

# The impact of strategic management and planning on creativity and innovation of school managers

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of investigation is the effect of strategic management and planning on the creativity and innovation of the school managers. A sample of 120 people was selected by using the cluster sampling. The research instrument was questionnaires related to the impact of strategic management and planning on the creativity and innovation. For data analysis, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Regression Analysis were used. The results showed that the strategic management and planning variables could explain the creativity and innovation.

**Keywords:** Strategic management and planning, creativity and innovation, school managers.

## Introduction

One of the main categories in education and training is creativity. Describing the creativity concept is a complex process, especially when it is defined with excitement. Creativity is a general cognitive capacity which is involved in various degrees in the production of invention or in the formation of innovation processes. From the engineering point of view and also based on the commercial views, the invention is normally considered as the manifestation of creative mental activity [1]. In general, creativity is a habit [2]. although there may be contradictory views in this regard. It seems that, for the same reasons that environmental conditions can suppress habits; educational methods in learning can also unintentionally suppress creativity.

Creativity reflects the balance between the person's knowledge and his/her use of that knowledge [3]. We perceive the creativity as a specific form of problem-solving and also the result of the identifying of those cognitive processes that have

the ability of mediation between the characteristics of an individual and or his/her innovations [4]. We consider creativity as a cognitive ability and it can be used as a relatively clear feature in distinguish the human intelligence from all other forms of senses -such as animal or artificial intelligences [1].

For creativity, many factors are needed both in the individual and in the environment [4]. In this respect, the negative excitements are as the environment factors that can affect the cognitive creativity. Based on the social conceptualization perspective, Avriel believes that the excitements are as a form of the social interactions rather than the production of biological powers which the rules and the social norms make them. Originality in showing the excitements means that the excitements must be based on the beliefs and faith of the individual. According to this criterion, when a person shows his/her excitements due to his/her position and contrary to his/her beliefs and emotions, s/he does not respect the originality criterion, so s/he isn't considered as a creative person. When a person faces with an emotional state, having good and optimistic feeling is not enough to control the excitement, so s/he needs to have the best cognitive and behavioral attitude and can regulate his excitement. Principally, in the setting of the excitement, an optimal interaction of the cognition and emotional behavior is needed to deal with the negative conditions, because human beings interpret whatever that they encounter and it is the cognitive interpretations that determine the reactions of individuals [5]. The fundamental and rapid changes in political, economic, and technological events

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and trends in the post-industrial era have strong effects on the performance and behavior of organizations. Researches have shown that only a few managers especially in third world countries, have been able to respond accurately and on time to these kinds of changes and have been able to adapt the structure and internal condition of their organization with the needed capabilities to meet with the challenges and changes <sup>[6]</sup>.

In order to coordinate with the ever-increasing changes and to step toward the organizational goals, there is a need to change the way of thinking and the mind evolution of the organization managers because when the organization faces with new challenges, the old solutions will lose their effectiveness.

Like any other creative activity, the strategic management and planning can be more successful if it follows certain principles and avoids deliberately some deficiencies. It means that the effective factors of the organization should be seen, and by considering the interdependence of the effective factors the solutions must be prepared for uncertain and vague future. Strategic management and planning is over than noticing the social, economic, political and technological trends, and requires managers who can identify the correlation and interdependence of these factors <sup>[7]</sup>. Strategic management and planning enables the manager to understand what factors are effective in achieving the goals, and which ones are not effective and why? Strategic management and planning appears in the form of "simple and deep" rules, and creates a specific mental model that is the basis of the organization daily decision making and its overall orientation where it creates the motivation and commitment for the organization and its stakeholders.

This motive and commitment comes from the power that in fact is simple and at the same time attractive <sup>[8]</sup>. In review of current study, there are several definitions for the strategic planning and management concepts. Some authors have used the strategic thinking for other concepts, such as strategic planning and strategic management. For example, Wilson states: "... The effort to improve has changed the strategic planning entity so much that it is appropriate to refer to it as strategic management or strategic thinking <sup>[9]</sup>. Other authors focus on the strategic management and explicitly state that a good strategic planning will help to the strategic thinking <sup>[10]</sup>. Or implicitly, they accept that a well-designed strategic management system makes it easy for organizations to think strategically.

Garratt has the same view too. He believes that the strategic management and planning is a process by which the senior executives can separate themselves from everyday management processes and crises, and thus get a different view of the organization and its changing environment <sup>[11]</sup>. From a general point of view, strategic management and planning is an "insight and understanding of the status quo and the exploitation of the opportunities." This insight helps to establish the market realities and to understand its rules on time and also to create the innovative and valuable solutions in respond to these conditions. What is clear is that, the strategic thinking is the basis of the organization's vision and it moves the organization's

strategy towards its direction <sup>[12]</sup>. The strategic management and planning is the artistic architecting of one strategy based on the creativity, discovering and understanding of the discontinuities in business <sup>[13]</sup>. Strategic thinking is the planning of actions based on new learning <sup>[14]</sup>. Strategic thinking is a continuous process that aims to eliminate the ambiguity and to make sense for a complex environment. This process involves the analyzing of a situation and also the creative integrating of the results in the form of one successful strategic plan <sup>[15]</sup>.

Considering the importance of the subject, we were asked to do a research on this issue. The current research question is this, whether the strategic management and planning impacts the creativity and innovation of the school managers or not?

## Method

The present research is the fundamental one and it is as the descriptive and correlational researches. In this study, we try to judge based on the predictor variables, and the creativity and innovation criterions.

## Subjects and sampling Method

The subjects of the study were all the school managers in Ardabil city in 1395-1396 education years. A sample of 120 people was selected by using the cluster sampling, based on the Klein method (2011). The school managers were divided into separate clusters due to units of work, where some of them selected as a sample and the questionnaires were given to them.

## Research Tools

### Abedi's Creative Cognitive Assessment Test

The creativity assessment questionnaire, which is known as the "Abedi's Creative Assessment Test", was made by Abedi in Tehran in 1363 based on the Torrance theory about the creativity. This questionnaire was revised several times and eventually its 60 questions form was developed by Abedi at the University of California. It is included 60 three-option tests where measures four sub-scales as: fluidity, expansion, innovation and flexibility. The higher the score in the questionnaire, the more creative it is.

### Strategic Management and Planning Questionnaire

In this questionnaire the researchers extracted six questions from the review of literature for each one of the five dimensions of strategic thinking (systemic view, focus on purpose, intelligent opportunity, spatial planning, and hypothesis-based), in which its reliability among the 125 respondents from 11 companies using the EFQM model based on Cronbach alpha was 0.931 and among the 120 respondents from 13 companies not using the EFQM model based on Cronbach alpha was

confirmed as 0.872 Cronbach alpha. Also the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by eight university professors.

In the statistics section, the multivariate regression was used due to the research hypotheses. It should be noted that the data were analyzed using SPSS software.

## Findings

The descriptive summary of the collected data is given in Table 1. The mean (SD) of strategic management scores in tests was 60/60 (2.58) and the mean (SD) of the creativity and innovation scores in tests was 85.75 (5.27). To study the hypothesis, the multivariate regression analysis was used, the results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 1: The study of the statistical indicators of tests in strategic management, creativity and innovation scores.**

variable	number	Mean	standard deviation
strategic management	120	60/60	2.58
creativity and innovation	120	85/75	5.27

**Table 2: Stepwise regression analysis to predict the job satisfaction through the strategic management and planning components.**

variable criterion	predictor	R <sup>2</sup>	R	F	df	Beta	T	Sig
	systemic view					%43	10.53	0.001
	focus on purpose					%26	5.60	0.001
creativity and innovation	intelligent opportunity	%75	%86	129.681	5.214	%49	12.10	0.001
	spatial planning					%38	9.33	0.001
	hypothesis-based					%35	8.50	0.001

Beta: Standard regression coefficient

To test the hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. According to Table 2, the components of strategic management and planning (systemic view, focus on purpose, intelligent opportunity, spatial planning, and hypothesis-based), with the value of  $F=129.681$  at the level of 0.001 predicts meaningfully the creativity and innovation variables. The multiple correlations between the variables was %75, which shows that about %86 of the variables of creativity and innovation can be explained through the components of strategic management. Table 2 shows the variables' determination. The value of the standard coefficient of the systemic view is %43, focus on purpose is %26, intelligent opportunity is %49, spatial planning is %38 and the hypothesis-based is %35 at the significant level of 0.001. The results indicate that the power of predictor in systematic view, focus on purpose, intelligent opportunity, spatial planning, and hypothesis-based variables were very high that are able to predict the creativity and innovation variables.

## Discussion and Results

The aim of the current study was the prediction of the creativity and innovation based on strategic management and planning.

The results of this study showed that the strategic management and planning can predict the creativity and innovation.

The art of the managers who use the strategic management and planning is to see the components of the school and also the whole of the school together, it means that while the components are also considered, by seeing the details and the wholeness at the same time, one can respond to the existing challenges. The desire for the awareness and recognition of the future has always existed throughout the life of human from the distant past. Having this need in the present era and in the form of future studies at the organizations, which is considered as futurist and futuristic, is significant, since its maintenance and quality in the future is the concern of today's organizations. By increasing the level of science over the recent decades, and the rapid movement of the current world based on knowledge, the decision-makers of the organizations require to understand the future and its studies. Educational organizations due to their critical role in the education of future generations need to a serious attitude and attention to the future, not only in order to prepare for the use of new things, but also toward the building of a desirable future. Since the future studies provide the structured opportunity in looking to the following days, also create a favorable outlook for decision-makers and policymakers in the education organization. Regarding the findings, it can be said that the use of strategic management and planning can lead the organizations to achieve the educational where the most important one is the training of thoughtful and creative managers and directors. Therefore, the organizers should focus on providing the conduction and institutionalized grounds within their organizations. According to the findings it can be said that the relationship between creativity and strategic management and planning indicates the determining role in systemic function in providing the creativity to managers. Systematic function means the goal-oriented function toward the organization excellence. In systemic function, the most basic principle is to look at the organization and its function in the form of an aggregate system, in which the overall function is more optimal than the algebraic whole functions. Therefore, with regard to the relationship between the strategic management and planning, and the creativity, the school managers should take steps to provide the systematic function requirements. One of the most fundamental requirements for strategic management and planning is to institutionalize and promote the teamwork thinking and team-building knowledge. Promoting the spirit of team working in the organization through culturalization, promotion of whole overviews of organization and paying attention to collective performance can improve the systematic function.

Considering the results of the research and its discussion, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between strategic management and planning, and the creativity of the school managers.

## Limitations

Since the sampling of this research has been carried out among the school managers in Ardabil city so it is obvious that any

decision must be made based on the regulations of that organization and it is not possible to generalize to the other organizations. The research instrument was the questionnaire which it is the self-evaluation index; it may include all types of the self-reporting, ones such as social utility.

## Suggestions

In order to examine the other personality characteristics, it is suggested that other tests and personality assessment methods be used. On the other hand, it is suggested that in the future researches the comparison of each one of the questionnaire components be considered based on the demographic indicators, and such research among other occupations in for the purpose of this research, also such study can be carried out for other occupants with aim of the results generalization. Due to this research it is suggested that the character factors as the precondition ones be investigated among the other organizational features such as conflict management, management skills and power sources.

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