

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation for Jordanian Private Universities

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate the key factors affecting Jordanian private universities strategy implementation outcomes success. In order to find out the nature of affect-relationship between strategy implementation process context factors, and strategy implementation outcomes success, a questionnaire was designed and administrated to 261 senior managements, middle management, and teaching staff, members of governances at 20 Jordanian private universities. Collected data was subject of quantitative statistical processing and analysis. It was found that there is a high affect-relationship between the success of strategy implementation outcomes measured by using BSC four perspectives, and the Jordanian private universities strategy implementation process context internal and external factors. Also, Jordanian Private Universities characteristics differences can statistically explain variances in degree of success of strategy implementation. The interaction between the internal and external factors can make changes in affect-relationship degree ranking between strategy implementing process context factors and the Jordanian strategy implementation outcomes success indicators.

Keywords: *Balanced Scorecard (BSC), K-economy, Pearson correlation coefficient, ANOVA analysis of variance, Multiple regression*

1. Introduction

A carefully prepared and solid strategy is no longer enough to ensure profitable success unless it links virtually every internal and external operation of an organization with a focus on customer needs (*DeFeo and Janssen (2001)*). In current turbulent environments, the ability to develop and implement new strategies quickly and effectively may well mean the difference between success and failure for organizations. Fewer than 15 percent of organizations around the world report that they are successful at strategy implementation (*Van der Mass 2008*). Over the last 20 years, private higher education has been the fastest-growing sector of higher education, and the growth of private higher education are much more significant in Asia than in other regions of the world. Across Asia nearly 40 % of higher education students are enrolled in private institution. Foreign universities set up branch campuses in selected Asian countries in order to not only absorb demand that cannot be met by local higher education institution, but also attract international staff and students to these branch campuses *UNESCO (2014)*. The case of Jordan is perhaps typical of what the two cited *UNESCO* reports illustrated in the big picture of higher education. In fact, 9 % of Jordanian GDP in the year 2012, is the annual expenditure of higher education. Jordanian private higher education sector forms one of the main players in the national higher education system; with a market share of 26.9 % from students enrolled for undergraduate, 18.2 % among graduate enrolled (for master's and other higher diploma), and 14.4 % from PhD enrolled students in the year 2012. Jordanian Statistics Department (2013).

However, three main challenges confronting Jordanian private universities now days: the first is to improve their contributions in the Jordanian socio-economic development efforts as one of two main players in the national higher education system operating in a k-economy driven country as the case of Jordan .The second challenge is about achieving and sustaining academic excellence translated by high quality of :(Teaching-learning , scientific research ,and community services) in the local, regional ,and the international levels. The Third challenge concerns proving their feasibility as a business-economic projects for their stakeholders.

This research main question is:

"What can be the affect-relationship between strategy implementing process context factors and the Jordanian private universities strategy implementation outcomes success indicators?"

Two sub-questions will be raised also:

- What are the most relevant factors to be considered once implementing strategy process is activated in Jordanian private universities, in order to improve success opportunities?
- Can Jordanian private universities characteristics differences, explain variances in degree of affect-relationship between their strategy implementing process context factors, and their strategy implementation outcomes success indicators?

These questions were translated into a number of general and specific objectives for this research.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the nature of affect-relationship between Jordanian private universities strategy implementation process context; internal and external factors, and their strategy implementation outcomes success indicators: (Financial, customers, internal-processes, learning and development). Several specific objectives were developed to commit with answering this research other questions.

2. Literature Review

After reviewing the most important conceptual models and frameworks, a complementary step must follow by reviewing empirical relevant studies. Such step helps in explaining the most important factors affecting strategy implementation success. In the same time, the review of empirical relevant studies will allow highlighting obstacles and problems that face executing strategy, in order to better understand the big picture and helps to better develop forward, recommendations through learned lessons. Many scientific attempts, using Balanced Scorecard (BSC), specially adopted for higher education institutions. The overview of empirical researches about factors affecting strategy implementation success, allows us to categorize reviewed attempts in two groups:

2.1. Empirical Studies about BSC - "Financial Perspective"

The genuine version of BSC of *Kaplan and Norton* (1990), (1996), shows that the financial perspective is covered, comparing with the organization vision, when the organization succeed in achieving: (Revenue growth and mix, cost reduction / productivity improvement, asset utilization / investment strategy). 14 years later in his working report, *Kaplan*, (2010), includes: (Improve cost structure, increase asset utilization, expand revenue opportunities, and enhance customer) to the same financial perspective.

Ahmed and Hasnu (2013) re-produce the financial perspective items to adopt them for higher education institution they used: (building endowment / fund raising / annual giving, increased research grants, increased state appropriation, increased student fee, increased teaching productivity, to be financially sound, and to be financially succeed.

Later, *Ahmed and Soon* (2015) used other adapted items for the financial perspective to fit higher education institutions: (program funding ratio, human capital investment, enrollment trend and endowments, leverage, funds generated from student fee, fulfilling shareholders interest, and deduction of cost).

As for *Betchoo* (2015) the attempt was by using financial perspective translated in items as: (developing higher return in terms of financial gains, improving margins of profitability through operational Empirical studies about BSC Excellence, reducing defects / expenses).

2.2 Empirical Studies about Strategy Implementation Success Obstacles

Developing a sound strategy is only half the battle; the more difficult task is confronting the obstacles that prevent leaders from executing their strategies. There are a multitude of reasons proffered to explain why planning and execution sometimes fail to deliver expected performance. AMA/ *American Management Association* (2006-2016).

Each firm is unique in terms of its portfolio of products and markets, its resources and capabilities, its corporate culture, its administrative heritage, its structure, systems, leadership style, and the external environment together, can describe organizational identity and overall configuration in achieving success to formulating and implementing any organization corporate strategy. Regarding that internal fit is not enough; the critical requirement and the key of this complexity, is fit with external environment as well, the strategic fit is the key. *Grant* (2010).

Kurt VERWEIR, argued the issue of strategy implementation obstacles, said that; "in many discussions with managers who struggle with strategy implementation, he has discovered that there are five root causes for unsuccessful strategy implementation": *Verweir* (2014)

- There is too much focus on financials in strategy discussion.
- Functional strategies are not substitute for a business strategy.
- Strategy implementation is too fragmented.
- Managers communicate about strategy but forget to translate strategy into action.
- Strategy implementation requires leadership capabilities.

Wheelen et al, (2015) considered 10 problems in implementing strategy:

1. Implementation took more time than originally planned.
2. Unanticipated major problems arose.
3. Activities were ineffectively coordinated.
4. Competing activities and crisis took attention away from implementation.
5. The involved employees had insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs.
6. Lower-level employees were inadequately trained.
7. Departmental managers provided inadequate leadership and direction.
8. Key implementation tasks and activities were poorly defined.
9. The information system inadequately monitored activities.

As for the AMA / *American Management Association* (2006-2016), the listed "Top ten factors hindering strategic execution (2006); with (expectations go for 10 years, till 2016), took the ranking by relative importance in a scale of 5-points, where 1= very little and 5= very much, table (1):

Factors	2006	In Ten years (2016)
Lack of adequate resources	3.18	3.00
Government regulations	3.09	3.17
Lack of follow-through	3.08	2.85
Competitive pressures	3.06	3.24
Inadequate communication and feedback	3.06	2.88
Lack of performance management links to outcomes	3.03	2.75
Culture not ready for change	3.02	2.74
Economic conditions are not favorable	3.01	3.33
Confusion over goals or expectations	2.99	2.78
Conflicting accountabilities	2.98	2.86

Table 1: Top Ten Factors Hindering Strategic Execution seen by AMA 2006 and Expectation in Yen Years, (5 points scale)
 Source: AMA, "The key to strategy execution", (2006-2016)

In this study, we believe that obstacles and problems that could hinder strategy implementation or causing its failure; should be included as a part of a comprehensive conceptual model as it is proposed in this study. In fact, surrounding both internal and external factors affecting strategy implementation outcomes success and examining them empirically will permit further conclusions in the Jordanian private universities as the case of this study. In order to achieve an objective analysis of cause-effect relationship between the context's factors of strategy implementation process, and the success degree of achieved outcomes of strategy implementation, this study's designed conceptual framework is distinguished, perhaps, in its combination through adopting the Balanced Scorecard four perspectives; (Financial, Customers, Internal process, and learning and growth) as dependent variables, to integrate other components. Thus, the comprehensive approach is illustrated in the conceptual framework of this study, due that such combination is integrated by adding the missing link cycle that permits measuring strategy implementation outcomes success. See Figure 1.

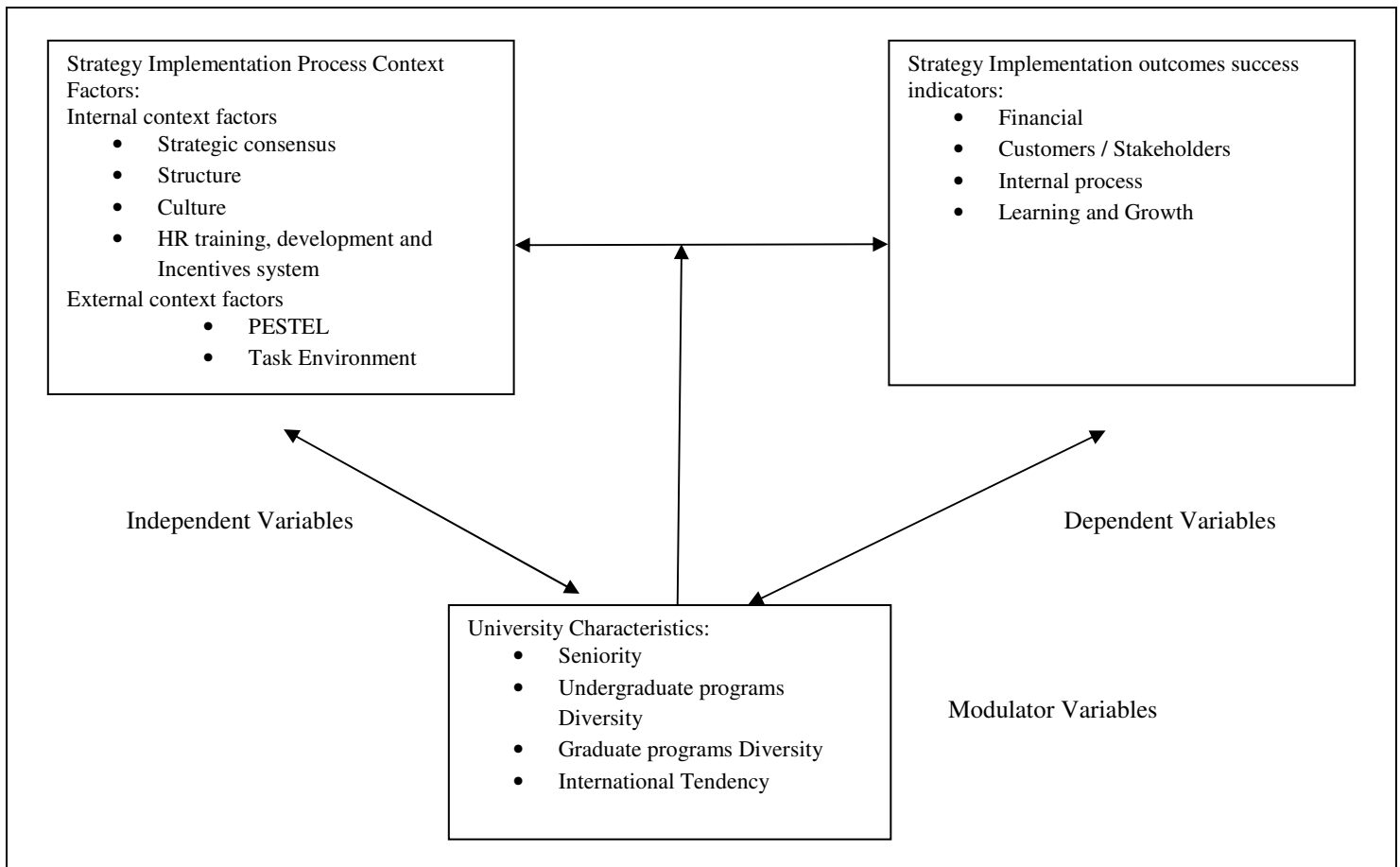


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework Model

3. Data and Methodology

In this study, the "targeted population" consists all members of both (Administrative and Academic staff) working in twenty Jordanian private universities for the year 2014 – 2015 which their total number is 8041 individuals. *JSD, Higher Education Statistical Annual Report (2014 – 2015)*.

Sampling method consists that in order to identify the sample size of the observation unit", the population must be divided into a number of distinct homogeneous categories / strata as sub-population, from which individual elements can be randomly selected *Johnson (2002)*. In this study, stratified-random sampling method was used by dividing the population into three strata:

- Senior management (including university president, vice president, trustee board members, faculty deans).
- Middle management (including registrars, head of departments and divisions)
- Teaching staff (including full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers)

3.1. General Overview about Research Population” Jordanian Private Universities”

	Public Universities	Market Share %	Private Universities	Market Share %
Grand total T 289596 = 100% (F) 149492	T 213306 (F) 121327	73.7%	T 76094 (F) 28036	26.3%
Total of students (undergraduate degree) T 267489 = 100% (F) 138620	T 195688 (F) 112058	73.1%	T 71801 (F) 26562	26.9%
Total of students (graduate): (PhD, masters, High Diploma): T 22107 (F) 10872	T 17768 (F) 9372	80.4%	T 4339 (F) 1500	19.6%

Table 2: Summary data of students enrolled at Jordanian universities and market share by degree for the years 2014-2015

T = Total (F) = Female

Source: JSD, Jordanian Statistics Department “higher education Statistics Report 2014-2015.

The summary data, based on students enrolled indicator, at Jordanian universities, illustrate the weight of each, public and private universities, in the higher education market. Table (2) shows that the Jordanian private universities market share represents 26.3% from the grand total of enrolled students for the year 2014/2015. Their market share between students enrolled for the Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.s.c) is 26.9% for the same year. And between students enrolled for (PhD, Masters, Higher Diploma) degrees is 19.6% for the year 2014/2015. Table (2).

Jordanian private universities /market shares	Undergraduate students market share comparing with		Graduate Students (PhD, Masters, High Diploma) comparing with	
	Total market shares private and public universities %	Between market shares private universities only %	Total private and public universities %	Between private universities only %
<i>Al-Ahliyya Amman</i>	2.05	7.65	0.1	0.5
<i>Applied Sciences</i>	2.39	8.91	0.64	3.23
<i>Philadelphia</i>	2.55	9.53	0.35	1.77
<i>Isra'a</i>	2.09	7.79	0.71	3.61
<i>Petra</i>	2.37	8.85	0.79	4.01
<i>Zaytoonah</i>	2.9	10.82	0.1	0.5
<i>Zarqa</i>	2.58	9.63	0.83	4.19
<i>Irbid</i>	1.2	4.47	0.31	1.59
<i>Jerash</i>	1.48	5.55	1.07	5.41
<i>Princes Sumaya</i>	1.01	3.78	0.8	4.03
<i>Jordan Academy of music</i>	0.03	0.13	-	-
<i>Educational Sciences</i>	0.44	1.65	-	-
<i>Jadara</i>	1.08	4.04	1.64	8.27
<i>Jordan Applied University collage of Hospitality and Tourism</i>	0.1	0.37	-	-
<i>Middle East</i>	0.92	3.44	2.71	13.66
<i>Ajloun National</i>	0.42	1.71	0.04	0.2
<i>Open Arab</i>	0.99	3.69	0.68	3.34
<i>Amman Arab</i>	0.2	0.75	2.15	10.87
<i>American / Madaba</i>	0.49	1.84	-	-
<i>Islamic Sciences</i>	1.42	5.29	6.87	34.66

Table 3: Distribution of Jordanian Private Universities market shares by degree of enrolled students for the year 2014-2015

Source: JSD, Jordanian Statistics Department “Higher Education Statistics Report 2014-2015

From table (3), the distribution of market shares between the (20) Jordanian private universities by degree of enrolled students for the year 2014/2015 shows that 7 from 20 private universities in Jordan have more than 2% as market share from the grand total of students enrolled for the (Bachelors) degree for the year 2014/2015. And the same 7 private universities have more than 7% as market share plan from the total students enrolled in all the 20 private universities operating in Jordan for the same year.

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Passing to the market share distribution of students enrolled for (PhD, Masters, and High Diploma) degrees; we will remark that the "Islamic Sciences" private university market share is 6.87% from the grand total of students enrolled for (PhD, Masters, and High Diploma) degrees, taking the lead of other Jordanian private universities in this category of enrolled students for the year 2014/2015.

This same private university (*The Islamic Sciences*) shows its leading position by having 34.66% as market share from total students enrolled for (PhD, Masters, and High Diploma) degrees in all Jordanian private universities for the same year 2014/2015. See Table (3).

3.2. Sampling Method and Research Tool

For this research sampling process was made by applying the recommended formula as shown in table (4):

Jordanian private universities (Administrative staff)	Jordanian private universities (Academic staff)	Grand total	Sample size
4426	3615	8041	258

Table 4: Study sample size calculation, based on working staff in Jordanian private universities for the year 2014 – 2015

Source: www.surveysystem.com

Where: Confidence level = 95%

Confidence interval = 6

Population = 8041

Number of distributed questionnaires	Number of received questionnaires	Number of valid received questionnaire=N	Percentage of recession
360	282	261	72.5%

Table 5: Study questionnaires distribution and recession process result

Table (5), shows that the observation unit of this research size is 261 respondents.

→ Study Sample (Respondents) profile:

→ Distribution of Study sample (respondents) by age:

Research Tool (Questionnaire), and Normality testing result

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov value	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value
Independent Variables:		
Strategic consensus	.687	.732
Structure	.656	.728
Culture	.1.732	.005
HR	.720	.677
(Internal)	.722	.675
(External)	1.000	.270
PESTEL	1.290	.072
Task environment	.826	.503
Dependent Variables:		
Financial	.910	.379
Customers	.841	.480
Int.-processes	1.105	.174
Learning and growth	.267	.071

Table 6: Research conceptual model data distribution Normality test, using "Kolmogorov-Smirnov/ one sample"

The "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" is used in this study to test the normal distribution of the data. It is found that Sig. value for each (Independent and dependent) variables is greater than 0.05, that means the data is normally distributed, as shown in table (6).

Research data processing and statistical techniques collected data through this study questionnaire is to be analyzed by using SPSS 23rd version as follows:

- Descriptive statistics: *frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation*, were used for describing respondent personal and professional profile; university characteristics, the degree of responses measurement (*mean*).
- Inferential statistics: *Pearson correlation coefficient, ANOVA analysis of variance, Multiple regression, Scheffe test, 2-way ANOVA*, are used to test this study hypothesis.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Study Sample Responses

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategic consensus	261	2.67	5.00	3.6654	.55277
Structure	261	2.63	5.00	3.7845	.46174
Culture	261	2.33	5.00	3.5109	.56272
HR	261	2.50	5.00	3.3908	.68117
Internal factors(sum)	261	3.00	5.00	3.6761	.44063
External Factors(sum)	261	1.50	5.00	2.2321	.85803
PESTEL	261	1.00	5.00	1.6137	1.01108
Task environment	261	1.67	5.00	2.8506	.82820
Financial	261	1.67	5.00	2.4364	.79968
Customers	261	1.86	5.00	2.7400	.74907
Internal. processes	261	2.00	5.00	2.6641	.71626
Learning & Growth	261	1.25	5.00	2.4167	.88931
Dep.	261	1.88	5.00	2.5676	.73984
Valid N = (list wise)	261				

Table 7: Distribution of Means and Standard Deviations of study sample responses about Independent and dependent research variables

Study sample responses with (*mean* value of 1.61). for the dependent variables translated by (financial, customers, internal-processes, learning and growth) as strategy implementation outcomes success indicators, they got a medium level of agreement within study sample responses, having a mean value between (2.41 up to 2.74).The independent variables translated by (Strategic consensus ,Structure ,Culture , HR) as internal factors; and(PESTEL ,and Task Environment , as external factors of strategy implementation process context :With (*mean* value between 1.6137 – 3.7845).See table (7).

The ranking of dependent variables, by degree of affect value is illustrated as in Table (8).

Rank	Success indicator	r	R square	F
1	Internal processes indicator	.931	.867	275.300
2	Financial	.875	.766	138.961
3	Customers / stakeholders indicator	.869	.755	130.310
4	Learning and growth indicator	.845	.714	105.576

Table8: The study's sum of independent variables:(strategy implementation process context factors affect-relationship with the Dependent variables: (strategy implementation outcomes success indicators), ranked by degree of (r) value]

From table (8), we can notice that the “internal-processes” has the top position, by having highest value of affect-relationship, the second position is the “Financial” perspective then the third and the fourth was for the: Customer, and the ‘Learning and growth’ perspectives successively.

5. Conclusions

Jordanian private universities demonstrate their awareness about the role of internal and external factors of their strategy implementing process context. Having a significant affect-relationship with strategy implementation outcomes success indicators: (Financial, Customers/stakeholders, Internal-processes, Learning and Growth). Jordanian private universities considered that independent and dependent variables of this study are correlated and all these correlations values are significant. However, these correlations are not of the same strength degree. The highest value of simple correlation (*PersonCorrelation*), value was between "University structure" as one of strategy implementation process context internal factors, and the "Financial perspective" as one of the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators. The lowest simple correlation (Person) value was between "HR training and Development" as one of the internal factors of Jordanian private universities strategy implementing process context internal factors, and "Learning and Growth" as one of the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators. The highest value of correlation was between "PESTEL" as one of the strategy implementing process context external factors, and "Internal-processes" as one of the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators. And the lowest correlation value was between "Task environment" as one of the strategy implementing process context external factors.

If we measure the affect-relationship (by block); between strategy implementing process context (the sum of internal and external) factors, and each of the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators, the results proved that the highest degree of affect-relationship was with "Internal-processes" as one of the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators, and the lowest degree of affect-relationship was with "Learning and Growth" as one of the strategy implementation outcomes success four indicators. Such a finding will lead to a conclusion that the inter-action between these internal and external factors can make changes in affect-relationship degree ranking between strategy implementing process context factors and the Jordanian strategy implementation outcomes success indicators.

Differences between organizations characteristics could not be negligible, while studying factors affecting strategy implementation outcomes success. In fact, this study proved by using 2-way ANOVA, and *Sheffes test*, that Jordanian private universities characteristics as modulator variables in its conceptual model, can explain variances in degree of affect-relationship between Jordanian private universities strategy implementing process context factors, and their strategies implementation outcomes success indicators.

This study, after establishing its conceptual framework model's validity and the availability of chosen independent variables in explaining 84.2% of the variations in the strategy implementation outcomes success indicators as dependent variables in the case of Jordanian private universities. In fact, our proposition is supported with three options:

- Option (1): the adoption of this study model with possibility of re-examining it in another socio-economic sector: (Industrial, educational, health care, financial-banks).
- Option (2): the possibility of re-combining variables used in this study model, to ensure its fitness with different aspects of strategy implementation.
- Option (3): the possibility of "Adding new variables that fits other aspects of strategy implementation process".

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