



Higher Education Strategic Planning

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Abstract

University education institutions play a central role in the progress and development of nations, due to their education aimed at preparing and training human energies that lead to social and economic development, and scientific research aimed at exploring the depths of knowledge and finding solutions to renewable needs, and serving the community aimed at meeting its requirements on the basis of Partnership with its institutions and individuals. As a result of the challenges faced by university education institutions during the previous decade in their internal and external environment, such as globalization, the information and communications revolution and the knowledge revolution, and in response to urgent challenges such as lack of financial support, rapid technical progress, and population changes, and the introduction of academic programs offered in universities, many universities turned to use Strategic planning to achieve beneficial strategic changes to accommodate and adapt to a rapidly changing environment. These challenges impose on university education to adapt itself develop its curricula and modify its methods according to it, and controlling universities in this way must have a scientific method and approach based on methods, entrances, methods, projection, prediction and others, that thought is strategic planning. whose task is not easy; Because under changing conditions and intertwined circumstances in place and time, it works in an atmosphere characterized by conflicts, resistances, tensions and uncertainty, and this led to the multiplicity of parties involved in the strategic planning process, which can be summarized in three: inputs - processes - outputs, and education planning is a rational process aimed at Specific social goals, and uses special means to achieve the goals, which is directed action that takes into account the available possibilities, and works to use them in the best use (1). As strategic planning has become the comprehensive view of all education problems, it is the primary tool and means of development, and it has a role in the growth of the economy and social life, as well as its role in the growth of culture and civilization in general. Therefore, countries resort to it; To search for guidance and solutions to the economic, political and social problems it faces (2). Strategic planning represents a next stage for the two quantitative and qualitative stages of the development of planning thought, which is planning based on calculating the changing environmental conditions and the needs of the labor market, taking into account the quality of society and life in it in the future. Its steps include: analyzing the elements of the internal and external surrounding environment, analyzing and determining the necessary resources (aids - facilities...etc), analyzing competitive opportunities, analyzing the sources of strength and weakness of the institution, formulating goals (currently and in the future) (3), and through Using the scientific method can develop plans and strategies, find alternatives to make decisions, solve new problems, analyze processes and quantitative and qualitative research methods (4) .

Keywords: *Higher Education: Strategic Planning*

Introduction///Research Problem

University education, like other aspects of human activity. Like other aspects of human activity, university education became very difficult to predict the future, and strategic planning became the effective means of integrity and maintaining movement in the right direction; As it is a continuous process through which university education can maintain the direction of its development in the future, by making changes (5) that are compatible with the rapid transformations in its internal and external environments.

The need for strategic planning has increased as a result of the development and modernization processes that universities are witnessing, and the problems and challenges they face related to several parts: the first of which is scientific research, which suffers from a lack of knowledge necessary to : conduct scientific research, and the absence of scientific cooperation between universities at the local and international levels, and the second is the teaching process ; It suffers from the stereotyping of curricula, the use of traditional teaching methods, and the third of which is community service; It suffers from weak interdependence between research carried out by faculty members and development plans, and a clear (6) separation between university faculties and many community institutions.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear that strategic planning is a necessity for university education, to achieve the desired development and to confront successive societal changes such as globalization communications revolution, technological revolution...etc. Therefore, the research problem can be crystallized in the following questions

- 1-What is the concept of strategic planning, and what are the terms associated with it?
- 2-What are the characteristics and objectives of strategic planning?
- 3-What is the importance of strategic planning and its benefits?
- 4-What are the justifications for the introduction of strategic planning in university education?
- 5-What is the relationship of strategic planning with other educational planning entrances?
- 6-What are the strategic planning processes?
- 7-What are the obstacles to applying strategic planning in university education?

Research Aims

The Research Seeks to Achieve the Following Objectives:

- 1- Understand the concept of strategic planning and the terminology associated with it.
- 2- Determine the characteristics and objectives of strategic planning.
- 3- Determine the importance and benefits of strategic planning.
- 4- Determining the justifications for the introduction of strategic planning in university education.
- 5- Presentation of the relationship of strategic planning with other educational planning entrances.
- 6- Dealing with strategic planning processes.
- 7- Determining the obstacles to applying strategic planning in university education.

Research Significant

The importance of the current research lies in its attempt to address an important issue in the sense that the developmental situation of any nation must be played by the university, in which it plays a major role. Where it is no longer seen that traditional view that it is a "scientific institution" only, but that it is also and with the same importance as an "economic institution", and this is what many developed and developing countries have noticed alike, and the importance of the current research crystallizes in:

- 1-The current research may open up wider horizons in the field of strategic planning; It is considered an extension of previous studies in the field of strategic planning for educational systems, and at the same time it is a prelude to other new studies. The current research may open up wider

prospects in the field of partnership; It is an extension of previous studies in this field, and at the same time it is a prelude to other new studies.

- 2-The current research may benefit each of the authorities concerned with planning university education and its institutions, and those in charge of its management; It contributes to crystallizing the concept of strategic planning, its importance and its operations...etc.

Research Methodology

Starting from the main objective of the research, which lies in addressing the strategic planning of university education, the research uses the descriptive approach; Identifying the concept of strategic planning and the terminology associated with it, identifying the characteristics and objectives of strategic planning, determining the importance and benefits of strategic planning, determining the justifications for introducing strategic planning in university education, presenting the relationship of strategic planning with other educational planning approaches, addressing strategic planning processes, and identifying obstacles to the application of strategic planning. in university education.

Strategic Planning Concept

Planning is the stage of thinking that precedes any work, and that ends with making decisions regarding what to do, how and when to do it. Planning is a series of decisions related to the future, as it (7) includes predicting what the future will be with preparation for this future. Strategic planning is a new thought in educational planning, and it includes a set of concepts in different fields, and accordingly, it is necessary to describe and analyze this thinking in planning through multiple visions; In order to be able to understand it, and from this point of view, a set of definitions will be presented in the various writings, which dealt with this method as follows:

Strategic planning is defined through four points, which are considered to cover the aspects included in this planning method, namely(8):

- 1-The future of current decisions: as strategic planning focuses on identifying the strengths and weaknesses that lie in the future. This is to find a basis on which the organization can rely in making current decisions that lead to taking advantage of the available opportunities and avoiding risks, and accordingly planning here means designing for the future and specifying the means to make it happen.
- 2-Planning as a process; Strategic planning is a process that begins with setting goals, then defining strategies, policies and detailed plans that include implementing the strategies in a way that leads to achieving the required goals. Or the entity that will undertake the implementation, and how to deal with the results, and this means that it is a process that runs on understandable grounds, but at the same time it is characterized by continuity, To contain the changes that may occur in the environment, although this does not mean changing plans every day, but when there is a necessity.
- 3-Planning as a philosophy; Planning is a direction and a way of life It focuses on performance based on the study and inspiration of the future, and it also focuses on the continuity of planning and not relying only on a fixed set of procedures and methods.
- 4-Planning as construction; Strategic planning works on linking three main types of plans: strategic plans, medium-term programs, short-term budgets, and procedural plans, with the aim of transforming their integration into current decisions. Altbach

Harry Cooper (2018) defines strategic planning as the method or means by which an institution or organization can identify relevant variables and trends within its surrounding environment, analyze potential outcomes, and build an integrated strategy to identify these future events and their emergency changes(9).

Diana Schelder (2017) sees strategic planning as the process capable of answering the following questions: What is the current state of the organization? What resources does the institution have? Where does the organization want us to be in the future? How does the institution get there(10)In other words, ? according to Diana Schielder's vision, strategic planning should provide a clear picture of what the system wants to achieve, provided that this picture is not static, but within a framework of organized change.

Alexandra Lerner (2015) defines strategic planning as: looking towards the future, focusing on the expected future. It is concerned with identifying the features of change in the world within 5 to 10 years, and aims to achieve the future of the organization based on what the features of this future should be, and is based on a comprehensive analysis of the expected trends and diverse and possible future scenarios, as well as depends on the analysis of internal and external data(11).

Strategic planning is also defined as a perceptive process through which an institute or institution can learn about the current situation and its potential future, and then develop strategies,policies and procedures, with the aim of selecting and implementing one or some of them. Strategic planning focuses on four aspects, which can be summarized as follows: dealing with the future, understanding the surrounding environment that surrounds the institution,determining the current strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and the ability to use the information collected in the previous three points to make appropriate decisions that lead to the well-being of the institution(12).

In the field of education, it is a planning that moves within a known time horizon ranging from five to ten years or a little more and ends with a strategic plan that includes a number of procedural and executive plans, and each of the plans has other backup plans; It can be used in times of crisis or when implementation conditions change, and here its flexibility and movement appears. It is also proceeding according to a rationalized process aimed at achieving the long-term tasks and goals of the educational system using certain strategies that do not use all available and expected human and non-human resources (13).

It is alsodefined it in the field of education as: a dynamic curriculum that deals with an open educational system far from equilibrium, and is carried out in the form of methods to monitor analyze and interpret the available and possible human and material educational capabilities and develop alternatives and options with their advantages and disadvantages in front of decision makers, and it takes place in the form of an orientation Democratic represented in the participation of all members of the educational institution in the planning process in all its stages(14).

Terms Related to Strategic Planning

The concept of strategic planning is one of a continuum of terms that express a logic or method of thinking that aims to rationalize the movement of a “system” towards the future, leading to increasing its relevance and development, while increasing its ability to contribute to development around it(15) .This series of terms are:

- Mission: The message is a language, it is not sent and is in one topic(16). And technically speaking, it is the main purpose for which the institution exists, and which it seeks to achieve(17).
- Vision: language, opinion: belief, reason, measure, consideration and meditation, and vision: what is seen in sleep(18),technically defined as the ambitions of the institution that cannot be achieved in light of the available capabilities, although it is possible to reach them in the long term(19).
- Objectives language: the end is the end and the other. The end of everything: its end and its , end. The purpose of the matter is the intended benefit(20) .They are the sites or situations that the institution wants to access in the future, and usually come within the limits of the task, and translate them in a more detailed and specific way in words and numbers without linking them to a specific time range, but at the same time they are not in the degree of detail or specificity that appears in the objectives direct(21).

- **Strategy:** It is a word used in military life, and its connotations evolved until it became the art of military leadership in the face of difficult circumstances, then moved to other social, political, economic and educational fields. It is a set of ideas and principles that deal with a field of human knowledge in a comprehensive and integrated manner that proceeds towards achieving certain goals and identifies the methods and means that help them achieve these goals, and then sets the appropriate evaluation methods to identify the extent of their success and achievement of the goals that were set before(22) .It is also defined as the general direction or path taken by the organization to reach its goal. There are many ways to reach a goal, and from here comes a variety of strategic alternatives for each goal, and the comparison and selection of these alternatives comes according to criteria, including: the available capabilities and conditions, potential obstacles, cost, speed of reaching the goal, and expected returns.The preferred strategy may be a combination of a number of strategies, or a sequential series of a number of strategies (stage strategy), eg strategies by which primary education can be generalized as an end(23).
- **(Direct) goals:** the specific or specific points - in time and achievement - along the achievement of the goals sought by the institution, and their formulation in most cases comes in a quantitative manner; To be measurable, and to be achieved through programmes, projects and activities for which they are designed(24).
- **Programs and Projects** It is a set of activities that have been selected, organized, formulated or : designed in groups of projects,each of which serves a goal or an interrelated number of goals on the one hand, and specific resources are identified for its implementation on the other hand.Programs with this content are the means and mechanisms, or as some call them the techniques that the institution uses to move towards its goals and objectives(25).
- **Resources:** It is the driving force of programs or projects on the course of the institution or its way of working in order to achieve its goals, purpose and mission. It is usually classified into financial and human resources (skills) available and expected, and there are those who add to it other sections such as: the extent of scientific and technological progress, the prevailing values in the society in which the institution is located, popular support for this institution, and enthusiasm for its goals, purpose and mission(26).
- **Strategies of Implementation,**They include: detailed procedures related to the implementation of programs and projects, and the related identification of starting points and responsibilities in locations and at different levels, procedural steps, means of implementation,methods of supervision, evaluation and follow-up, and detailed procedures related to gaining the support of employees in the institution and its contacts. plan, and motivate them to make it a success(27),
- **Contingency Plans:** These are plans that are resorted to in the event that signs appear - during implementation - that change the image of the future and the related forces, factors, and postulates, or the occurrence of sudden events (regional wars, scientific discoveries, technological inventions, etc.), that are not were not expected in advance when designing the original plans(28).

Characteristics and Objectives of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning as a new planning thought has a set of characteristics that distinguish it, and the practitioners' awareness of the planning process for these characteristics and not neglecting them in the stages of the planning process reflects positively on the effectiveness of planning, and then on the performance of the institution. Among the most important of these characteristics are the following)29(:

- 1-The strategic planning process revolves around the objectives, and the precise description of the objectives is the basic premise of the planning process; It is the essence of the process of evaluation, comparison and selection between alternatives to achieve goals. The lack of complete clarity of the goals and objectives makes the plan ineffective, and therefore the lack of clarity of work priorities, programs and tasks, and the absence of indicators for measuring performance, evaluating the results and comparing them with the goals set.

- 2-The effectiveness of planning is affected by the extent of integration and interdependence of the components of the plan, and it follows that the planning process is a complex system of many components represented in the objectives, policies, rules, programs and standards.
- 3-The imperative of objectivity and the scientific approach to the effectiveness of strategic planning,through a commitment to logical and objective analysis of situations and variables and identifying trends. Effective planning cannot be based on descriptive approaches and emotional considerations without rational standards. Achieving objectivity and the scientific method requires achieving an acceptable degree of balance between the formal and informal aspects of planning.
- 4-The strategic planning process is an integrated system with its inputs,processes and outputs; Where the inputs are the planning requirements,whether they are physical, human or informational,while the planning system operations include all the activities of compilation,analysis, interpretation and determining the relationships and trends of the variables, and its outputs are the identified and formulated goals, policies, plans, programs and standards, and the components of the planning system are like any other asystem does not operate independently or separately, but the final output of planning processes depends on the interaction and mutual influence between the components of the system.
- 5-The reciprocal effect between the planning process and the characteristics of the environment, the planning process cannot be exercised in isolation from the environmental conditions in which the organization operates; Where one of the basic objectives of the planning process is to achieve a degree of environmental suitability for the objectives and directions of the institution.
- 6-The effectiveness of the monitoring and control process is the basis for the effectiveness of the strategic planning system; It consists of planning, follow-up and control, the institution's means of moving and moving from a current situation to a targeted and planned situation.
- 7-The dependence of the planning process on the information system,and each stage of planning has its degree of dependence on information, and through information and its availability, a high level of performance and satisfactory results are achieved.

Andrew Peterson (2018) indicated that the strategic planning process is a process(30)

- Learning provides the opportunity for participants to understand more fully what they are striving to achieve, and when and how it can be done.
- Discovery; Because through it, unknown opportunities and solutions can be identified.
- Openness to different perceptions and concepts, which represent the basis for finding different solutions to various problems.
- Focus on important strategic matters, which require separating strategic issues from other issues.
- It includes the decision-maker, by selecting the most suitable alternative from among the available alternatives, supporting priorities and available resources, evaluating each group of interrelated decisions, and supporting high-quality operations such as the high-risk plan.
- organization of efforts; To implement the decisions, taking into consideration the available institutional resources and capabilities.
- Adopting a realistic view of expectations, and an appreciation of contingencies and changes; Where these processes are characterized by flexibility, drawing clear links between the outputs of one stage,which represent the main inputs to the next stage or more.
- Setting goals and arranging them in a logical manner, determining the extent to which the goals are compatible and related to each other,taking into account the need for goals to follow logically over time and creativity and response rather than interactive ones.

In light of these characteristics, the objectives of strategic planning are summarized in(31):

- 1-Facing change in the organization's work environment; Where the planning process aims at the systematic description of the work environment of the institution and the development of

strategies for effective dealing with it, and the development of the institution's capabilities to identify, analyze and evaluate opportunities and challenges and develop ways to effectively deal with them, and strengthen the ability of the institution to identify its strengths and weaknesses and determine the requirements for effective dealing with them, and provide flexibility for the institution To adapt to unexpected changes, and provide tools for forecasting and estimating the trends of the elements of the organization's work environment.

- 2-Determining directing the strategic paths of the institution, by formulating and developing the institution's mission and objectives, defining and directing the course of action in it, formulating strategic goals and objectives while providing requirements for improving performance and achieving growth and progress, ensuring that strategic objectives are linked to the aspirations of higher management and the interests of the members of the institution, and directing resources and capabilities to economic uses. And directing research efforts to develop the performance of the institution and achieve the coherence between the mission and objectives and what is set by policies, rules and work systems.
- 3-Developing and improving the performance of the institution, by identifying the main characteristics of the internal work environment of the institution; Which helps it to achieve its goals and mission, support the high performance of individuals and work groups evaluate low performance and provide requirements for its improvement, ensure continuous follow-up to the elements of the work environment and identify ways to develop them, provide requirements for supporting positive relations and fruitful communication between the institution and the external parties related to it, and strengthen the elements of its survival its continuity and growth.
- 4-Developing the organization's administrative system, by providing the appropriate organizational climate for generating innovative ideas, providing educational opportunities and organizational and administrative updating, and strengthening the flexibility of procedures and freedom of action, in a way that provides the ingredients for achieving the planned accomplishments and goals, and facilitating administrative communications between members, work groups and organizational units within the institution, and identifying The rules, policies and administrative systems that facilitate the achievement of the goals and mission of the institution, and focus on providing the appropriate general framework for follow-up, control and evaluation according to sound foundations to preserve the resources and capabilities of the institution, and to ensure that they are used to achieve the planned accomplishments and goals.

The Importance and Benefits of Strategic Planning

The importance of strategic planning lies in its focus on the effective link between the organization and its surrounding environment in a way that ensures its success in achieving its mission, and this is due to the existence of a general agreement among leaders and experts that strategic planning is a critical component of good management and governance, and strategic planning helps organizations understand the needs of achieving various goals, Implementation plans, and often long-range planning - planning for a period of one or two years - is difficult to implement and lower in return, and strategic planning is very important planning in a changing environment(32).

The Benefits of Strategic Planning Can Be Summarized in:

- 1-The fruitful orientation and better investment of efforts and resources, and the strengthening of the role of governments and relevant institutions in setting priorities according to a systematic scientific study.
- 2-Identify areas of change and challenges facing educational systems, develop appropriate solutions to address them, and help devise new ways and mechanisms of action that improve performance.
- 3-Determining the basic issues that constitute the core of the educational work, making decisions commensurate with the issues raised in the educational work, and defining procedural goals for

educational and educational programs and the specific jobs and responsibilities of each member of the institution.

- 4-Develop a vision for the future of the institution by revealing the reality of the educational institution's potential and available resources, and bringing educational institutions to a high level towards achieving its goals and mission, and working to bring about appropriate positive change to achieve the educational message towards students, the environment and society.
- 5-Constant focus on the basic issues related to the educational institution's reality and its future, and reaching strategic decisions at times when the educational institution is exposed to potential internal and external challenges in the future.
- 6-Emphasizing the importance of participation and cooperation between members of the educational community and the local community; To achieve the goals of the institution, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses in educational institutions through continuous measurement, evaluation and follow-up processes.

Justifications for the Introduction of Strategic Planning in University Education

There are many external challenges and internal forces that push universities to adopt strategic planning, including: the increase in demand for university education, the decrease in government funding for university education, the change in student demographics, and the need to compete with new models of university education while trying to maintain the spirit of the traditional comprehensive form For the university, strategic planning can help the university to face such challenges(34).

Six types of environmental challenges can be identified that may negatively affect university education institutions, and make them urgently need to adopt strategic planning; To face the processes of change and dynamics brought about by these challenges, as follows(35):

- 1- The population environment, and what is characterized by change, whether increasing or declining in age groups at the level of a single country and between countries in age groups.
- 2- The economic environment, including changes in production costs and rates, energy costs, the state of markets and employment.
- 3- The political environment, including the interest of officials and political leaders in accounting, how the money is spent and the extent of the return achieved.
- 4- The environment of institutions, and the competition it includes between private and governmental educational institutions over funding sources and students.
- 5- social environment; As the spread of concepts of acceptance democracy, and the increased competition among students in recent years for access to education, has made the social environment more complex.
- 6- technological environment; As the technological challenge has a significant impact on the way educational institutions follow in the education process, modern technology such as: laser disks, and communication systems such as: cables, satellites and computers may help to change the nature of education from the traditional form of classrooms that depend on communication Direct interaction between teacher and learner to other forms of education.

Strategic Planning and Other Educational Planning Approaches

Despite the multiple approaches to education planning, there are three main approaches to planning education, which are common: the social demand approach, the cost/benefit approach, and the labor force approach, and they can be addressed as follows:

- Social Demand Approach:

Maximum education for the largest number of people" is the slogan that summarizes the " philosophy of this entry. This slogan is not easy to implement, especially with limited resources.This

planning approach seeks to take into account the explicit/implicit needs for the development of individuals, universities and social classes in rural areas. UNESCO calls this entrance as the (socio-cultural) entrance. The planning of education within the framework of this approach stems from the paramount importance of education in social progress, political development and economic growth, through: strengthening political affiliation to the homeland, preserving the unity of the state, developing social and cultural values, preparing forces that stimulate creativity and innovation, identifying individuals' talents, developing their capabilities and increasing their skills. And due to the increase in social demand for education, educational systems cannot meet this demand. However education systems must ensure equal opportunities for all(36).

- Cost-benefit input Cost - Benefit Approach :

Numerous researches and studies have confirmed that education has an economic return that exceeds the volume of expenditure on it. Many countries have tried to identify the role of education in economic development through the cost-benefit approach. The use of this approach in planning education requires familiarity with the methods of calculating the direct and indirect costs of education, as well as the methods of calculating its returns to the individual and society. Among the common methods and methods in measuring the economic return of education: the residual method, the direct measurement method, the method of correlation between educational progress and economic growth, and the method of forecasting the needs of the labor force. Each of these methods has its drawbacks and advantages, and whatever methods are used in calculating the economic return, there are data that need to be provided, the most important of which are: the number of individuals in educational levels and different stages, the educational level of individuals and the incomes they obtain, school expenses, educational buildings and equipment, and data on the labor market(37).

- manpower entrance Manpower Requirement approach:

This approach is concerned with providing the manpower necessary to meet the needs of the labor market and the production sector (ie, it links education and the labor market). This approach is based on matching the volume of production in a sector with a number of qualified manpower. Hence, when planning education, the needs of the different sectors of qualified workforce should be taken into consideration in the short, medium and long term. The educational needs for economic development (the labor market) are estimated according to this approach in light of the following stages(38):

- 1- Inventory of the prevailing conditions in the base year (the year of the start of the plan).
- 2- Forecasting the labor needs during the plan years.
- 3- Employment evaluation according to task and positions.
- 4- Translate needs into educational goals.

As for the inventory of the prevailing conditions, it is necessary to study the conditions of the population according to age, sex occupation, economic activity, unemployment, employment and residence. For forecasting labor needs, mathematical methods and statistical models are used, including: international comparison, productivity method, and economic indicators. As for evaluating employment by occupation, there is no unique methodology that guarantees the accuracy of estimates by occupation; As it depends on the nature of employment in each sector, international comparison, extrapolation and productivity can be used in the estimates for evaluating employment by occupation, and for translating needs into educational goals (calculating educational goals based on the needs of the workforce), which is the final stage in an educational plan based on an entrance The workforce, and these needs are translated into numbers accepted by the educational system according to student flows. Graduation takes place in the light of the rates (enrollment - failure - dropout), and expectations of graduates in different disciplines are calculated. When individuals are identified, they must be enrolled in education during the years of the plan(39) .

A Critical View of Common Approaches to Education Planning

With regard to the entrance to social demand, there are some aspects of criticism, the most important of which is the difficulty of achieving this increasing demand, especially in higher education, with the lack of funding sources and their insufficiency; Which reduces the adequacy of this education, and this approach requires great capabilities. To provide education for all, and perhaps this is what some have called for launching Education in Austerity On planning for education (40).

As for the cost-benefit approach, it faces problems related to measurement and calculating the rate of return, especially since the basic idea in measuring the return depends on the fact that the differences between education levels reflect a disparity in the return among learners. The problem is that the disparity in the level of education may not be the decisive factor in the disparity in the value of the return on education. There is the individual's level of intelligence and his social and economic level...etc. There is also a problem related to the cost of the "opportunity" for the student during the years of schooling; As it is not taken into account when calculating the return, and its calculation is not easy. Also, education expenses in return for the economic return, indirect expenses may be omitted (as the family bears part of the children's education expenses).

As for the entrance to the workforce, there are objections facing education planning according to this approach, the most important of which is that economic goals are not the only goals of education, there are socio-cultural goals that must be taken into account when planning. Also among these considerations is that this approach may be reduced to just establishing a balance between supply and demand from the labor force(41).

Strategic Planning Processes

There is no single method that is considered the best approach to strategic planning. Strategic planning can be conducted at all levels, starting with a university, or an educational system, and ending with society as a whole. Successful strategic planning can answer four main questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be in the future? How do we get there? How can we measure our progress (42)?

The Pennsylvania Center for Quality and Planning(1999) identified the main stages of strategic planning in(43):

First Step: Planning

This step is a critical first step for the organization. Through it, the institution assesses its readiness to use strategic planning, and to design planning processes that are compatible with its purposes, resources and political environment.

Before beginning the first steps of planning, leaders must reach agreement on: the purpose and need to achieve the goal, the organization's readiness in aspects related to personnel, financial resources, general culture, the principle of commitment, reporting formats, and the exact time for submission of each of the reports needed during the process. planning, steps/processes; To make the application path clear and to follow the steps in a logical manner, and the institutional regulations; In order to implement strategic planning processes.

Most of the common institutional organizations are based on the formation of a coordinating committee responsible for supervision and decision-making, while task groups work to present recommendations to the coordinating committee based on a deep study of the topics of interest.

Step Two: Gain and Support Commitment:

In this step, the main participants in the planning and implementation process are identified: legislators, leaders, government employees, or citizens. Among the ways that may be used for the participation of different groups of the intended community from the planning process in the strategic planning processes, are the following:

- Surveys, media announcements, and public meetings to describe strategic planning processes.
- Meetings and meetings with different groups, identification of working groups, and periodic publications.
- Establishing offices for guidance and counseling, and answering various inquiries.

In order to achieve the commitment of the groups participating in the planning and implementation processes, it is necessary to: Continuously emphasize the necessity of the commitment of the members of the organization in general, and the planning team in particular, and to set a work schedule with a specific time, and to set real and appropriate expectations for the participants in the planning process, and to use opportunities to achieve success, and follow-up and continuous communication Between the planning team, and link the institution to the surrounding environment.

The Third Step: Analyzing The Needs and Desires of the Beneficiaries of the Institution's Services:

Where the institution must take into account the needs and desires of the beneficiaries of its services. This means the need to take the advice and guidance of the beneficiaries in the planning process, and it is necessary for them to participate in the development of the institution's mission, vision and values, as well as they can help identify the gap between expectations and the current performance of the institution.

Fourth Step: Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses in the Performance of the Organization, and the Opportunities and Challenges Surrounding Them:

To develop a realistic plan; The strengths and weaknesses in the performance of the institution must be identified, as well as an analysis of the external environment; To identify opportunities and challenges that may face the organization's work in the future. The examination of strengths and weaknesses should focus on topics such as: the organization's structure, its culture, its employees, and its financial condition. The sources of obtaining information for conducting the examination process include: employee surveys, beneficiary surveys, political development file, internal databases, annual reports, budget requirements, program evaluation, and internal plans.

As for the analysis of the internal environment, it is considered one of the important and distinctive features of strategic planning. It works to determine whether the institution performs in light of past trends, current reality and future possibilities or not.

Among the strong factors that may affect the organization are demographic changes, economic conditions, organizational changes, and technological developments. Sources of obtaining information include: government statistical databases and reports, government legislation, laws, budgets, political statements, special studies, and information centers in colleges and universities.

Step Five: Setting the Strategic Direction:

Determining the strategic direction helps define the identity of the organization, defines what the organization is, and what it seeks to achieve; It helps the organization in: setting priorities among the multiple requests and goals, judging how to handle and carry out various tasks building a spirit of

teamwork and raising morale among employees, and acquiring the long-term view needed to achieve real change in the organization's current situation.

Defining the vision is defined as “a visualization of an attractive, reliable and realistic future.” There are many approaches to developing vision statements, including: reviewing the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, conducting brainstorming sessions, drawing a planning vision for the future, and envisioning the future through the participation of institutions community, drawing on the reports of planning committees, and the completed tasks they contain, and drawing on visions developed by other institutions.

The development of the organization's vision is linked to the development of the mission, and a good message must answer the following questions: Who are we? And who do we serve? what is the And main purpose for which we exist? what are the problems and difficulties for which we were founded? And we striving to achieve are What And what makes us unique and unique?

Determining the vision and mission of the institution is also related to determining the values of the institution, they are the principles that guide the behavior of the institution, and the expressions of values are defined in the form of topics: mutual respect between service providers and beneficiaries, ethical standards regulating dealing, equal opportunities policies, and emphasis on distinguished services.

Sixth Step: Identifying Strategic Topics:

Strategic topics represent the determinant of the future of the organization, so they must be arranged logically; To enable the organization to carry out its mission. In order for the organization to define and distinguish its strategic themes, it needs to answer the following questions: What is the topic?, and why does it represent a topic? who said that it is a subject?, and how do we know that it is a And , subject? what factors made it a strategic issue And? can the foundation do something about it And? And what are the consequences of not registering this topic?

Step Seven: Develop Objectives and Objectives Performance Measures:

Objectives are one of the main tools needed to determine the direction of the organization towards the future. Objectives are general, subject-oriented statements that focus actions towards achieving a specific and clear purpose. The goals are usually linked to strategic topics such as education and public health. When goal statements are developed, the following questions should be taken into consideration:

- 1- Are the objectives consistent with the institution's legislative framework, vision, mission and values?
- 2- Does achieving goals help achieve the vision and mission?
- 3- Do the objectives reflect strategic issues and priorities?
- 4- Do the goals provide clear directions for action?
- 5- Are long-term goals not limited by time?

The next step is to define the objectives, which are defined as “measurable interim steps towards the achievement of the organization's vision and long-term goals”. They are directly related to the objectives, and they are measurable; Where it focuses on the results of the performance of the enterprise at the end of the period specified for the implementation of the plan, and the criteria for writing the purposes are:

- 1- specific; It reflects the tasks to be performed, not the methods (strategies) used to achieve it.
- 2- measurable; Objectives must be measurable, as they represent the means by which performance is measurable.

- 3-Powerful but attainable. Objectives represent criteria for progress, and therefore must be challenging the capabilities of the institution, but realistically and within the institution's ability to deliver.
- 4-The results wave, it should be specific to the results and outputs, not the ways to achieve them.
- 5-Time-limited, each goal must specify a time for its completion.

Of course, setting goals and objectives will be insufficient without identifying the mechanisms for evaluating progress that help in correcting and adjusting in a timely manner. Successful strategic planning processes are based on accounting, and performance measurement must be part of the strategic plan and used to evaluate performance towards achieving goals and objectives.

Eighth step: Defining Strategies and Action Plans:

The next step, after defining the destination, is deciding how to reach it. Strategies are means to accomplish goals and objectives. More than one strategy may be used to accomplish each objective. The specific and available strategies must therefore be reviewed; To ensure that it corresponds to all the goals and objectives previously defined, and its effectiveness by identifying the strategies used by another organization to achieve similar goals, and can they be modified or added to them to improve their effectiveness? Evaluating the available strategies helps to narrow the space for choice and comparison. When making the evaluation, the following must be taken into account:

- 1-Does the strategy reflect the institution's legislative framework, vision,mission and values?
- 2-Is the strategy clearly linked to the achievement of the stated goals and objectives?
- 3-Is the strategy realistic so that political considerations determine the workforce and costs?
- 4-Is the strategy technically practical?
- 5-Will the strategy be accepted by the beneficiaries?
- 6-Is the strategy compatible with other strategies used?

Step Nine: Implementation of the Plan:

If the appropriate strategy is chosen, implementation plans should be developed; To provide details of the implementation of the strategic plan, and implementation plans should specify: tasks of the work team (staff), implementation steps, work schedule and implementation deadlines, cost and expenditure information, and funding sources.

The Tenth Step: Performance Measurement/Results Evaluation:

Evaluation represents the feedback loop in strategic planning processes, complementing the cycle that begins with planning and ends with performance. It should be noted that there are three different types of monitoring and evaluation, they are:

- 1-Performance Monitoring: Performance must be monitored and reported regularly and at frequent intervals. Regular monitoring not only helps to identify the locations of problems, but also works to show the strength of the strategy and its usefulness. This type of monitoring must include answering the following questions:
 - Is the organization progressing towards achieving its vision?
 - Is the organization carrying out its mission?
 - Does the organization act in ways that are consistent with its values?
 - Does the institution meet the expectations of the beneficiaries?
- 2-Process Monitoring: Implementation processes must also be monitored and evaluated. In doing so, the following questions must be asked and answered:

- Is the situation we are now better than before the introduction of the principle of planning?
- Will doing the planning process again get us where we are? And if so, what did we change?
- Have the beneficiaries become part of the work team? How do we support this relationship?

3-Monitoring the environment: the external world and the surrounding environment are constantly changing, and monitoring the external environment needs regular and continuous tasks, which makes the organization aware of the changes taking place in various fields and various technologies, and since strategic planning depends on the analysis of the external environment to identify opportunities and challenges; Changes in that environment may affect the implementation of the plan used.

Obstacles to Applying Strategic Planning in University Education

The challenges facing the adoption of strategic planning in Arab educational institutions can be summarized as follows (44):

- The lack of Arabic writings that dealt with this method until recently.
- There is a lot of foreign literature that has dealt with this method, but the majority of these writings focus on providing specific rules for its application, and provide little about the main element on which the process depends.
- This method is still in its early stages. It was only applied a few years ago in the educational field and has not yet been subjected to the test of time in order to put a specific definition in the field of education.

Among the obstacles facing the use of strategic planning as well (43):

- 1-Difficulty developing a strategic planning system.
- 2-Difficulty collecting and analyzing information and data to develop a strategic plan.
- 3-Weak budget and resources of the institution, and the lack of multiple sources to improve its financial position.
- 4-Strategic planning requires a large amount of time and cost as a result of discussions to develop a vision, which needs a large amount of time, and the need to provide a huge amount of data and information that needs high costs.

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