

## Abdullah AL-Mutairi

Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait  
E-mail: mutairi.a@gust.edu.kw

## Kamal Naser

Financial Advisor, Kuwait Fund, Kuwait  
E-mail: drknaser@yahoo.co.uk

---

# OBSTACLES TOWARDS TRANSLATING A KUWAITI PUBLIC SECTOR STRATEGY INTO ACTION: EVIDENCE FROM KUWAIT

---

Original scientific paper

UDK: 005.21:35](536.8)

JEL classification: H83

Accepted for publishing: October 31, 2019

### **Abstract**

*Purpose*–The aim of this study is to empirically investigate barriers towards successful strategy formulation and implementation in the public sector strategy of Kuwait. *Design/methodology/approach* – The article used a questionnaire survey to identify the barriers toward successful strategy formulation and implementation experienced by the public sector organizations. The questionnaires were distributed to 300 public sector employees, from which 200 were valid for analysis. Participants were requested to state the degree of agreement with the items listed in the questionnaire. Regression analysis employed to identify factors impact strategy formulation and implementation. *Findings* – The study showed that unsuccessful strategies formulation and implementation result from various aspects of government institutions (organization, policies and regulations, human resources and communications). The participants revealed that lack of consensus among decision makers, lack of effective role formulators and lack of choice of real strategy formulators represent major obstacle toward strategies formulation. Incompatible structure with the strategy and insufficient linkage between strategy and goals were the main variables that prevent successful strategies implementation. The regression analysis pointed to policies and regulations, communication and external factors as the most significant determinants of strategy formulation; whereas organizational and communication factors appeared to be the most significant determinant of strategy implementations. *Research limitations* – Specific governmental departments were targeted by the questionnaire survey employed in this study. This reflect the staff employed in these departments. To obtain a wide picture about strategy implementation, the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Finance should be surveyed since they are responsible of a significant part of the country's strategic planning. *Practical implications*– This research offers valuable practical insights of decision maker. it might provide the route map for the firm and develop a good information system that help managers for obtaining the highest quality of knowledge through developing processes, systems and managerial mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Strategic management, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, obstacles, public sector, Kuwait.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic management decisions have been a subject of growing theoretical and empirical investigations in business literature. The central issue in the literature is to explore the barriers to successful strategy adoption by looking at the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance.

Empirical studies pointed to several factors that may present obstacles towards successful formulation and implementation strategy such as lack of communication, information and training systems, senior managers' instability, poor teamwork and unclear regulation and executive policies. The main feature of previous research on obstacles towards formulating and implementing public sector strategy was that most of them were undertaken in Western countries. The outcomes of these studies are not necessarily applicable to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in general, and to Kuwait in particular. GCC countries possess unique economic, political and cultural characteristics. They are rich oil producing countries with relatively high per capita income. The governments play significant role in the economic and social activities. Recruiting personnel in the public sector is not necessarily based on efficiency considerations, but rather involves some personal considerations that reflect the culture of the GCC countries. This puts more pressure on the public sector's functions and subject it to more responsibilities than other countries. The Islamic Arab culture together with the tribal structure of the GCC countries play a different role in the preparation and implementation of the public sector strategy. Hence, obstacles towards successfully formulating and implementing strategies in the public sector of the GCC countries are often different from other countries. Investigating obstacles towards formulating and implementing strategies in the Kuwaiti public sector assists in recruiting the right committed personnel and ensure their job satisfaction in order to minimize future resignations from the public sector institutions. Bearing in mind that the public sector is a desirable employer for many of the Kuwaitis. Finally, the current study is expected to add a new dimension to the existing body of the literature.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Related literature and previous studies are reviewed in the next section. Data collection and research methodology are presented in the third section explains. While the findings and analysis are offered in the fourth section four, the conclusion is offered in the last section.

## 2. RELATED LITERATURE AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

Strategic planning aims to maintain a favorable balance between an organization and its environment over the long run (Eadie, 1983). It is a plan of action designed to reach a specific objectives (Mohammed *et al.*, 2013). Strategic planning goes through main processes: formulation and implementation. Strategy formulation is the decision to establish the firm's goal while strategy implementation is the decision to use firm's resources to achieve this goal. In the formulation process, a strategy is designed to ensure effective use of scarce resources and capabilities (Taslak, 2004). Alexander (1985) emphasized the importance of the formulation process in incorporating new good idea to promote successful implementation. Strategy implementation process is undertaken by an organization to reach where it perceives itself to be in the future (Lihalo, 2013). Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) believe that the strategy implementation process is more important for the organization than the strategy formulation. Al-Kandi *et al.* (2013) stressed that all the efforts invested during the formulation process becomes worthless if the strategy does not achieve the needed target due to poor implementation.

Several studies have been undertaken to examine reasons behind successful or otherwise of strategy adoption in various countries (see for example, USA: Kargar and Blumenthal, 1994; UK: Al-Ghamdi, 1998; O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2002; Turkey: Taslak, 2004, Koseoglu *et al.*; 2009; Iran:

Rad, 2005, Ali and Hadi, 2012, Seifi and Sazvar, 2012, Mohammad *et al.* 2013; Kenya: Gichoya, 2005, Messah and Mucai, 2011, Lihalo, 2013, Ng'ang'a and Ombui, 2013, Kenyatta, 2013, Njeru *et al.*, 2013, Ndegwah, 2014, Chemwei *et al.*, 2014, Mbaka and Mugambi, 2014; Malaysia: Ahmad and Rajuddin, 2006, Samad *et al.*, 2014, Robani *et al.*, 2014; Jordan: Aldehayyat and Anchor, 2010. Brazil: Canhada and Natália, 2011; Bangladesh: Islam and Ali, 2011; China: Zhang *et al.*, 2011, South Africa: Smith, 2011, Libya: Mohammed *et al.*, 2013; Pakistan: Latif *et al.*, 2012; Sial *et al.*, 2013; Croatia: Ivančić, 2013). The following section reviews in brief these studies.

Kargar and Blumenthal (1994) used a questionnaire survey to examine the major problems in adopting strategies of small commercial North Carolina banks. They found inadequate training to be a major problem and it leads to more time consuming in strategy implantation.

Al-Ghamdi (1998) used a survey questionnaire to identify recurring problems in strategy adoption in UK. He found that communication, management support, and good information systems are the key tools for smooth implementation process. Al-Ghamdi concluded that strategy formation cannot be separated from strategy implementation. O'Regan and Ghobadian (2002) noticed that small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) that involve in formal strategic planning experience fewer barriers to implementation than those that do not; and subsidiary firms are likely to locate a greater emphasis on formal planning than independent firms.

Taslak (2004) examined problems restricting success of strategic decisions formulation and implementation in Turkey. The researcher pointed to "uncertainties arising from national economic conditions" as the most important formulation problem, and the "implementation activities taking more time than originally planned", and "uncontrollable factors in the external environment" as the most important implementation problems. The researcher concluded that the educational level of the employees and their skills are important factors to the formulation and implementation processes. Koseoglu *et al.* (2009) attempted to explore the reasons behind the failure of implementing strategies. They found the lack of consensus among decision makers, lack of identification of major problems, lack of effective role formulators, unsuitable training system and unclear regulation and executive policies to be that the most important problems in the formulation process. They further found incompatible organizational culture, competing activities among people, lack of adequate communication, lack of effective co-ordination and lack of adequate information system to be the most important problems in the implementation.

Rad (2005) examined barriers to successful implementation in health care organizations in Iran. He found that the lack of senior management commitment and involvement, instability of senior managers and poor teamwork and participation to be major barriers to successful implementation in health care organizations. Ali and Hadi (2012) attempted to identify obstacles towards successful implementation of business strategies of food companies in Fars Province. They detected several obstacles including planning consequences, organizational obstacles, managerial obstacles, individual and staffs obstacles and environmental obstacles. They noticed that individual obstacles have significant effect on preventing the strategy implementation. They also found that lack of proper information systems in the sampled companies to be a major obstacle in implementing strategies. To eliminate these obstacles, they advised top managers to develop adequate commitment in middle managers and operational levels. In another study, Seifi and Sazvar (2012) examined the barriers facing strategy implementation in the Iranian high-tech organizations. They observed that lack of sufficient communications, long time implementation period and employees with low abilities the main barriers of strategy implementation. Mohammad *et al.* (2013) explored the barriers that have prevented Iranian cities from achieving the urban planning goals. They identified several major barriers including the urban plans context, structure of urban planning, related law and regulations, public participation, and financial resources.

Gichoya (2005) examined factors affecting successful strategies' adoption in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) projects in government. He found that government support, external pressure and rising consumer expectations are the factors that affect successful adoption of ICT

strategies. The researcher considered poor data systems and lack of compatibility, skilled personnel and leadership styles among the main barriers that hinder implementation. Messah and Mucai (2011) examined the factors influencing the adoption of strategic management plans and pointed to managerial behavior as a result of lack of strategic thinking. They concluded that faculty members should be motivated to learn new knowledge on the role and place of strategic management in steering organizations in times of volatile market conditions. Lihalo (2013) examined barriers to successful strategy adoption by mid-sized companies in Kenya. He pointed to internal barriers including management, communication, human factors such as resistance to change, leadership, organizational structure, information systems and technology. He further pointed to external barriers including changes to the operating environment, un-anticipated competition or entrants by new players in the industry and changes in government policies. Ng'ang'a and Ombui (2013) examined factors influencing the implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Kenya. They detected organizational leadership as the most important factor that contributes to the implementation of strategic plans; followed by resource allocation, and communication and organizational structure as the least factor. Kenyatta (2013) examined barriers to strategy implementation by mid-sized companies in Kenya and identified internal factors such as management, communication, human factors such as resistance to change, leadership, organizational structure, information systems and technology. He also found external factors represented by changes to the operating environment, un-anticipated competition or entrants by new players in the industry and changes in government policies. Njeru *et al.*; (2013) examined factors that influence the formulation of strategic plans in Kenya. They provided evidence that employees motivation, availability of funds, support by top school leadership, government policy and employee skills had a statistical relationship with the formulation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Embu North district. They urged the Ministry of Education to organize awareness programs to school stakeholders on the importance of preparing and implementing school strategic plans effectively.

Moreover, Ndegwah (2014) examined the factors influencing the implementation of Strategic Plans in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya. He found the implementations are affected by managerial skills, institutional policies, resources allocation and rewards/incentives. The researcher recommended that management should provide employees with academic and technical skills to help them successfully implement strategic plans in their respective schools. Chemwei *et al.* (2014) examined factors that impede the implementation of strategic plans in selected secondary schools in Kenya. The researchers found human resources to be inadequate to implement the strategy. Mbaka and Mugambi (2014) attempted to explore factors that affect the strategy implementation in water sector in Kenya and found that the most important reason for the failure of the strategy implementation is the operational plan of the implementation. Operational plan includes resources limitation, incompetent management and staff, poor planning for execution and lack of integration among the departments.

Ahmad and Rajuddin (2006) used the Balanced Scorecard to clarify organization vision and strategy and to translate them into action. It provides feedback from both internal business processes and external outcomes to undergo continuous improvement on the strategic performance and results. Samad *et al.* (2014) examined the relationship and influence of strategic planning on organizational performance in the Malaysian healthcare system. They established that strategic planning components are related to organizational performance. They provided evidence that strategic planning barrier is the most triggering aspect that influenced organizational performance. Robani *et al* (2014) attempted to explore the barriers to effective academic leadership among Malaysian community college lecturers of rural settlement background. They identified personal and family issues as the main barriers.

Aldehayyat and Anchor (2010) examined strategic planning implementation problems and their relationship with various organizational variables in Jordan. They found that the most important obstacles were unanticipated major problems and implementation requires more time than was planned. The researchers indicated that firms are likely to enhance strategic planning by allowing suitable time for its implementation, improve the quality of training and improve communications.

Canhada and Natália (2011) tested the main barriers to and facilitators of the implementation of different strategies by Brazilian organizations. They noticed that lack of relation between strategic content and strategic process and lack of coherence between strategic planning and resource allocation are the main barriers. They concluded that certain factors that facilitate the effective implementation of strategies may actually constitute barriers, depending on how the strategy is conducted by the individuals and the groups that interact constantly within organizations.

Islam and Ali (2011) used a questionnaire to determine obstacles of strategic operations management in Bangladesh and provide some policy implications for organizations and government. They found that there is a need to remove problems of proper operations management to improve efficiency in business operations. Public and private partnership would be developed to resolve the problems of the business organizations of the country. They argued that it is important to identify effective and efficient techniques in strategic operations management of organizations to ensure Bangladeshi organizations success in global business environment.

Zhang *et al.* (2011) used a questionnaire survey to examine 10 typical barriers encountered in the process of real estate development and facilities management. The researchers identified high cost for green appliance and lack of motivation from customers' demand as the two major barriers. They ascertain that there is a need for policy and regulations on green issues, which may be achieved by initiatives promoted by government.

Smith (2011) examined perceptions about strategy implementation tasks within six selected industries in South Africa. He found the task of strategy implementation is a primarily operations-driven activity, revolving around the management of people and business processes. He also found a significant relationship between the perceptions regarding building a capable organization and the ethnic classification of respondents. He further found the marshalling of resources necessary for strategy implementation is significantly related to the ethnic classification of respondents and type of industry in which they are employed.

Mohammed *et al.* (2013) examined strategic management and strategic process adopted in Libyan business organizations and found that they lack of proper strategic. They suggested that the organizations should identify their current mission, analyze the environment and formulate and implementing strategies. The researchers concluded that strategy managers should stay close to the situation to respond early to any significant changes.

Latif *et al.* (2012) explored how and where strategic planning goes awry and what executives can do about it. They found that the most common barriers is effective strategic planning like, strict time limits, identical procedures, lack of accountability, power and influence which organizations frequently face in strategy formulation and implementation. They concluded that it is mandatory for the leadership to involve employees in the decision-making process, along with explicit description of their roles within the organization, and on the other hand, full mechanism of employees' accountability and regular checks are required to remove these barriers. Sial *et al.* (2013) explored effective factors of failure of the strategic plan implementation in public sector organizations in Pakistan. They found that the most important reason for the failure of the strategic plan implementation in public sectors organization in Pakistan is operational plan of the implementation. They also found that paying more attentions to plan implementation of the public sector can achieve the desired result in the stated goals, benefit and surplus budget. The researchers concluded that the manager should take the action in right time, with adequate resources and competent labor forces.

Ivančić (2013) attempted to explore failure in managing strategy implementation in Croatia. He provided evidence that strategic management process is a very complex and long-term process, which requires defining, conducting and evaluating the applied strategy. The researcher

found that most strategic planning efforts fail during this crucial phase and firms waste significant resources.

As far as the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC)<sup>1</sup> region is concerned, few studies were undertaken to examine the barriers of successful implementation strategy (see for example, Saudi Arabia: Al-Kharashi and Skitmore, 2009; Al-Kandi *et al.*, 2013; Alsughayir, 2014; Al-Ghamdi, 2006). A brief review of each of these studies is the subject of the succeeding section.

Al-Kharashi and Skitmore (2009) examined the causes of delays in public building projects in the Saudi Arabian construction industry. They found that the failure to develop strategic plans for scheduling future construction projects has led to a crisis in the construction sector. They also found that the most influencing current cause of delay is the lack of qualified and experienced personnel. Al-Kandi *et al.* (2013) examined the factors that influence the implementation of the strategic decision process and its outcomes for Saudi Arabian banks. They found that the process and personnel factors, combined with the project factors, have greatly influenced the outcomes of strategy implementation of the banks. They also found that the involvement process for all managers and implementers on all organizational levels is perceived to be a crucial factor in the implementation process and of paramount importance for successful implementation. Alsughayir (2014) examined the barriers faced by private medical services organizations while trying to implement TQM. He found that the most significant barriers to implementation are frequent employee turnover, resistance to change among employees and lack of understanding TQM and shortage in motivation among management. Alsughayir stressed the need for quality managers and professionals capable of developing plans that addresses the challenges they face when implementing TQM. Al-Ghamdi (2006) used a questionnaire survey to determine the extent to which strategy implementation problems recurred in the Saudi Arabian Petrochemical Industry. He found two of the implementation problems are linked to human elements in the process of implementation. He believes that there is a need for effective management support systems for staff employees, strategy-structure alignment, effective compensation systems, and top management involvement in order to facilitate the process of implementation. Al-Ghamdi suggested managerial actions for improving strategy implementation.

### 3. DATA COLLECTION AND STUDY METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Data collection

The current study used a structured questionnaire to collect data about obstacles towards successful strategy formulation and implementation in Kuwait. The questionnaire consists of two parts, while the first part related to general background information about the participants, the second part focused on factors leading to the failure of successful strategy. The second part of the questionnaire consists of the main obstacles frequently appeared in previous research. To reach the high level of validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by five university professors at the Arab Open University (AOU)-Kuwait branch and Kuwait University specialized in the same area of research. The questionnaire was then modified to reflect their suggestions and recommendations. The questionnaire was further piloted among a group of public sector employees to ensure the participants' understandability. Consequently, new questions were added and others were deleted. The modified questionnaire contained 5- point Likert scale items. It is worth mentioning that previous studies have used this scale (Al-Ghamdi, 1998; O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2002; Taslak, 2004, Koseoglu *et al.*, 2009; Ali and Hadi, 2012). The questionnaire asked the participants to rate each item on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) where (3) stood for a neutral response. To identify barriers towards successful implementation of a public sector strategy in Kuwait, the questionnaire was divided into seven sections. The first section contained formulation factors. The second section contained factors expected to affect strategy

---

<sup>1</sup>GCC established in May 25 1981 and consists of six countries namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and United Arab of Emirates.

implementation. The third sections contained organizational factors that may affect effective strategy formulation and implementation. The fourth section comprised policies and procedures factors that would affect successful strategic formulation and implementation. The fifth section handled human resources factors that may affect effective strategic formulation and implementation. The sixth section contained communication factors expected to influence successful strategic formulation and implementation. The last section contained some external factors. A summary of the questionnaire main sections and the set of factors contained in each section are summarized in Table (1).

Table 1 Key factors that may present barriers towards successful implementation of a public sector strategy in Kuwait

Formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable leadership</li> <li>Lack of exact strategic planning</li> <li>Lack of consensus among decision makers</li> <li>Lack of identification of major problems</li> <li>Lack of effective role</li> <li>Lack of choice of real strategy formulators</li> <li>Lack of strategy understanding</li> </ul>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of adequate manager commitment</li> <li>Unsuitable training system</li> <li>Lack of enough capabilities of employees</li> <li>Unsuitable personnel management</li> <li>Incompatible structure with the strategy</li> <li>Time limitation</li> <li>Inadequate connection to the vision</li> <li>Unsuitable resources allocation</li> <li>Insufficient linkage between strategy &amp; goals</li> <li>Lack of adequate manager commitment</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate physical facilities</li> <li>Lack of adequate organizational support</li> <li>Incompatible organizational culture</li> <li>Resistance to change among units</li> <li>Inadequate physical facilities</li> <li>Lack of adequate organizational support</li> </ul>
Policies and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear regulation and executive policies</li> <li>Unsuitable evaluation and control systems</li> <li>Unsuitable compensation system</li> </ul>
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear of job insecurity in the new territory</li> <li>Resistance to change among people</li> <li>Lack of enough motivation among employees</li> <li>Lack of employees commitment</li> <li>Fear of job insecurity among managers</li> <li>Lack of enough motivation among managers</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate communication</li> <li>Competing activities among people</li> <li>Lack of effective co-ordination</li> </ul>
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of adequate information system</li> <li>Competing activities among units</li> <li>Lack of a national attitude towards strategy</li> <li>Political factors in regard to power</li> </ul>

The questionnaire was then distributed to 200 managers who work for the public sector; 130 returned completed resulting in 65 percent useable response rate. To measure the reliability of the collected data, a reliability test was performed. The Cronbach's Alpha for the collected data was 0.895<sup>2</sup>. According to Messah and Mucai (2011) and Taslak (2004) 0.60 Cronbach's Alpha value or more are sufficient to ensure data reliability. Descriptive statistics are performed to examine the obstacles of successful implementation strategy in Kuwait.

To identify the main factors expected to impact strategy formulation and strategy implementation, two regression models were estimated. In the first model, factors comprise strategy formulation were combined together to proxy strategy formulation and used as a dependent variable. In the second regression model, factors formed strategy implementation were combined together to represent strategy implementation and used as a dependent variable. The two models can be presented as follows:

$$STRFOR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 STRIML + \beta_2 ORGA + \beta_3 POLREG + \beta_4 HR + \beta_5 COMM + \beta_6 EXTR + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

$$STRIML = \beta_0 + \beta_1 STRFOR + \beta_2 ORGA + \beta_3 POLREG + \beta_4 HR + \beta_5 COMM + \beta_6 EXTR + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Where:

$\beta_0, \beta_6$	: The parameters of the model
<i>STRFOR</i>	: Strategy formulation
<i>STRIML</i>	: Strategy implementation
<i>ORGA</i>	: Organizational factors
<i>POLREG</i>	: Policies and regulations
<i>HR</i>	: Human resources
<i>COMM</i>	: Communications
<i>EXTR</i>	: External factors
$\varepsilon$	: Standard error

### 3.2. Findings and Analysis

Descriptive statistics about the participants in the questionnaire are summarized in table (2). The table revealed that individuals from 12 different public sector organizations took part in the survey. The table also revealed that the vast majority of the participants (97.7%) are Kuwaiti nationals, 59.2% are male and 89.2% of them are either occupying middle or top management levels in their organizations. The table further showed that almost all participants age is more than 25 years and more than 65% of them hold university academic degree with more than 10 years of work experience.

---

<sup>2</sup>The main reason for determining the Cronbach's alpha is to test the reliability of the participants' answers to all sections of the questionnaire, rather than specific sections of the questionnaire.



Table 2 Participants Background Information

Place of Work	Freq.	Percent	Nationality	Freq.	Percent
Education	20	15.4	Kuwaiti	127	97.7
Commerce and Industry	11	8.5	Non-Kuwaiti	3	2.3
Kuwait State Audit Bureau	11	8.5	Total	130	100.0
Interior	10	7.7	<b>Gender</b>		
Kuwait General Administration of Customs	10	7.7	Male	77	59.2
Communication	11	8.5	Female	53	40.8
Electricity & Water	10	7.7	Total	130	100.0
Kuwait National Oil Company	7	5.4	<b>Level of Occupation</b>		
Public works	10	7.7	supervision	14	10.8
Social affairs and Labor	10	7.7	Middle Management	51	39.2
Kuwait Fire Service Directorate	10	7.7	Top Management	65	50.0
Justice	10	7.7	Total	130	100.0
Total	130	100.0	<b>Age</b>		
<b>level of educational</b>			less than 25 years old	1	.8
high school	7	5.4	from 25-35	35	26.9
Diploma	33	25.4	35-45	63	48.5
Bachelor	84	64.6	more than 45 years old	31	23.8
Master level	6	4.6	Total	130	100.0
Total	130	100.0	<b>Years of Experience</b>		
<b>Years of Experience</b>			less than 3 years	12	9.3
less than 3 years	12	9.3	from 3-10	30	23.1
from 3-10	30	23.1	from 10-15	44	33.8
from 10-15	44	33.8	more than 15 years	44	33.8
more than 15 years	44	33.8	Total	130	100.0
Total	130	100.0			

Table (3) presents the main factors that form barriers to strategies formulation and implementation in the public sector of Kuwait. It is evident from the table that strategic formulation represents a major obstacle. This reality has been reflected by the resulted mean and the median. The smallest standard deviation associated with this factor gives clear indication that the participants were consistent about the effect of the strategy formulation factor on the strategic success in the Kuwaiti public sector. The table also showed that the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the factors used to explain ineffective public sectors' strategic implementation as mirrored by the reported mean and median. Similarly, the relatively low standard deviation points to a high level of agreement among the participants. What attracts attention in the table is that the participants agreed that all other main factors listed in the questionnaire represent obstacles towards successful strategic formulation and implementation in the Kuwaiti public sectors. However, the participants showed that public sectors policies, regulations, and the communication system employed in the public sector institutions are the main obstacles towards effective strategic formulation and implantation. External and human resources factors appeared to present less significant obstacle.

Table 3 Results of the description statistics

Factor	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	Rank
Strategic Formulation	3.80	4.00	0.61	1	5	
Strategic implementation	3.52	4.00	0.63	1	5	
Organization	3.53	4.00	0.76	1	5	3
Policies and procedures	3.70	4.00	0.73	1	5	1
Human resources	3.44	3.00	0.77	1	5	4
Communication	3.69	4.00	0.75	1	5	2
External	3.32	3.00	0.96	1	5	5

Table 4 The extent of the participants agreement with all factors affecting successful strategy formulation and implementation

Formulation	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree		No View		Strongly Agree/ Agree		Rank
	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.	(%)	
Unsuitable leadership	13	10.0	28	21.5	89	68.5	12
Lack of exact strategic planning	9	6.9	23	17.7	98	75.4	4
Lack of consensus among decision makers	19	14.6	31	23.8	80	61.5	18
Lack of identification of major problems	21	16.2	32	24.6	77	59.2	19
Lack of effective role formulators	11	8.5	25	19.2	94	72.3	6
Lack of choice of real strategy formulators	18	13.8	21	16.2	91	70.0	7
Lack of strategy understanding	19	14.6	23	17.7	88	67.7	13
<b>Implementation</b>							
Lack of adequate manager commitment	20	15.4	38	29.2	72	55.4	23
Unsuitable training system	24	18.5	34	26.2	72	55.4	23
Lack of enough capabilities of employees	41	31.5	32	24.6	57	43.8	34
Unsuitable personnel management	28	21.5	39	30.0	63	48.5	29
Incompatible structure with the strategy	7	5.4	19	14.6	104	80.0	2
Time limitation	62	47.7	24	18.5	44	33.8	35
Inadequate connection to the vision	16	12.3	27	20.8	87	66.9	14
Unsuitable resources allocation	24	18.5	32	24.6	74	56.9	22
Insufficient linkage between strategy & goals	8	6.2	20	15.4	102	78.5	3
<b>Organization</b>							
Inadequate physical facilities	27	20.8	41	31.5	62	47.7	30
Lack of adequate organizational support	13	10.0	20	15.4	97	74.6	5
Incompatible organizational culture	11	8.5	33	25.4	86	66.2	15
Resistance to change among units	37	28.5	49	37.7	44	33.8	35
<b>Policies and regulations</b>							
Unclear regulation and executive policies	27	20.8	19	14.6	84	64.6	16
Unsuitable evaluation and control systems	12	9.2	27	20.8	91	70.0	7
Unsuitable compensation system	13	10.0	36	27.7	81	62.3	17
<b>Human Resources</b>							
Fear of job insecurity in the new territory	21	16.2	34	26.2	75	57.7	21
Resistance to change among people	36	27.7	36	27.7	58	44.6	31
Lack of enough motivation among employees	20	15.4	19	14.6	91	70.0	7
Lack of employees commitment	31	23.8	23	17.7	76	58.5	20
Fear of job insecurity among managers	40	30.8	32	24.6	58	44.6	31
Lack of enough motivation among managers	31	23.8	32	24.6	67	51.5	28
<b>Communication</b>							
Inadequate communication	12	9.2	27	20.8	91	70.0	7
Competing activities among people	26	20.0	33	25.4	71	54.6	26
Lack of effective co-ordination	8	6.2	16	12.3	106	81.5	1
Lack of adequate information system	17	13.1	19	14.6	94	72.3	6
Competing activities among units	33	25.4	39	30.0	58	44.6	31
<b>External</b>							
Lack of a national attitude towards strategy	40	30.8	18	13.8	72	55.4	23
Political factors in regard to power	38	29.2	24	18.5	68	52.3	27

Table (4) reports the extent of the participants agreement with all factors affecting successful strategy formulation and implementation in the Kuwaiti public sector listed in the questionnaire. The table disclosed that the lack of effective coordination within the public sector institutions as the most significant factor affecting successful strategic formulation and implementation. This factor was followed by factors such as incompatible structure with the strategy, insufficient linkage between strategy and goals, lack of exact strategic planning and lack of adequate organizational support. 75% or more of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that these factors are responsible for unsuccessful strategies formulation and implementation in the Kuwaiti public sector. In addition, between 70-75% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that each of the following factors are responsible for unsuccessful strategies formulation and implementation: lack of effective role formulators, lack of choice of real strategy formulators, unsuitable evaluation and control systems and lack of enough motivation among employees. This implies that almost all aspects of the public sector's institutions (organization, policies and regulations, human resources and communications) contributing to unsuccessful strategies formulation and implementation.

To assess the strength of association between the main factors expected to form major obstacles towards effective strategic formulation and implementation in the Kuwaiti public sector, Person correlation is performed and disclosed in table (5). The table pointed to positive and statistically significant correlations among all listed factors in the questionnaire. This implies that the success of strategic implementation cannot be isolated from its formulation. In addition, the government institution's policies and regulations, organization, human resources, communication and external factors affect successful strategic formulation and strategic implementation. In other words, it is difficult to attain effective strategic implementation without proper strategic formulation; and it is unlikely to achieve a successful strategic formulation and implementation without adequate physical organizational facilities, organization support, compatible organization culture and the willingness to change. Also, successful strategic formulation and implantation in Kuwaiti public sector requires clear regulations and executive policies, suitable evaluation and control and compensation systems. In addition, successful strategic formulation cannot be achieved without satisfied human resources about their job security, motivation and willingness to change. Moreover, successful strategic formulation and implementation require adequate communication system within the public sector institution, avoidance of competing activities among individuals and units, effective coordination and adequate information systems.

Table 5 Correlations among the variables employed in the study

	Strategic implementation	formulation	Organization	Policies and procedures	Human resources	Communication
Strategic implementation	1.000					
formulation	.679**	1.000				
Organization	.657**	.421**	1.000			
Policies and procedures	.513**	.578**	.408**	1.000		
Human resources	.450**	.306**	.600**	.332**	1.000	
Communication	.572**	.426**	.432**	.685**	.297**	1.000
External	.339**	.362**	.102	.288**	.200*	.303**

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).\*\*

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).\*

To identify the main factors responsible for the success or otherwise of strategic formulation in the Kuwaiti public sector, a regression analysis is undertaken and the outcome of the analysis is reported in Table (6). The table showed positive and statistically significant

association between strategic formulation together with strategic implementation and policies and regulations. Positive but marginally statistically significant association also detected between strategic formulation and external factors such as the national attitude towards strategies and political factors regarding power. However, negative and a statistically significant association appeared between strategic formulation and the communication system. This might imply that even though public sectors institutions in Kuwait may have an advanced communication system but it is not employed properly in strategic formulation.

Table 6 Result of the regression analysis: factors affect strategic formulation

Model	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
(Constant)		3.727	.000	
Implementation	.578	6.320	.000	2.350
Organization	-.029	-.322	.748	2.357
Policies and regulation	.403	4.776	.000	2.005
Human resources	-.037	-.482	.631	1.627
Communication	-.193	-2.195	.030	2.174
External	.119	1.798	.075	1.230
F = 26.362		Sig. F = 0.000		Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.541

To identify which of the main factors listed in the questionnaire impact strategic implementation in the Kuwaiti public sectors, a second regression model was estimated where the implementation factor was used and a dependent variable and the results are summarized in Table (7). The table pointed to positive and statistically significant association between strategic implementation and factors such as strategy formulation, organizational and communication factors. The table also pointed to positive but statistically insignificant association between strategy implementation and human resources and external factors. A negative but statistically insignificant association spotted, in the table, between strategy implementation and policies and regulation.

Table 7 Result of the regression analysis: factors affect strategic implementation

Model	Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
(Constant)		.611	.542	
Formulation	.424	6.320	.000	1.726
Organization	.380	5.379	.000	1.910
Policies and regulations	-.101	-1.284	.201	2.346
Human resources	.031	.469	.640	1.627
Communication	.259	3.539	.001	2.051
External	.091	1.599	.112	1.236
F = 43.321		Sig. F = 0.000		Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.663

## 4. CONCLUSION

The current study is set out to investigate factors preventing successful strategies formulation and implantation in the Kuwaiti public sector. Five key factors expected to affect the strategy successful formulation and implementation were identified. The choice of these factors was mainly based on previous studies in this area of research. The main factors were then divided into sub-factors and put together in a survey questionnaire. 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to employees at different levels in twelve organizations belong to the public sector of Kuwait. 130 of the distributed questionnaires returned, resulting in 65% usable rate. The participants in the

questionnaire survey were mainly Kuwaiti nationals and 59% of them are males. A significant number of them are more than 25 years old and most of them completed university academic degrees. They occupy different managerial levels within their organizations and most of them have more than 10 years of work experience. The fact that the participants work for twelve different governmental organization at different organizational levels with long timework experience gives credibility to the questionnaire survey.

The participants emphasized the importance of strategy formulation to achieve successful public sector strategies. The level of agreement expressed by the participants to strategy formulation was higher than that given to strategy implementation. Yet, the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that all listed factors in the questionnaire affect successful strategy formulation and implementation. The high association reported by the strategy formulation and strategy implementation indicates that it is unlikely to implement a strategy in the public sector successfully without properly formulating the strategy. In addition, a properly formulated strategy cannot be implemented without securing the right factors.

The participants indicated that clear policies and regulations together with external factors positively influence strategy formulation. They stressed that the communication system negatively affect strategy formulation. It seems to be the current communication system is not properly employed when formulating strategies. The communication system should be effectively used when setting strategies in the Kuwaiti public sector. This insures personnel strategy understanding and assist in smooth implementation of the strategy.

Analysis of the participants' response emphasized that the lack of effective coordination within the public sector institution is the most significant variable that impact successful strategic formulation and implementation. A substantial proportion of the participants also ascertain that incompatible structure with the strategy, insufficient linkage between strategy and goals, lack of exact strategic planning and lack of adequate organizational support are the main obstacles towards successful strategies formulation and implementation.

On the other hand, policies and regulations together communication and external factors are important factors towards effective strategy formulation. The participants further believe that organizational as well as communication factors are important to successful strategy implementation in the Kuwaiti public sector.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to express their special tokens of gratitude to Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for its financial support and guidance this article, which will be presented at the Scientific Conference in the fields of Global Trends and Challenges in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution held in Republic of Croatia on 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## **REFERENCES**

- Ahmad, A. and Rajuddin, M. (2006). Barriers to translate strategy into action: Balanced scorecard approach. International Conference on Technology Management 2006 (ICTM 2006), 4-5 December 2006, Putrajaya
- Aldehayyat, J. and Anchor, J. (2010). Strategic planning implementation and creation of value in the firm. *Strategic Change*, 19(3-4):163-176. DOI: 10.1002/jsc.866
- Alexander, L. (1985). Successfully implementing strategic decisions. *Long Range Planning* 18(3):91-97.
- Al-Ghamdi, S. (1998). Obstacles to successful implementation of strategic decisions: the British experience. *European Business Review*, 98(6):322-327.
- Al-Gamdi, S. (2006). Obstacles to successful implementation of strategic decision: the Saudi case. King Fahed University of Petroleum & Minerals for the Development, the SABIC grant.

- Ali, M. and Hadi, A. (2012). Surveying and identifying the factors affecting successful implementation of business strategies in companies of Fars Province Industrial Towns (Case study: Companies of Food Industries). *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(1):265-272
- Al-Kandi, I.; Asutay, M. and Dixon, R. (2013). Factors influencing the strategy implementation process and its outcomes: evidence from Saudi Arabian banks. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, 14(December):5-15
- Al-Kharashi, A. and Skitmore, M. (2009). Causes of delays in Saudi Arabian public sector construction projects. *Construction Management and Economics*, 27(1):3-23.
- Alsughayir, A. (2014). Barriers to TQM implementation within a private medical services organizations in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 5(3):117-121
- Canhada, D. and Rese, N. (2011). Implementing strategies: Barriers and facilitators in the specialized Brazilian literature. *Future Studies Research Journal*, 3(1):37-57
- Chemwei, B.; Leboo, C. and Koech, Sh. (2014). Factors that impede the implementation of strategic plans in secondary schools in Baringo District, Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(5): 114-120
- Eadie, D. (1983). Putting a powerful tool to practical use: The application of strategic planning in the public sector. *Public Administration Review* 43(5):447-452.
- Gichoya, D. (2005). Factors affecting the successful implementation of ICT projects in government. *Electronic Journal of e-Government*, 3(4):175-184.
- Islam, J. and Ali, M. (2011). Identifying problems of strategic operations management in business organizations in Bangladesh: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Business and Policy Research*, 6(1):75-86
- Ivančić, V. (2013). The biggest failures in managing strategy implementation. *Interdisciplinary Management Research*, 9: 197-208
- Kargar, J. and Blumenthal, A. (1994). Successful implementation of strategic decisions in small community banks. *Journal of Small Business Management* 32(2):10-23.
- Kenyatta, J. (2013). Barriers to strategy implementation by mid sized companies in Kenya. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 13(12):8-12
- Koseoglu, M.; Barca, M. and Karayormuk, K. (2009). A study on the causes of strategies failing to success. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, 6(December):77-91
- Latif, B.; Gohar, F.; Hussain, A. and Kashif, M. (2012). Barriers to effective strategic planning. *International Journal of Management and Organizational Studies*, 2(1):16-21
- Lihalo, M. (2013). Barriers to strategy implementation by mid sized companies in Kenya. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 13(12):8-14
- Mbaka, R. and Mugambi, F. (2014). Factors affecting successful strategy implementation in the Water Sector in Kenya. *Journal of Business and Management*, 6(7):61-68
- Messah, O. and Mucai, P. (2011). Factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans in government tertiary institutions: A survey of selected technical training institutes. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3(3):85-105
- Mohammed, A.; Saiah, S. and Bon, A. (2013). The application of strategic management in Libya's industrial sectors for a successful business. *IJRRAS* 15 (3):379-384
- Ndegwah, D. (2014). Factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 3(2):993-1002
- Ng'ang'a, W. and Ombui, K. (2013). Factors influencing implementation of strategic plans in public secondary schools in Lari District, Kiambu County. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 2(11): 92-98
- Njeru, N.; Stephen, M. and Wambui, M. (2013). Analysis of factors influencing formulation of strategic plans in Embu North District, Embu County, Kenya. *Global Business and Economics Research Journal*, 2(5):116-129.
- O'Regan, N. and Ghobadian, A. (2002). Effective strategic planning in small and medium sized firms. *Management Decision*, 40 (7):663-671. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00251740210438490>
- Rad, A. (2005). A survey of total quality management in Iran: Barriers to successful implementation in health care organizations. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 18(4/5):12-34
- Robani, A.; Hassan, S. and Hussin, H. (2014). Exploring the motivation for and barriers to academic leadership among Malaysian community college lecturers of rural settlement background. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 22 (2):284-290. DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2014.22.02.21908

- Samad, S.; Yusuf, S. and Ahmed, W. (2014). The influence of strategic planning on organizational performance: A case in Malaysian healthcare system. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 8(13):508-515
- Seifi, H. and Sazvar, A. (2012). Strategic analysis and strategic planning barriers ranking using MADM techniques in high tech organizations. *Interdisciplinary Journal of contemporary Research in Business*, 3(11):851-859
- Sial, A.; Usman, M.; Zufiqar, S.; Satti, A. and Khursheed, I. (2013). Why do public sector organizations fail in implementation of strategic plan in Pakistan?. *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 3(1):33-41
- Smith, E. (2011). Perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks in selected industries: A South African perspective. *International Journal of Business and Commerce*, 1(4):22-45
- Taslak, S. (2004). Factors restricting success of strategic decisions: evidence from the Turkish textile industry. *European Business Review*, 16(2):152-164.
- Zhang, X.; Shen, L.; Wu, Y. and Qi, G. (2011). Barriers to Implement Green Strategy in the Process of Developing Real Estate Projects. *The Open Waste Management Journal*, 4, 33-37

