it can be concluded that IIS responsibility for establishing the strategic foundation can be delegated to a planner assigned to work with the team or leading may be assigned to chief executive to draw the plan and make decisions (Bryson,2004). Besides that, it were confirmed that IIS planning team diagnosed both internal and external environmental factors for school excellence.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

In this dimension, the researcher wishes to give some suggestions based on research findings in order to provide significant insights for the top executives and the entire member of strategic planning team of International Islamic School. These may improves the practice planning of strategic planning for school excellence. For effective and efficient planning outcomes, the planning teams should lay more emphases on below suggestions;

1. Most of the respondents at the IIS believe that the strategic planning were useful tool (strategic planning) for school management, but the level of institutionalising the strategic functions were very low. This is because some staff combines the work of administrative with teaching. Thus, those staff whose work might be affected significantly by participating in planning process needs to take planning as formal responsibility.
2. The finding from the study revealed that leading responsibility assign to one person, although it is consistence with (Bryson, 2004) suggestion. It is still a gap in IIS according to data collected, where the responsibility of transformational leaders need to be practiced as clearly emphasis by Covey, (1992) that leader need to transform people: by changing their minds, their visions, insight and beliefs, principle of value, bring about the changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating and momentum building. Hence, leadership should be delegated and reported to one designated body for school excellence.
3. The top executives should regularly assess its human resources development programs. This assessment brings more benefits and increases the managerial knowledge able to search for quality and standard human resource that can fulfil the



need of the customers. As it was stressed that customers are too demanding, but they determine the future of and an institution (Andreas & Petros, 2002).

4. The finding emphasised that strategic planning team of IIS should give priority to external analysis in their planning development. This enables institution identify the threats and opportunities that might require external solution and geographical target. As planning was compared with a compass; (Dan, 1991) stress that compass precisely showing the direction and indicate clearly the exact degree of deviation from the target. Thus, IIS planning team should deviate by targeting the external opportunities as threat is challenge to them.

### **Recommendations For Future Research**

In the light of the findings, theories and several researches carried out in the literature. As this research investigates the extent to which IIS institutionalises, establishes, conducts, develops and manages the practice of strategic planning for school excellence. More research is needed in investigating other practices of strategic planning in educational sectors. For instance, it could be replicated in other educational sectors such as macro-level (Ministry of Education) etc. Moreover, as this research was conducted at a single institution in Capital City, additional investigations are warranted at larger and geographically dispersed environment for future result. Further more, strategic planning process has been found in this research finding to have strong application in educational sector, thus additional work should be done on this research constructs for more validation. Although, there are numerous research that validated the strategic planning process in educational sectors, while this research look in to extent with some constructs. Therefore, data analysis of this research claim to have more constructs. Finally, all strategic planning team where identify through demographics to the extent of strategic planning practices for school excellence.

### **Conclusion**

Strategic planning process is a management tool that enables the school manager to define the specific task for school excellence. Findings from the present study were extensively discussed based on the constructs investigated in practice of strategic planning. Based on research questions, the researcher relates his investigation with several researchers' works on the extent of institutionalising, establishing, conducting, developing and managing strategic planning for school excellence. Selznick (1957) emphasised on leader's effectiveness in define and defend the institutional values and its distinctive mission. Thus, degree of performance of the present research revealed that IIS strategic planning team were consistently follow a define set of procedures, and also need to institutionalized the strategic planning as formal responsibility for school excellence. Similarly, the findings of developing strategic foundation factor revealed that the planners understood themselves and they designated the leading responsibility to one person for school excellence (Bryson, 2004). In addition, scanning the external environment provides opportunities and identifies the threats while internal environment enable the school management

identify the strength and weakness in her conducts/performance (Nutt and Backoff, 1992). Moreover, managing strategic plan implementation enable the school managers review and predict for next planning period.

However, the investigation revealed some implication such as theoretical, practical and managerial implication towards achieving educational excellence. Thus, the study elucidates that theory has proven that strategic planning implementation needs to be managed for school excellence. Also, it has been emphasised that research practically enable the administrators to understand the strategy to carry out the plan that will meet the requirement set as vision of an organisation. Nevertheless, the managerial implicayion, thus based on where are we now, how are we going to reach there, when are we going to reach there, and what will be the achievement.

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