

Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.5, No.9

Publication Date: Sep. 25, 2018

DoI:10.14738/assrj.59.5159.

Tamimi, S. A. A., Khalil, S., & Abdullah, H. H. (2018). Applications Of Strategic Management Practices In Public Sector: Cases From Some Middle East Countries. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(9) 36-51.



Applications Of Strategic Management Practices In Public Sector: Cases From Some Middle East Countries

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to investigate Strategic Management (SM) practice in Public Organizations (POs) within some Middle East (MEt) countries. This is an archival-desktop research paper reviewing available literature on SM in the last two decades. Fundamentally, this paper posts a question of; “How do POs in MEt countries practice SM?” The answer of this investigation is being based on the extent of the available literature from SM theory and application within public sector in some MEt countries. This paper is one of the first attempts to analysis and interpret SM practices within MEt region. This analysis used content analyses techniques, the researcher found four variables that contribute in the effectiveness of SM existence conditions within POs. These variables are; public reform, and SM elements (strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation) situations and challenges. Finally, this paper discussed the implication and lessons learned for improvement. Findings indicate that even though there are some countries practice SM in this area in various degrees, but it also shows that most of these countries are struggling in practicing SM for various reasons. While, results showed a positive impact of SM tools practices on POs performance. Outcomes also indicate that there are other issues needs to be considered in these countries which are public-reforms and decentralization successes within POs in each case. However, relying on data from literature review limits the in-depth discussion but at least offer critical analysis on achievements of SM implementation in MEt countries.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, it has been noticed that many MEt countries tend to adopt SM concepts within their public organizations for several motives and reasons. In an overview of the current situation in some MEt countries (United Arab Emirate, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Sultanate Oman), it can be said they might have various drives, but mostly concentrated to overcome the economic decline, needs to perform in a business-like model, and to face rapid changes public sector upcoming challenges within MEt Region (OECD, 2010).

MEt countries had been facing many changes where some are disposing unique characteristics to themselves. Countries such as Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco are experiencing some public reforms, but still suffering many other public administrations issues (Devarajan, 2016). Similarly, rich oil countries within this region are also experiencing similar challenges or problematic administrations issues. While, Polidano and Hulme (1999) concluded that in developing countries public reform normally fails, which cause serious problems in POs

managements systems. Indeed, POs long-standing management strategies in this area is more complicated and suffering from many difficulties and shortfalls, Actually they suffer from various difficulties and challenges in their public administrative issues, such as poor productivity, corruption, and lack of development (OECD, 2010), which implicates the needs for SM practices in POs to face these issues.

POs managements always need some changes or reforms as their working conditions has a changing nature. Though, private sector in MEt countries has succeeded to adapt many changes to accommodate upcoming changes within its working environment and succeeded to embrace SM much earlier than their public sector counterpart. This due to some realities facing their survival or development, but with less urgency for the public sector. While, SM plays a vital role in the organizations future, and it deals more effectively with these realities and working environment variables (Hunger & Whaleen, 2003). This management system uses current trends to foresee the future for all organizations.

While, SM in public sector is based on the organizations pre-conditions or suitable reforms. Though, it consolidates the organizations objectives and formulate their strategies to survive fluctuating conditions (Durh & Judh, 2012). That supports the successive management operations such as the implementations and evaluations of all organizations managements actions and activities. This process increases the POs performance effectiveness and efficiency. SM is a set of decisions and actions implemented in subsequent phases designed to achieve the organization objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 2000). So, SM is the art and science of POs strategic decisions initiation and structure, because SM mechanisms promote managers long-term vision and create effective decision-making process conditions, and SPing process constructs the organizations strategy to assure POs stability and dependency at long run.

Considering the fact that POs in MEt countries are unique and vary in their management characteristics for different reasons. SM characteristics are demanded to be highlighted in this paper. As, current global and regional conditions facing MEt countries require some SM aspects to be adopted. On this basis, the author uses content analysis to find variables that describe the practice of SM applications by POs in MEt countries. The researcher examined the available published literature in Middle East countries through official universities websites and some known journals websites, he examined all available literature regarding public administrations related to the foundations of SM and its existed tools and techniques within public-sector in MEt region. The researcher identified four main variables contribute in the effectiveness of SM applications and enhance POs performance. These variables are public-sector reforms, strategic planning, strategy implementation, and evaluation.

This paper tries to answer an important question; "How do POs in MEt countries practice SM?". This study will investigate the main components of SM practices(Formulation, Implementation, and evaluation) and some of its foundations for SM occurrences. This paper reviewed the available published SM literature in the last 20 years. Also, it analyses some other related literature to draw better conclusions. Relevant literature review is fundamental for any research paper (Sekaran, 2003), it facilitates the creation of the foundations of the current article. An effective critical review creates a solid foundation for any article and very essential for knowledge building (Webster & Watson, 2002).

PUBLIC REFORM AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Government reform can be defined as the identification and classification and distribution of all government tasks and roles to all government organizations to enhance their complementarity work, and to address the overlaps and duplication in the implementation of

the required tasks to grantee the execution of all necessary activities to achieve the PO objectives, it also define the responsibility of implementation for each set of activities to ensure the implementation of all organization strategy aspects; technical, managerial and organizational levels (Instructions Guide for Government Organizations Reform In Jordan, 2015). Thus, public reform is not just to make POs more efficient, but to build some SM capabilities. As, POs reform creates the proper conditions for the organizations SPing and strategic decisions making capabilities, which are essential SM tools. SM can be defined as a continuous series of decisions and actions that lead to the development and formulation of the appropriate POs strategy, also the implementation and evaluated of this strategy in light of the POs environmental variables analysis. It is an integrated system of interrelated processes, activities, and decisions related to the POs working conditions analysis.

In 1950s SM was first used in public-sector, where it was widely applied in Western countries, then quickly moved to developing countries (Magrebi, 1999). The term "strategy" was initially used in military operations, means a plan. After then, this term was imported to businesses in late 20th century, where strategy is acceptably used to refer to a plan for interacting with the organizations environments to achieve its objectives (Daft and Willmott, 2010; Paret& Gilbert, 1986). SM is not about planning and strategy formulation only. Though, it assisted businesses to asses all possibilities, but it deals with potentials before occurrences and enable organizations to adapt and interact with them (Durh, & Judh, 2012). It helped businesses victories and sustainability because it deals with businesses strategy. Strategy is the cornerstone of SM system in all organizations, whether its military or private or public. Hence its importance came from its essential role for organizations success, stability, and capabilities enhancement (Hunger, Whaleen, 2011).

Nevertheless, SM had shaped public-sector with a strong positive impact on various aspects of this sector performance, it also generated many changes across POs to enhance their performance (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Andrews, Boyne, Law, & Walker. 2012). While, the drive for worldwide public reforms is the performance of POs (Kloot& Martin, 2000; Meier, O'Toole, Boyne& Walker, 2006). However, SM had been triggered long time ago, but it is relatively new in public sector. While, all forms of public sector modifications (New Public Management (NPM), Collaborative Management (CB), Decentralization, and E-government and others) have contributed in establishing the foundations of SM (Ansell & Gash, 2008), and SM existence had dramatically grown within this sector over the past few years (Andrews, Boyne, Law& Walker, 2011; Elbanna, 2013; Elbanna, Fadol, 2016; Kay, McKiernan, & Faulkner, 2003; Ketchen, Boyd& Bergh, 2008; Johnsen, 2016). SM had become an important part of the administrative system thinking process in both sectors public or businesses. This process includes strategy identification, design, implementation, and evaluation, which constitutes the organization SM (Ktameen, 2009). In businesses SM seeks to increase profitability, while in POs it seeks to increase the value of the organization through the effectiveness of its activities and performance efficiency (Bryson, 1999; Moore, 1995).

Interestingly, from political standpoint, Rosenberg and Ferlie (2016) noted that public organizations are more influenced by political scenarios. Yet, SM activities considered many factors including political factors. SM considers and incorporates all external and internal factors regardless the nature of the organization involved (Poister& Streib, 1999). Thus, SM in POs administration make them compatible with their national priorities, by increasing their adaptation and interaction with their working environments issues, it improves public managers ability to respond to these environments influences, and contributes in the development, and growth of future ideas (Al-Salm, 2005; Poister& Streib, 1999; Durh& Judh, 2012). SM coordinates and unify all departments efforts to improve the organizations long-

term performance and reduces the rejection of changes by enhancing stakeholders' participation (Hunger & Whalen, 2011).

SM APPLICATIONS IN SOME MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

In MEt area, most countries have done several public administration reforms and tried to adapt decentralization concept in some of their POs or institutions. Although, both reforms and decentralization conversion meant to develop public sectors performance and adopt modern management practices depends strategic planning and POs performance evaluation and monitoring, but both processes were not the end objectives. These management means had increased public management efficiency and reduced some public-sector old fashion problematic issues. Yet, decentralization and reforms changes were labelled to create more suitable conditions for SM applications (Plant, 2009). Therefore, the researcher considered these two concepts or variables as an essential foundation for SM practice in POs. Thus, while these two concepts emphasize more autonomy POs officials decisions, they resolve POs decisions complexity and increase the speed rate required for some public decisions, though this process should enhance POs transparency and accountability.

Consequently, these reforms or changes in POs management indicted that countries are interested in some aspects of SM within this sector. Whereas, all countries in this region are interested in SM within business sector. In fact, most businesses now are interested in worldwide environment and competition, but public organizations still struggling with these issues. However, public sector had taken many steps forward (Elbanna, 2013). Therefore, the researcher measured the effectiveness of SM practice through the challenges facing its main elements existence within these countries, and those important steps toward SM effectiveness which are public reforms and decentralizations changes.

The researcher presented the collected results and their analyses country by country in the following paragraphs. Elbanna (2013) examined SM process and its impact on (UAE) public organizations performance, based on his analysis there is a regular and standard practice of SM within UAE POs, and it has a positive impact on these organizations performance. Some of these results contradict Al-Shaikh (2001) previous conclusions within the same sector in this country. However, Elbanna indicated that UAE public sector has been reformed many times to encounter upcoming challenges in the last few years. Elbanna (2013) argued that SM can be practiced through three stages "plan to archive, plan to act, and plan to act effectively and positively impact on organizational performance and the quality of public services" (p. 428). His study showed that SM elements had a positive impact on POs performance, and it improves the government services capability. Moreover, he found that SPing and balanced scorecard tools were mostly used as a SM framework.

Also, Elbanna and Fadol (2016) exhibited that the comprehensiveness of SM implementation is obviously affected by three major factors; strategy formulation, managers participation, and political behavior or government policy. Also, their results demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between the comprehensiveness of SM implementation and the effectiveness of strategy formulation, which lead to more effectiveness and efficiency in the PO performance. This result support Katheeri (2016) study on semi-government organizations in UAE ; He founds that there is a positive relationship between organizations performance and SM elements practice (strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation). These results came in line with other studies perspectives findings from other part of the world (Andrews, Boyne & Walker, 2006; Andrews, Boyne, Law & Walker, 2009; Andrews, Boyne, Law & Walker, 2011; Ajila, Akanni & Ekundayo, 2012).

Whereas, in Jordan case showed many public administrations reforms. But, Jreisat (1989) results showed that these reform efforts have not been efficiently articulated or accomplished. Also, despite the administrative autonomy enjoyed by the municipal councils, decentralization principles have been subject to the custody of the central government (Al-Ani & Al-Shbatat, 2016). while, other scholars recommend that “political cultural reform” to assist in liberating the decentralized concept among the local governance multi-layered governmental system (Al-Rabady & Abu-Khafajah, 2014). Yet, these conclusions showed clear problematic issues in Jordanian public reform and decentralization concepts process, which negatively impacted the SM practice pre-conditions. Nevertheless, Saif & Suliman and Tail (2004) concluded that Jordanian municipalities didn't have a long-term strategy. So, it was recommended that municipalities must have their own strategy, and this strategy must consider various political, economic, and social dimensions. This shows that there is a weakness or absence of SM practice within the public sector. On the other hand, other results showed that there is some interest in SM within the Jordanian private sector; vast majority of Jordanian scholars in SM were focused on the private sector to include, banking or financial services, communication firms, pharmacy industries, and hotels. These findings from Jordanian private sector revealed a fair use of SM tools within this sector, and they indicate a positive impact on their respective organizations performance (Aldehayyat & Anchor, 2008; Aldehayyat & Al Khattab, 2013; Aldehayyat & Twaissi, 2011; Al-Abdullat & Al-Najjar, 2015; Maryan, 2012; Dudin, 2013; khawaldah, 2014; Sharabati & Fuqaha, 2014).

However, there are some strategic tools and techniques are used and popular in Jordanian private sector (Aldehayyat & Anchor, 2008). Unfortunately, in the public sector the situation remains the same. Shuqair (2015) study assured that SM issues in Jordan did not resolve, and some POs still struggle with their SPs. He recommended to institutionalize POs resources allocation to create a suitable condition for SM implementations. Although, Jordanian constitution stated that all government organizations and ministries must produce their own SP. But Shuqair results indicated that produced plans are not supported by adequate or proper resources, and there are no proper implementation and evaluation foundations for these plans. SM is not about planning only, it includes many other activities that helps in translating these plans into actions and events. SM includes all necessary tools to harmonize, prioritize, allocate suitable resources, and evaluate all management actions and activities based on real budgets and pre-settled objectives. These objectives must be integrated with a holistic long-term vision for each PO. Although, long-term planning has been introduced in Jordanian public administrations since 1950s (Shuqair, 2015), but he mentioned that government still struggle with some critical issues in this management process. These outcomes came in line with Zabin (2016) results, he stated that most Jordanian public hospitals did not pay much attention to strategic planning. Zabin assured that SM outputs should be linked with public hospitals performance, as SM outputs have a real impact on the efficiency of the organization institutional performance.

In Lebanon, Saleh (2011) revealed that public administration development and reforms in Lebanon are not easy to be implemented. It has two main obstacles; bureaucratic culture and political resistance. Although, the simplification of government procedures is an easy tool in public administrative reform, but it is complex and difficult in the implementation process phase. In a such case change into a comprehensive SM in public administrative structure and organizational behavior became more difficult and complicated (Saleh, 2011). Also, Jafer (2017) stated that the current services delivery and public administration in Lebanon needs to be developed and expand; Which contributes in transferring public administrative services reality from the stage of sagging and weaknesses to a better stage, this stage of services should be based on a knowledge planning, wide base information, and better communication

mechanisms. These issues create and serve SM applications and the integrated development of the public sector. He added that SM comprehensiveness cannot happen without updating the state legislations policies. These policies, legislations, and plans must support each other, and SP must be based on pre-settled strategic objectives. This process must also consider the importance of human resources capacities and capabilities development (Jafer, 2017). While, a former study by the office of the Minister of State for Administrative Development dated 11th January 2011 recommended to prepare a practical mechanism to follow up and evaluate the implemented of governments projects, on the basis of which to verify the good implementation of these projects in accordance with their related developed strategic and operational plans (Lebanon Minister of State for Administrative Development, 2011). This indicates the existence of weakness or absence of proper implementation and evaluation activities of the available SPs in POs. Also, it shows the continuation of the PO problems existence, and it indicates weaknesses in all SM phases; planning, implementation, and evaluation, but its more dominant in the implementation and evaluation stages.

While in Palestine case, it is a government with special status. It has been occupied for many decades, which deprived Palestinian public organizations administrations. The existing problem between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the inability to develop clear and integrated Palestinian legislation had weaken the exercise of the mandated functions of public organizations. Which make SM more difficult and much more complicated. However, there are some POs interested in SM practice, in public universities Dijani (2011) recommended that universities strategic decisions and related activities must be based on integrated databases. This data base should cover all essential data and documents to support senior managers strategic decision-making, that enhance SM practice within this sector. He also added that special attention to strategic alternatives must be considered when preparing for strategy implementation as the environment instability or uncertainty is the most dominated factor in Palestinian case. This environment uncertainty causes a large number of political and economic changes that affect the SM implementation. Therefore, it is compulsory to use SM tools and techniques (such as strategic planning, balanced scorecard, ...etc.) to utilize a management model that stresses on SP modeling at all stages, to enhance these organization performance (Dijani, 2011). On the other hand, Al Shobaki & Naser (2016) study at Islamic University in Gaza revealed some different conclusions from the previous study within the same sector. This study showed a real understanding of the importance of SM practice from the top management. Also, their findings indicate the existence of a relationship between the decision support systems and SM in the Islamic University in Gaza. Their results revealed that there are some influences on the SM practice from the existing capabilities for the usage of strategic decisions support structures, as well as the type of decision support systems used. This indicate the importance of strategic decision mechanisms to SM system effectiveness, and also indicates that environments changes had exaggerated the implementation problem or issues.

Whereas, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) study results in Palestine indicated some positive results in SM practice. Analoui and Samour (2012) study revealed that the utmost NGOs in Palestine was using SM tools, and they perceived that the practice of SM is a vital tool for the quality of services delivery enhancement. Their results came in line with Al Shobaki& Amuna and Naser (2017) results, which indicated that there are some SM tools mainly SP and operational planning are practiced in the "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East" (UNRWA), and it has apposite results on their performance. Yet, UNRWA initially were intended to deliver the functions of public works such as; direct reliefs, health care, education services, and any other required social services. Which assured the essential role for SM in in the public domain functions. More

importantly, their results indicated that there is a relation between SM tools and crises management operations, which assures the importance of SM in crises management to overcome the variation in the organization conditions.

While, In Algeria, it was noted that Algerian legislature has violated the principle of decentralized bodies independence, through strict public administrative control (Hamdi, Blhaj, & Bn-Ali, 2017). Although, the legislator linked the intervening at the organizational level to the central authorities, but organizations administrations have been relatively independent (Hamdi, Blhaj, & Bn-Ali, 2017). While, in the education sector within public universities; Kuryshi and Zoebi (2014) concluded that strategic analysis and strategic option have significant effects on performance at Biskra University, and there was no effect for the strategic vision, mission and goals of the university. This indicates the existence of SM practice within this sector and the importance of strategy formulation process and its implications on the organization performance. Also, their results and findings are consistence with other result from other countries within this region and in different sectors such as public hospitals or others. These results assure the positive relationship between the use of SM tools and techniques and the POs performance. It also, indicate the ability to practice SM in some government organizations, even though they might have some issues with their decentralization system concept.

Whereas, in Saudi Arabi, Common (2008) stated that "despite the apparent vibrancy of these international trends ... Gulf states appear to be highly resistant to administrative modernization ... such as Saudi Arabia", which make serious challenges to public reform and decentralization concepts issues. Also, Al Otaibi, (2015) concluded that Saudi Arabia had consumed large amounts of money on modernizing their bureaucratic public management systems, but developments were very slow with some POs cultures and structures drawbacks. This resistance and drawbacks will create unsuitable environment for SM implementations. Hashm and Aamery, (2006) found that most of the central government agencies in Saudi Arabia do not exercise SM. Their study concluded that the application of SM concept faces lack or absence of SM specialists, that reduces the presence of motivation to prepare a strategy. This in addition to absence of a written mission and vision statements in most POs (Hashm& Aamery, 2006), which exaggerated the problem and enlarged the management gap. Therefore, it can be said that these results are largely consistent with Abu Naem (1994) and (2000) studies results. These studies concluded that most important reasons for lack of SM implementation is weak training, lack of competencies capability of future thinking, and lack of competition within government agencies. This showed weaknesses in SM practice and its related activities.

However, these studies emphasized the importance of establishing a comprehensive data base to assist in adopting some effective strategies aimed to achieve the organizations objectives. This data base reduces the obstacles that prevent successful SM implementation, and it ensures an effective strategic information accumulation and analysis. While, Al-Ghamdi (2005) examined the use of SP tools within (72) Saudi organizations, his work indicated that only 10% of the target organization in his study used planning tool, and 17% of these organizations used these tools frequently. While Al-Ghamdi found that the "analysis of critical success factors, followed by benchmarking, and then what if analysis" are that most frequently SM used analysis tools and techniques.

Whereas, In Sultanate Oman, Common (2008) investigation disclosed that public administrations in Oman is highly resistant to reform tendencies for many reasons mainly; political systems are highly centralized and there are some public administrations cultures

enhance resistances for changes or reforms. These two issues complicate the conditions for SM in POs and decrease SM tools utilization at the organization level. Although, other studies revealed that managers were generally aware of some SMs tools and practices, but most managers didn't use these tools frequently, and there was a great difference in the managers awareness of these tools and techniques within the same organization (Rajasekar & Al Raei, 2014). However, their findings indicate that 30% of their targeted organizations were rarely or never used SM tools, while most organizations were using SP management tools and techniques to some extent. But most importantly they found that most organizations are moving toward strategic thinking and future plans using various types of SM tools and techniques.

It is noted that not only MEt countries did not pay much attention to SM, but other developing countries have almost similar problem in this regard. For example, Nigeria is considered one of the largest and richest countries in Africa (Odularu, 2008), It was revealed by some scholars that Nigeria POs did not apply SM tools in their public administrates. Olaleye and Afinotan (2014) investigated the SP practice in local government management system in Nigeria; they recommended a total review of the constitution and the federal system structure aspects, a need to evaluate intergovernmental relations and decisions powers allocation. This recommendation showed a lack of public administration reforms and a weak SM pre-conditions within government departments, which cause weak institutional public management system and lack of long-term vision. These results go in line with Gideon and Georgina (2016) investigation, they investigated SM practices as a comprehensive management system in Abia State/ Nigeria local government. Gideon and Georgina (2016) pointed out that there is a lack of organizational policy which is very essential to guide or give the proper direction to public strategies. They also found other reasons behind the weakness of SM such as; lack of training, improper leadership style, and a weak focus on top management interest. Which implies weak organizations performance and blurred organizations visions and relations.

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The analysis above showed that there are many obstacles and challenges to SM applications in POs, though they can be classified into three main areas; strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation phases, but these phases applications in POs requires a certain degree of basic requirements. These requirements are embodied in state policies, legislations, POs decision-making mechanism, and a developed administrative system with qualified human resources capable of supporting the overall SM elements practices. Therefore, the researcher focused on SM elements and their foundation bases, which is public reform variable. As, POs performance was the main objective for all public reforms, while SPing was the main tool to achieve this objective, and results showed that SPing is the core axes of the comprehensiveness of SM.

Nevertheless, conclusions or results showed that SM elements have many positive effects on POs performance, and also results indicated that there are some failures in public reforms in some of these countries, which negatively impacted the conditions for SM practice, consequently, it negatively impacted POs performance in MEt countries. Yet, results showed there are three major issues faces SM applications in MEt countries POs; First legislations, all public administrations restructuring, and managements processes are affected and influenced by legislations governing the functioning of POs and they have no power to amend them. Second, human and material resources availability, POs strategic objectives cannot be achieved without a real government's commitment and enough resources. Third, government policies and real commitments, since SM practice requires long period for implementation and

its always association with the government's strategic plans and cultures from one side and POs administrations capacities and capabilities from the other side.

Therefore, SM effectiveness in POs is linked with other public-sector management developments and constrains. Whereas, MEt countries Public-sector is extremely resistant to worldwide reform trends and when it renewed its more adapted to local issues rather than the international basis (Al Otaibi, 2015; Common, 2008). Public reforms and decentralized in MEt countries were varied, but they were mainly focused on two main matters; economic difficulties issues and public administrative sagging problematic issues. Whereas, linking these improvements or reforms to resolve administrative sagging and economic problems is wrong and flawed. As, public reform and decentralization are two scientific management approaches aimed to bring radical changes in the prevailing administrative conditions and practices, which contributed in transforming traditional public administrations into more effective strategic administrations. These improved administrations characterized by strategic thinking, authorities and responsibilities decentralizations, research, initiatives and innovations based on long-term planning processes. These processes are fundamental for SM practices and mandated for the authorities to ensure efficiency in performance, they also increase transparency and to get rid of routine in public administrations work. These processes balance the authorities and responsibilities with rationalize resources allocations at all levels.

Even though, public management reform and decentralization concepts had taken many forms in developing countries, but results were mixed. While, the core of these processes was to decentralize strategic planning and public organizations responsibilities. However, these efforts created more efficient and effective organizations managements. But, all countries were confronted many difficulties mainly in the implementation stage (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983). These difficulties were varied from insufficient political and bureaucratic support to the failure of transferring sufficient authorities and responsibilities. And lack of coordination between institutions, which infringement central plans, and lead to weakness in the implementation of strategic public plans or policies.

Therefore, the aforementioned issues and the ongoing Middle East instability situation have complicated SM practice or existence in POs. As, SM does not remove instability or resolve public policies or economic or even administrative problematic issues, but it deals with them systematically and effectively create many positive implications on these organizations performance (Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013; Johnsen, 2016; Elbanna, 2013; Katheeri, 2016). It helps in putting public organizations in proactive mode rather than reactive or defensive mode. It unifies and harmonize all management's efforts.

However, SM in public is grounded on many factors, while managers participation or stakeholder's participation is very important, therefore some scholars concluded that available studies are suitable for democratic society only (Todorov, 2014; Johnsen, 2016), as these scholars focused on this axis only. Although, other scholars claimed that SM is to enhance democracy and increase citizens participation in some POs decisions-making processes (Marshall & Sproats, 2000; Todorov, 2014). Hence, states should look at all aspects of this management process to include trends towards democratic values and other essential issues such as legislative changes, human resources rehabilitation, and any other issues related to these organizations cultures and structures that restrict SM existence in POs.

While, The researcher agrees about the importance of stakeholder participations in SM, and it essential role in enhancing the democratic values and improve strategic decisions quality, but

he disagrees that SM suits democratic societies only. Stockholders or managers participations facilitate strategy implementation and evaluation (Hanger & Whaleen, 2011; Magrebi, 1999) and it increases decisions effectivities and efficiencies. These participations enhance and energize the process itself, it doesn't tailor this management process to a particular organization with a specific political set-up. Hunger and Whaleen (2011) stated that SM belongs to all organizations types and all managerial levels. It fits all organizations sizes, regardless their nature or complexity or originality (Butnaru & Balcan, 2012).

Thus, some scholars concluded that strategy is a result of an ongoing processes based on stakeholders' collective understanding and efforts (Armstrong, 1982). SM is an inclusive management system built on many features and dimensions. Actually, it's a collective effort based on the capability and cooperation of all managers or stakeholders, but it also deals with the organization current and future status. It is built on various inputs from the organization internal and external influences, it's not limited to the social, economic, political, and legal external factors. Its also influenced by internal factors such as; structures, cultures, inter managerial levels relations, and various resourcing mechanisms.

In sum, available literature in some MEt countries support the above discussions and the availability of many factors affect the exitance of SM in POs. Besides there are some important conclusions indicated some usage of SM tools and techniques within POs in these countries. Although this usage varied between these targeted countries, but the core of these conclusions showed a positive relation between SM tools usage and POs performances. These conclusions were in line with other world-wide studies results. Putting in mind that SM is not a single-phase management system, it is multi-phase complex in nature system and fits all organizations (Butnaru & Balcan, 2012; Magrebi, 1999). Therefore, it fits all public organizations, and the failure in one stage at any managerial level might cause a serious problem in the overall management process. However, there are some usage of SM tools in techniques in these countries, but they are facing with some constraints in this management process application; First, training on strategic management importance and its usage within POs to include all managerial levels (Abu Naem, 2000; Dijani, 2011; Hashm & Aamery, 2006; Jafer, 2017). Second, some implementations and evaluations breakdowns (Al Shobaki & Naser, 2016; Elbanna & Fadol, 2016; Shuqair, 2015; Saleh, 2011; Jafer, 2017; Dijani, 2011). Third, political instability and unsuitable constitutional/ legal bases (Saleh, 2011; Elbanna & Fadol 2016; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2016; Rosenberg & Ferlie, 2016). This in addition to some malfunctions in SM preconditions which is a proper reform and suitable decentralization systems. Besides lack managers or stakeholders participations, which deepen the SM application problematic issues.

However, most governments in MEt area have applied various strategies to advance their decentralization issue and reform their public administration systems, with different results in each case. Putting in mind the complexity and other political interests' issues in MEt region, it is hard to make generalization in such a diverse region (Kim, 2009). This in addition to the complex nature of public sector itself in practicing SM, and its high dependence on government policy, which make more risks to be failed than those encountered by the business sector (Al-Khoury, 2014; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2016; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2016; Fixari & Pallez, 2016; Baloria & Mamo 2015).

Despite the fact, that political stability, political will, and stakeholders participations are some crucial issues for SM accomplishment in POs (Hussey, 2007). This region is facing serious problems in these matters, its mostly unstable and suffers from lack of democratic values that should have boosted strategic decisions-making participations. This in addition to the other

management factors such as training weaknesses and the nonexistence of the necessary data bases to support the decision-making process will exaggerate the problems.

Consequently, it is not easy to generalize of this study for some reasons mainly the difference in the degree of these challenges facing SM implementations, and this region diversity with some political and economic differences issues. While , their policies instabilities and cultures have deepened the problem of SM applications in POs within this region. These countries had many serious political and economic problems in the last two decades, which jeopardize any strategic plans formulations and implementations. This reduces the chances for the success of inclusive SM systems and its SPing backbone in POs management system; SPing is highly linked with the political, economic, cultural, and legal status in any state. Still, SM approach is the best key approach in an unstable environment, and the most suitable tool to unify public managers' effort and overcome all types of challenges, as it can make use of the existed POs strengths and avoids their weaknesses.

Table 1 summarizes the most important results from each country.

MEt Countries	Conditions; Public reform & Decentralization	Used SM Tools	SM tools usage vs. Performance	Challenges
UAE	Effective public-reform, Gulf states appear to be highly resistant to administrative modernization.	SPing and balanced scorecard tools were mostly used as a SM framework, formulation, Implementation, and evaluation	SPing to act effectively and positively impact on organizational performance, Positive relationship between Org Perf. and SM elements	POs faces more difficulties in strategy implementation.
Jordan	Reform not efficiently articulated or accomplished, decentralization subjected to the custody of central government.	SPing, SOWT analyses, Balance Score Board.	SPing has appositive impact with POs performance, SM outputs have a real impact on the efficiency of Perf.	Problems in public-reform, Inadequate Resources, no proper Impl& Eval foundations, no strategy, didn't consider SPing
Lebanon	Public admin development and reforms are not easy to be implemented.	SPing.	SPing has positive results on performance.	Public-reform obstacles; bureaucratic and political resistance - No proper laws and policies for SM, Absence of Impl& Eval tools. no Info bases.
Palestine	Public reforms& Dec difficulties.	SPing, Balanced Scorecard,	Positive relation decision support system and SM, relation between SM tools& crises Management operations, strategic options considered in instability Impl, SM importance in crises management	Inability to develop clear and integrated legislation. Instable situation, Lack of decisions-making data base,
Algeria	Violated Dec, strict public administrative control	Strategy Form., Impl& eval	strategic analysis& option have effects on POs performance, no effect for strategic vision, mission	legislator linked intervening at the organizational level to the central authorities,
Saudi Arabia	POs reform& development were very slow with some POs cultures& structures drawbacks	SPing, analysis of critical success factors, benchmarking, what if analysis		lack or absence SM specialists, written mission& vision absence, weak training on SM Impl, Lack future thinking, Lack of competition in Govt agencies
Oman		SPing	organizations moving toward strategic thinking and future plans using various types of SM tools.	difference in Mngrs awareness of SM tools, 30% rarely or never used SM tools, Gulf states resists changes
SPing: Strategic Planning, Impel; Implementation, Eval: Evolution, Mngrs: Managers.				

CONCLUSION

SM in POs is the process which strategies and policies are put into practice through POs management programs, plans, budgets, rules, and procedures. It is a clear and dynamic scientific management process approach, which represents new administrative thoughts and techniques within a relatively stable political system. Though, It is an inclusive and multipart management system uses a diverse combination of management, social, economic, and political tools and techniques to survive rough environments. It creates a practical management model that is initiated at the top management, but it involves and motivates all management levels. Therefore, this management process helps to boost the overall public management system.

Although, it is difficult to make generalization in such an unstable and diverse region, but findings show that governments in MEt Area are still struggling with SM practice and they face many challenges. This struggle come from two foundations; lack of proper political and legal foundations for SM, and some breakdowns in the SM elements system itself. But its more prominent in the implementation and evaluation phases. These interruptions are impeded in POs structures and cultures, and resources availability or suitability . It is clearly that, they have some serious problems in their political will and stability, besides the availability of laws or legislations that imply and regulate all phases of SM process within these countries POs. As well as they have serious problems in the implementation phase central factors, which jeopardize the overall SM process and its existence in the public sector. Though, it is optimistic to say that some countries succeed in using some SM tools in their POs. Finally, The researcher recommends future studies to investigate the degree of the relation between policy stability and SPing practice in POs within this area.

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