

# The Mediating Role of Sustainability between Strategic Planning and the Performance of Governmental Organizations

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<p>Article history Submitted: 20 October, 2020 Revised: 15 December, 2020 Accepted: 25 December, 2020</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b> Strategic planning is critical for organizations to survive and thrive. The use of strategic planning and its relationship with the performance of governmental organizations has received less attention. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of strategic planning on the organizational performance of public organizations. The study also aims to examine the mediating role of sustainability. The population is the employees of the department of economic development in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Using the partial least square, the study found that strategic planning affected positively the sustainability and the organizational performance. In addition, sustainability mediated the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance. Improving strategic planning will have a positive impact on the sustainability and the organizational performance of organizations.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Strategic Planning</i> <i>Sustainability</i> <i>Organizational Performance</i> <i>Organizational Culture</i></p>	

## 1. Introduction

Strategic planning is considered as a mechanism through which organizations make timely decisions in order to manage the limited resources in a rational way. It helps to increase and improve services and achieve greater satisfaction for all stakeholders [1], [2]. In order to reach strategic success and due to the tremendous technological progress and technical practices, several governmental organizations try to follow methods that enable them to achieve their strategic success and the most important of these methods is the sustainable development [3].

In the context of the economic changes and social transformations taking place in the contemporary world, the United Nations has adopted and promoted new concepts and strategies to help countries to deal with issues of sustainable development [4]. Sustainability refers to the permanence and continuity in the development activities, thus sustainable development summons to expanding options for individuals of society, in order to actively contribute to advancing and moving the wheel of development in its economic and social aspects [5] [6]. The optimal way to achieve this objective is by a strategic partnership between government institutions and civil society organizations [7].

Due to the technological revolution and recent developments, governmental organizations suffer from a turbulent external environment; this makes strategic planning as the optimal option for responding to the rapid change in the elements of the environment [8] [3]. Several factors contribute to the weakness of strategic planning in public sector organizations. These include the lack of available resources, such as the lack of resources, the difficulty of accessing resource, the difficulty of managing them and the lack of the necessary capabilities [9], [10]. The strategy may require significant time and cost, which limits the perception of opportunities and potential risks and the truth, and this matter would affect the performance of these organizations [11], [12].

As a result of the changes brought about by technology and modern technologies, pressures appeared on all organizations, and based on society's view of governmental organizations, the low performance of governmental organizations has become evident [13], [14]. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of strategic planning on the performance of governmental organizations. It also aims to examine the mediating role of sustainability between strategic planning and the performance of economic governmental organizations. In the following section, the literature is reviewed followed by the research methodology, findings of this study as well as the discussion and conclusion.

## 2. Literature Reviews and Conceptual Model

This section reviews the literature pertaining to the variables of this study. The section presents a review of the strategic planning, organizational performance, and the sustainability as well as the conceptual framework of this study along with the hypotheses development.

## *2.1 Strategic planning*

Strategic planning is the process by which the strategy is developed, it includes strategic analysis, strategic choice and identification of alternatives, it is concerned with creating coherence and consistency between strategic and interim goals and short-term goals in a way that ensures that all scattered efforts are directed towards achieving personal goals in the best way and costs [15]. Strategic planning appeared for the first time in 1960s, and the planning method was developed in the mid-sixties. Development of strategic planning continued in 1970s and recently the strategic planning has become one of the most important field in the strategic management domain. The emergence and development of strategic planning contributed to the intellectual, scientific and professional accumulation in other planning systems and institutions that practiced the planning process in various forms [16]–[20].

Planning is a thoughtful and realistic process that includes creating a state of balance between three elements, namely “goal, resource, and time” by trying to reach the maximum goal with the optimal use of resources and in the shortest possible time [21]. Strategic planning is an essential function in managing organizations and a driving force to shape their future in planned and deliberate ways, for its role in defining their goals and ambitions and how to achieve them [22]. Strategic planning clarifies the framework and direction that leads and supports the management of the organization, helps in managing crises, increases the ability to deal with external risks, defines a common vision and goal for all workers in the organization, and increases the level of commitment towards the organization and its goals [23], [24]. Strategic planning helps to facilitate communications and participation, directing senior management to priority issues, clearly defining the vision and goals, providing information to senior management to make a better decision [25]. In this study, strategic planning is deployed as the independent variable and it is expected to have a direct effect on the performance of organization.

## *2.2 Organizational performance*

The performance is defined as a reflection of how the institution uses financial and human resources efficiently and effectively in a way that makes it able to analyze its goals [26]. It is the ability to produce effectively to allow the realization of organizational objective and to achieve the predetermined goals of organizations [27]–[29]. Organizational performance is a result of the resource allocated to and the effort has been made to achieve the goal of the organizations. It is one of the most important dependent variable for research that are interested in evaluating the effectiveness of organization [30]–[32]. Generally, organizational performance is the quantitative information regarding the degree of achievement of the goals, objectives, standards and plans followed in the organization [33]. Organizational performance is also the sum of the results of the activities and practices of the organization, which are expected to correspond to the planned and established objectives, it is also the final result of the activities of the organization [34]

Performance in organizations is given great attention for the functioning of institutions on the grounds that it represents the main motivation for the survival of any institution, and is considered the most contributing factor to achieving its main goal, which is survival and continuity [27]. The improvement of performance is a measurement that can be used at the beginning of the job, starting from the employee at the lower levels to the managers at the higher levels, and it must be effective at those levels to be reflected in the end on improving the performance of the organization as a whole [35]–[37].

## *2.3 Sustainability*

Sustainable development is a term synonymous with the term sustainability, which countries aspire to associate with their development model because economic development is related to bringing about changes in the economic structure and redistributing income in favor of the poor classes, i.e., correcting the imbalance in the income distribution structure in a way that reduces the differences between groups of society [38], [39]. Sustainable development is also the product of the intellectual and economic effort, and it was considered as a model that simulates the capacity of the earth and takes into account ecological balances in accommodating human requirements across time and space [40], [41].

Economic sustainability is the generation of long-term income through operations related to the housing sector, securing sites for various types of economic activities related to housing and creating job opportunities, helping poor communities bear the initial costs of sustainable construction [42], [43]. Through the economic dimension, the principles of sustainable development try to achieve an ideal balance between the life cycle of the product and the preservation of the production process, i.e., work to provide products with a long period of use in a manner that does not affect the profitability of investing in them, as well as trying to focus on reducing the negative effects of products on human health [44], [45]

Sustainable development is one that reconciles environmental, economic and social development, thus creating a valid circle between these three poles that is economically effective, socially equitable, and environmentally feasible. Sustainable development focuses on the concept of balance between the needs of successive generations, that it fulfils on an equal basis the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations [38], [39], [46].

## *2.4 Conceptual Model*

Based on the literature review and the resource based view, this study proposes that the strategic planning and its dimensions i.e., organizational culture, innovation, and information system will have a direct positive effect on the organizational performance. The study also proposes that the sustainability will mediate the effect of strategic planning on the organizational performance. Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of this study.

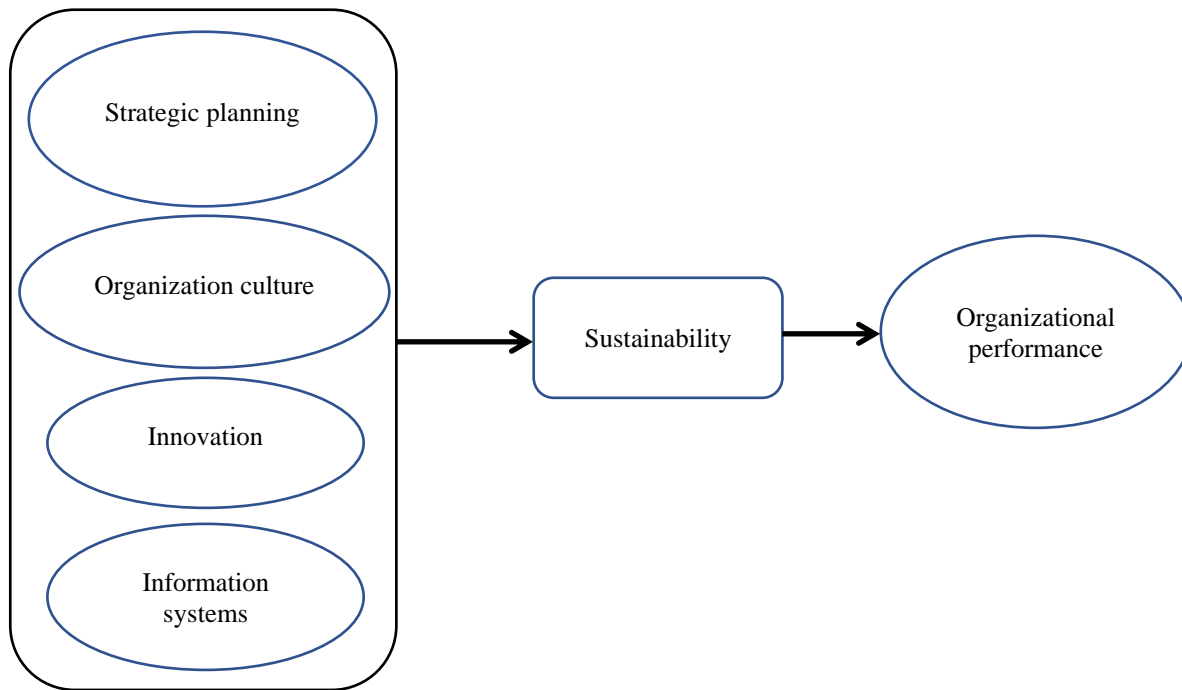


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Based on the review of literature, i.e., [3], [27], [30], [47]–[50], it is proposed in this study that the effect of strategic planning (organizational culture, innovation and information system) on organizational performance is positive and significant. Accordingly, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

- H1: Strategic planning has a significant positive effect on organizational performance
- H2: Strategic planning has a significant positive effect on sustainability.
- H3: Sustainability has a positive significant effect on organizational performance.
- H4: Sustainability will mediate the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance.

### 3. Methodology

This study deployed a descriptive and analytical approach. The population is the employees in Department of Economic Development in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Accordingly, the number of the population is 84,282. Random sampling technique is deployed in this study because the population is homogenous [51]. Based on [52], the sample size is 307 respondents. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire is the best option for collecting data, and previous studies have used this tool to collect the data [53]–[55]. A total of 279 respondents answer the questionnaire. In this study, data were analyzed and conclusions reached through SPSS and Partial Least Square (Smart PLS). Analysis such as the missing values, outliers, normality and multicollinearity were conducted using SPSS. The results showed that no missing data. However, a total of 12 respondents were deleted due to outliers. Data is normally distributed and no multicollinearity issue among the variables. This has resulted in 267 complete and usable responses, representing an 87% response rate of the total number of respondents.

### 4. Findings

In this section, the findings regarding the descriptive information of respondents and the hypotheses testing are discussed.

#### 4.1 Profile of respondents

Most of the respondents are males and their number reached (190) and their percentage was (71.2%), with Bachelor's degree (87.6%). And those with experience from 8 to 15 years have reached (152), and their percentage of the study sample is (56.6%). Finally, the job title of the respondents, the number of respondents who work as a subordinate employees reached 190, and their percentage was (71.2%).

#### 4.2 Measurement Model

In assessing the measurement model, [56] [57] [58] suggested that researchers must examine five criteria that are the factor loading (FL) ( $>0.70$ ) the reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite reliability (CR) both  $>0.70$ ). In addition, the validities such as the convergent validity which is achieved if the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50 and the discriminant validity which is achieved if the root square of AVE is greater than the cross loading. For the factor loading, some items were removed due to low loading. After deleting the items with low loading, all the criteria of the assessment were achieved. In Table 1, it can be seen that all the criteria has been achieved indicating that the measurement of this study is reliable as well as valid. CA and CR are greater than 0.70 and the AVE is greater than 0.50.

Table 1: Results of Measurement Model

Variables	CA	CR	AVE
Organizational Performance	0.982	0.981	0.798
Strategic Planning	0.979	0.984	0.874
Sustainability	0.972	0.976	0.855

#### 4.3 Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The result of testing the structural model showed that more than 55% of the variation in organizational performance can be explained by the variables. All the variables have acceptable level of predictive relevance and effect size. The result of path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is determined based on P-value of less than 0.05. Table 2 presents the result of direct effect hypotheses. The table shows the path of the hypothesis, path coefficient ( $\beta$ ), standard deviation (STDEV), T-values, and P-values.

Table 2: Result of Direct Hypothesis

Path	$\beta$	STDEV	T-Values	P-Values
Strategic Planning -> Organizational Performance	0.245	0.0693	3.570	0.000
Strategic Planning -> Sustainability	0.566	0.049	11.439	0.000
Sustainability -> Organizational Performance	0.273	0.076	3.579	0.000

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance is positive. Findings in Table 2 confirmed that the hypothesis is supported. For the second hypothesis, it is supported because the effect of strategic planning on sustainability has a coefficient of 0.566 at p-value of less than 0.05. Therefore, H2 is supported. For the third hypothesis, it is also supported. The effect of sustainability on organizational performance is positive and significant as shown in Table 2.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) says that there is a mediating role of sustainability between strategic planning and the performance of the Department of Economic Development, and the results in Table (3) indicate that this hypothesis is accepted, as the indirect effect was statistically significant with a path coefficient of 0.154 and significance level less than 0.05. Thus, it is concluded that there is a mediating role of sustainability in the relationship between strategic planning and the performance of the Department of Economic Development. The mediation is partial since the direct and the indirect effect are significant.

Table 3: Result of Mediation Analysis

Path	$\beta$	STDEV	T-Values	P-Values
Strategic planning -> Sustainability -> organizational performance	0.154	0.043	3.589	0.000

## 5. Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the effect of strategic planning on the organizational performance of the department of economic development in UAE. The findings showed the existence of an important statistical effect of strategic planning on the performance of the Department of Economic Development. This confirms that the hypothesis is acceptable and statistically significant, and because the relationship is positive, the increase in strategic planning has a positive effect on the performance of the Department of Economic Development. The finding showed also that there is an important relationship between strategic planning and sustainability. This confirms that the hypothesis is acceptable and that strategic planning has an important role in sustainability. Thus, in order for the Department of Economic

Development to increase the sustainability, strategic planning must be implemented. The findings also showed that the effect of sustainability on the organizational performance is significant indicating that the increase in the practice of sustainability will lead to an increase in the organizational performance of the Department of Economic Development. These findings are in line with the resource based view which includes that the organization can use its resources and capabilities to improve the organizational performance [8], [27], [30].

The findings also showed that sustainability is a mediating variable between strategic planning and organizational performance. This indicates that part of the relationship between the two variables can be explain via sustainability. These findings lead to suggestions that the department of economic development must use strategic planning and sustainability as tools to improve the organizational performance of the department.

## 6. Conclusion

This study covered the impact of strategic planning on the organizational performance of the Department of Economic Development. The results of hypothesis testing indicated that strategic planning have a direct impact on organizational performance. There was also a mediating role of sustainability between strategic planning and the performance of organizations. The finding are limited to the department of economic development and the perception of the respondents. Future studies are suggested to study the strategic planning and its effect on the economic and the development of specific sectors. Decision makers are recommended to enhance the strategic planning process and to establish sustainable practices.

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