

# The Impact of Strategic Planning Activities on Private Sector Organizations Performance in Sudan: An Empirical Research

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## Abstract

Private sector organizations of 21<sup>st</sup> century face local and international challenges resulted from the revolution of information, technological development, globalization, market liberalization and knowledge explosion, therefore strategic planning in private sector became an urgent necessity. The aims of this study, is an attempt to study the impact of strategic planning activities on private sector organizations in Sudan. The study comprises four variables of strategic planning process indicators. Those indicators represent each a component of strategic planning process and were obtained from inclusive review of the literature of strategic planning which are mission statement, implementation, internal & external analysis and control and evaluation. Organizational performance is measured by productivity and turnover dynamic. Data (N= 60) for this study were collected through questionnaires which were accompanied by a letter expressing the research project and promising respondents of the privacy of their answers. Those participants were managers of ten private sectors organizations in Sudan-Khartoum state. Statistical tools such as Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to test hypotheses and achieve the objectives, and the statistical package for social science was used to coordinate the data, thus the research is descriptive and as a result quantitative methods have been used. The result confirms that all four variables of strategic planning activities are positively correlated with organizational performance in Sudanese private sector organizations.

**Keywords:** strategic planning, performance, private sector

## 1. Introduction

There are many organizations in private and public sector in comparison to other are more profitable, their performance is more desirable and lucrative and they can easily overcome and tolerate political, economical and social changes on other hand there are many other organizations fail easily and cannot continue their business because they don't formulate proper strategy in this condition of uncertainty and intensive hypercompetitive. Strategic planning, a challenging process that involves patience, perservance and strong team effort, gives life to the mission and vision of the organization for achieving desired and cherished goals and objectives by facilitating effective decision-making even in the day to day activities of your organization, it provides you with the big picture of what you are doing and where you are going. Strategic planning gives you clarity about what actually you want to achieve so that strategic planning is a road map to lead an organization from its current position today to where it should be tomorrow. Therefore, many researchers have proven that strategic planning improves the success of an organization (Miller & 1994).

The aim of this paper is to check up whether there is significant correlation between the four main elements of strategic planning process namely: mission statement, the control and evaluation of strategies, implementation, internal and external analysis and organization performance in Sudanese private sector.

As the Most of studies concerning strategic planning in private businesses and its relationship with performance were prepared in the US and very few researches were undertaken in other developed countries such as the United Kingdom. Very little interest has been given to the study of strategic planning in private businesses in Africa in wide-ranging and in Sudan in specific. Therefore researcher consider that this paper will contribute to filling void existent in the research of the field of strategic planning on private sectors organizations in Sudan

and its impact on performance.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Strategic Planning

First planning is an exercise to visualize or anticipate or project the future, and act accordingly. Moreover, it's an intellectual process, the conscious determination of course of action. And strategy in its simplest terms refers to the method of an achievement, a planned operation in the execution of a project.

Before trying to offer a definition of what strategic planning is, it is valuable to declare that when some organizations want to change, they plan for it, and this planned change is a part of overall management approach.

Strategic planning as corporation development an instrument as we know it nowadays ongoing to be out lined in mid 1950s and for more than 30 years was mainly used in private organization sector while the perception and performing culture of public administration was developing entirely on the basis of national constitution and laws, today in one or another way all organizations in both private and public sectors, are using strategic planning as an instrument of performance and development .Moreover, Strategic planning is a new technique and means of forecasting which is the backbones and stone corners of every common-interest organization. Thus, it's important to know what strategic planning is. Strategic planning can be defined as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decision and an actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity), what it does, and why it does it? (Bryson, 1995).

It is a management technique intends to acknowledge the challenges and opportunities besides, strengths, & weakness of the organization facing it. Furthermore it's identify the future and how it will seek to achieve its vision, strategic planning pay particular attention to the organization's long term goals, calculate it's capabilities to achieve those goals, examines environmental factors that may affect the organization and identifies designed to move the organization forward in complex global environment, un predictable changes time and uncertainty which are precisely the reason why organizations should process strategic planning. The enterprises, which make decision without strategic planning, have a double chance to achieve extremely poor results.

The intentions of strategic planning are assisting organizations to get competitive advantages. However, with strategic planning future state is not predictable but in turbulent environment, strategic planning can help organization to think carefully in order to achieve a particular goal in a systematic way and develop effective strategies, develop a reasonable, sensible and defensible basis for decision making, make organization performance better, deal effectively with speedily changing circumstances, Provide employees with unambiguous objectives and guidelines for the future of the organization, increase employees enthusiasm and satisfaction, build teamwork and expertise, anticipate future problems and opportunities (Amin & Majid, 2011).

Strategic planning can be used successfully by: an organization connected with a government, that deals with providing service, department, or major organizational divisions, general purposes governments such as city, country, state or tribal government, nonprofit organizations providing what are essentially public services, and purpose-driven inter organizational networks (such as partnerships, collaborations, or alliances) in the public and nonprofit sector designed to fulfill specific purpose such as transportation, health, education or emergency services (Bryson, 2010).

There are several common business reasons for an organization to create a strategic plan, including the need to:

- Clarify and facilitate the emergence of a consensus on the organization's strategy. The strategic-planning process can help the organization's employees find answers to the big questions about its purpose, meaning, and value.
- Communicate this strategy to all levels of the organization—and to its diverse stakeholders and customers.
- Strengthen the fit between departmental and personal goals and the organization's overarching vision.
- Identify and align strategic initiatives, so the strategic actions of one part of the organization don't conflict with those of another (for example, so the team-based incentive pay system developed by operations doesn't conflict with the knowledge-based incentive program developed by human resources).

### 2.2 Organization's Mission

The mission statement of an organization is about the purposes and the reason of its existence, victorious mission statements start by influentially expressing the organization's purpose. The mission statement should direct the actions of the organization, shed light on its overall goal; provide a path, and facilitating decision-making. It provides "the framework or context within which the company's strategies are formulated (Hill, 2008). Mission

statements often include the following information: Goal (s) of the organization, how the organization offers value to stakeholders and a declaration of an organization's sole basis purpose. The question why does organization exist? Essentially answers by a mission statement. According to (Bart et al 2001) the commercial mission statement consists of three essential components: Key market -who is your target client/customer? Contribution – what product or service do you provide to that client? And Distinction – what makes your product or service unique, so that the client would choose you? It makes concrete the leader's view of the direction and purpose of the organization. Therefore, the mission is a unique fundamental object which distinct organization from other similar organization and determines its operation range in terms of product, technology, and market. Formulating of such a mission should be done in a way that the values and strategic decision makers' priorities and preferences should be reflected in it (Amin & Majid 2011).

### 2.2.1 Strategic Implementation

The word implementation is given a diversity of meaning in the literature. Implementation is a course of action directed by management to set up planning change in an organization. Implementation is a method of gaining appropriate and committed use of innovation by targeted organizational members; implementation is the extent to which an innovation becomes deep-rooted within organizational behaviors. Implementation also describes as the restructuring and reorganizing of internal activities to achieve the stated objective following by resource allocation. Strategy implementation is the means of: designing the structure of organization, ensuring that divisional and functional managers have the right background, and allocating resource (Jean2012). Also, strategic implementation can be defined as the process of transforming intentions into action. The dichotomy between intentions has been central to the study of strategic management in organization. Nevertheless, a full discussion of strategy implementation has been missing or undervalue in considerable literature (Victor et al, 2012). Certo and peter (1991) declared that without successful strategy implementation organizations are unable and in need of help to harvest the benefit of performing an organizational analysis, developing organizational direction, and originate organizational strategy.

### 2.2.2 Internal and External Analysis

The internal analysis (strengths& weaknesses) is a comprehensive evaluation of the internal environment's potential strengths and weaknesses. Factors should be evaluated across the organization in areas such as: Company culture, Company image, Organizational structure, Key staff Access to natural resources, Position on the experience curve and Operational efficiency.

External analysis (opportunity & threat) an opportunity is the chance to introduce a new product or service that can generate superior returns. Opportunities can arise when changes occur in the external environment. Many of these changes can be perceived as threats (threat is major undesirable situation in organization's environment). To the market position of existing products and may necessitate a change in product specifications or the development of new products in order for the firm to remain competitive. Changes in the external environment may be related to: Customers, Competitors, Market trends, Suppliers Partners Social changes and new technology.

### 2.2.3 Strategy Evaluation and Control

The evaluation and control is the point at which the results of a given strategy are monitored and determining how many the goals is achieved. Strategy evaluation includes three following main activities:

- Review of main principle of organization's strategy
- Compare expected results with actual result.
- Taking corrective action to ensure the accuracy of performance and operating based on plans.

Meanwhile, there are four criteria for strategy evaluation.

- Procedure stability
- Compatibility with environmental factors
- Feasibility
- Having a competitive advantage. (Forouzandeh, 2005).

## 2.3 Organizational Performance

Performance is at the core of all activities in any institution. An organization's performance determines its survival in any given economy. Mockie (2008) defines organization performance as the effectiveness of the organization in fulfilling its purpose. Curristine (2005) defines performance as "the yield or result of activities carried out in a relation to the purpose being pursued. its objective is to strengthen the degree to which

organization achieve their purposes” Also, performance is defined as all aspect of performance that are relevant for the existence of an organization as a whole and success as the way the organization carries its objectives into effective (flapper et al; 1996). According to Barney (1991) performance is a continuous process to controversial between organizational researchers. Performance consists of qualitative and quantitative elements related to the completion of duties targeted by organization.

In assessing performance, organizations must consider key performance indicators that are usually developed in line with the organization’s framework, strategies and objectives. Key performance indicators play a crucial role in determining an organization’s level of performance and it can either be financial or nonfinancial (Stephen, et al, 2012). Examples of key performance indicators include measure of human resource out comes (turn over, absenteeism, and job satisfaction), organizational outcomes (productivities, quality and services.), financial outcomes (ROA, ROE, and profitability), and capital market out comes (stock, price growth and return) (Deyer & Reeve, 1995). Chien (2004) suggested that organization performance cover five core components such as motivation models, the leadership, the organizational culture and environment, the work design and the human resource management policy. Delaney and Huselid (1996) consider previous market performance and productivity performance as an important index of organizational performance. Furthermore, Guest et al (2004) perceived organizational performance outcomes as management rating of employee performance, employee innovation, and employment relations. Various organizations are strategically expected to achieve positive performance, outcomes. This study proposes two factors which are turnover and productivity.

Accordingly, an effective performance measurement system ought to cover all aspect of performance that is relevant for the existence of an organization and the means by which it achieves success and growth (Nicholas, 2005).

Improving performance or ensuring sustained level of great performance, involves developing the right strategies that include several factors such as developing proper information technology resource, acquiring and retaining the right caliber, or quality human capital developing policies that encourage innovation and experimentation.

### 3. The Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the impact of strategic planning management activates on organizational performance in private sector, to achieve this objective, the following objectives taken up under consideration.

- 1) To study the concept of strategic planning activities.
- 2) To measure the relationship between strategic planning and organizational performance.
- 3) To study the impact of strategic planning activities in Sudanese private sector organizational on their organizational performance.
- 4) To increase an awareness in organization regarding effective strategic planning.
- 5) To propose useful direction for future research.

### 4. Research Hypotheses

In order to achieve the objectives designed for this study, the following research hypotheses are stated based on the revelation in the review of literature concerning strategic planning activities and organizational performance.

*Hypothesis One.* A significant positive relationship exists between Mission statement and organization performance in Sudanese private sector companies.

*Hypothesis Two.* A significant positive relationship exists between Internal & external analysis and organization performance in Sudanese private sector companies.

*Hypothesis Three.* A significant positive relationship exists between Strategic implementation and a significant positive relationship with organization performance in Sudanese private sector companies.

*Hypothesis Four.* A significant positive relationship exists between Strategy Control and evaluation and organization performance in Sudanese private sector companies

### 5. Research Framework

#### 5.1 Research Model

Figure1.Below. Explains how this study is carried out, where strategic planning activities which comprises four indicators that represent each component of strategic planning process formed as independent variable they are: development of mission statement, the analysis of internal and external environment, the control &evaluation of

the strategic and the implementation. While performance including turnover dynamic, productivity and job satisfaction are formed as dependent variable.

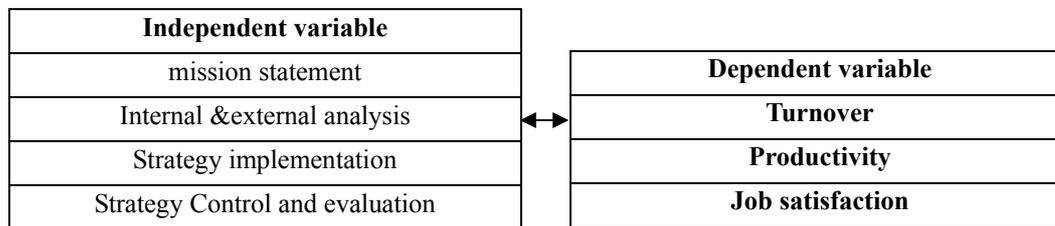


Figure 1. Research model

### 5.2 Sample

The research population is the group of people, organizations, or any other collection of substance under consideration for a research purpose (Jehad, 2011). The population of this research is invented of all private sector organizations in Sudan the study cover Khartoum state most of our companies included in this study (10) are medium size and 45.3% are small and micro business in size, the majority of the companies operated in building, medicine and printing. Stratified random sampling technique is used in selecting the sampled organization from the study population. The respondents were managers and employees of private sector organizations in Sudan.

### 5.3 Data Source and Instrumentation

To achieve this research, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data sources include extensive desk research through library, different published material and world-wide web. Primary data was collected through questionnaire. Questionnaire was constructed to measure strategic planning activities and organizational performance. The questionnaire was designed based on four independence variables of strategic planning, which were mission statement, implementation, internal & external analysis and control and evaluation. Those items were product from extensive review of literature on strategic planning that is considered to communicate with organizational performance. For the dependent variable, Dyer and Reeve, (1995) proposed four types of measuring for organizational performance affected by HRM those types are HR outcomes (turn over, absenteeism, and job satisfaction), organizational outcomes (productivities, quality and services.), financial outcomes (ROA, ROE, and profitability), and capital market out comes (stock, price growth and return).The variables are closely related conceptually to some hypothesized precursors of performance. But for the purpose of this study (turnover dynamic, productivity, and job satisfaction) are used as a measure for organizational performance ,turnover is the number of employee stop working for an organization( ya-fen,2009), productivity is the output of services and goods per unit of input of resource in a production (lai & chin,2005). Total of (80) questionnaire were distributed, (75) were returned, with a response rate of (93%) percent. Some of the returned questionnaires are excluded due to incomplete information. As a result, a total of (60) questionnaire were determined as usable and entered into statistical analysis. Overall (38) questions were developed and a five-points Likert scales were adopted as it is believed to be an easier approach to collected data (see table2). The questionnaires were distributed and collected within (December 2012 - January 2013). The questionnaires a by a letter expressing the research project and promising respondents of the privacy of their answers, the addresses of the questionnaire were managers of medium and micro business in Khartoum state. from the theme's point of view, it is worth having respondents who are in leading positions because they may have greater influence upon the creation and increase of values of the companies, and are capable of implementing changes within organization.

It is important to mention that the questionnaire had to be translated into Arabic to respect those respondents who do not know English.

Table 1. Views of the sample examined, according to the Likert scale and corresponding degrees

Opinion	Strongly Agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	strongly disagree
Degrees	5	4	3	2	1

Source: edited by the author

#### 5.4 Research Philosophy and Methods

The growing interest of strategic planning in developing countries and Sudan in particular, added a great interest for the researcher to adopt this research. Since the major objective of this empirical research is investigate the impact of strategic planning activities on private sector organization in Sudan. We believed that this philosophy is appropriate and will help in reaching objectivity.

The research is descriptive and as a result quantitative methods have been used for analysis. Firstly, the SPSS package was used so as to put data into a system. Reliability analysis was conducted on all questions in the survey instrument in order to better understand the relationship among research variable, Spearman's correlation analysis was conduct to assess the relationship between strategic planning activities and performance. The mean is used to measure the average answer of respondent and the standard deviation is used to measure variation. The scale used in the survey was a five- point Likert scale. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire.

#### 5.5 Reliability and Validity

Before a applying statistical tools, the assessment of reliability and internal consistency of questionnaire is much important, (Hair, et al, 2007) define the validity as "the degree to which a measure accurately represent what it is supposed to". in order to be sure that the questionnaire is clear, specific, measuring what intend to measured and leaving little room for ambiguity the questionnaire was displayed to four experts and academic in the field of the study.

Reliability differs from validity in that it relates not to what should be measure, but instead to how to be measured. Reliability is defined as the extent to which variable or set of variables is consistent in what it Therefore in the present study, Cronbach Alpha reliability test is conducted for all measures. It is commonly used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of psychometric test score for a sample of examinees.

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is define as

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right) \quad (1)$$

Where  $K$  is the number of components ( $K$ -items or *testlets*),  $\sigma_X^2$  the variance of the observed total test scores, and  $\sigma_{Y_i}^2$  the variance of component  $i$  for the current sample of persons (Devellis 1991).

Reliabilities are checked and they all fall between (.77) and (.91), which is satisfactory value because the satisfactory value is required to be more than 0.6 for the scale to be reliable (Sabapriya, 2011). The overall Cronbach alpha of the all scales used in this study is (.85). This indicate that the scales of present study is high reliable for data analysis. Table 2 Represent the Cronbach alpha value of all variables.

Table 2. Result of reliability test

Scale	Overall strategic mission	Internal analysis	Strategic	Strategy Control	Performance
	Planning	external analysis	implementation	& evaluation	
Cronbach alph	.85	.82	.77	.91	.88

Source: field Survey, 2012

## 6. Data Analysis

### 6.1 Respondent Profile

As shown in table 3. 86.7% of the respondent was male and 13.3% was female. Majority of the respondent (70%) possess B.SC degree, (20%) possess M.sc degree, and (3.3%) diploma certificate and (6.7) possess PhD. this is an indicator that the respondents are composed of highly educated people who should know more about strategic planning and it is impact on their organizations and (26.7%) of the respondent have 10-14 years experience, 33.7% have 5-9 years experience this is an indication that the respondent actually spent enough time in the service to know the impact of strategic planning on their organizations performance. Majority of the respondent (86.7%) were married. In Job title, 68.7% were assistant manager, 11.3% General manager & above and 20% were senior manager.

Table 3. Demographic characteristic of respondents

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	86.7%
Female	08	13.3%
<b>Level of education</b>		
Diploma	02	3.3%
B.sc	42	70%
M.sc	12	20%
P.hd	04	6.7%
<b>Years of experience</b>		
Less than 5 years	14	23.3%
5-9 years	20	33.3%
10-14 years	16	26.7%
15 and more	10	16.7%
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	05	8.3%
Married	52	86.7%
Widow	02	3.3%
Divorced	01	1.7%
<b>Job title</b>		
Assistant manager	41	68.3%
Senior manager	12	20%
General manager & above	07	11.7%

Source: field Survey, 2012

### 6.2 Hypotheses Test

Spearman's correlation was carried out so as to measure the relation between strategic planning and organizations performance. As according to Welkowitz, Cohen and Ewen (2006), a correlation coefficient is a very useful way to summarize the relation between two variables with a single number that falls between -1 and +1. Ayesha (2012), stated that -1.0 indicate a perfect negative correlation, 0.0 indicates no correlation, and +1.0 indicate a positive correlation. The result of correlation analysis (see table 4) shows that there is strong positive significant relation between strategic planning activities and organizational performance in private company in Sudan (correlation .858 at .01 level). Also it is found that there is strong positive relation between mission statement and organization performance of private sector in Sudan (correlation .463 at .01 level). It can be observed that the correlation of internal analysis external analysis is .664 and the significant level is 01 this indicates that internal analysis external analysis is positively correlated with organization performance in the private sector organization in Sudan. It is also evident from table 4 that Strategic implementation is positively correlate with organization performance of private sector in Sudan.(correlation,.668 at 01 level).it is also found that there is strong positive relation between Strategy Control & evaluation and organization performance of private sector in Sudan (correlation .663 at .01 level) the results. Reveals a significant positive relationship between organization performances of private sector in Sudan.

Table 5 delineates the mean score and standard deviation of the four variables. All the factor are having score more than 3.2 though the value of the deviation is less than (1.00) which indicate that the concentration of the answers and lack of dispersion. (See table 5). Therefore the correlation analysis confirmed that all the four hypotheses were accepted. And the finding of the research shows that all strategic planning activities had a significant relation with organizational performance. This result strongly supports the empirical research which indicates to the value of strategic planning to organization performance. Thus it is not surprising that these organizations paid much effort to involve in strategic planning process.

Table 4. The correlation between strategic planning activities and organizational performance (N=60)

		Strategic mission planning	mission statement	Internal& external analysis	Strategic implementation	Strategy Control & evaluation	Organizational Performance
Spearman's strategic pl	correlation	1.000	.843**	.744**	.678**	.809**	.858**
	Coefficient						
mission statement	correlation	.809**	1.000	.422*	.621**	.694	.463**
	Coefficient						
Internal & external analysis	correlation	.744**	.621**	1.000	.328*	.703**	.664**
	Coefficient						
Strategic implementation	correlation	.843**	.694	.434*	1.000	.524**	.668**
	Coefficient						
Strategy Control & evaluation	correlation	.747**	.489**	.625**	.567**	1.000	.663**
	Coefficient						
Organizational performance	correlation	.858**	.463**	.530**	.664**	.688**	1.000
	Coefficient						
	Sig. (1- tailed)	.000	.007	.002	.000	.000	

\*\* Significant at .01 level (1-tailed)

\* Significant at .05 level (1-tailed)

Table 5. Mean &amp; Std. deviation of strategic planning activities

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
mission statement	3.680	.7216
Internal analysis external analysis	3.523	.8115
Strategic implementation	3.780	.9104
Strategy Control and evaluation	3.706	.8558

Source: survey Data, 2012

## 7. Limitation and Future Research

A common goal of survey research is to collect data representative of a population. The researchers use information gathered from the survey to generalize finding from drawn sample back to a population within the limits of random error (James, 2001). Although there are notable contributions from this study but the results need to be viewed on acknowledged in the lights of its limitations. Limitation is an important feature of any empirical study.

The first limitation in this study is a sample size the lower response. Although, the recommended appropriate sample size for factor analysis is at least 100 (Jean, 2012). Moreover, the participant of this study comes from a single geographical region Khartoum state. The second and most obvious limitation of the present study is limited by cost and luck of time and that reflect on respondent rate. Finally the finding of the study can be generalized only to likewise organization of medium and small size, for those above limitation this study should not be generalized.

Strategic planning provides framework for steering operation in desirable direction over the future. Based on the backdrop from the study, future research should be conducted on a larger scale by considering more private companies from all Sudan to authenticate the positive relationship of strategic planning activities and

organizational performance. Also, comparative study can be carried out investigating the impact of strategic planning activities on organization performance in developing and developed country. Furthermore, choice of outcome measure is important in assessing performance. The measure of this study is only three and do not include indicators of financial outcome therefore a future research should strive to include additional measure of financial performance.

Also, controlling the contingency factors such as industry and environment are consider as important in strategy research, studying of these factors were out scope of this research. However, control these factors with the relationship between strategic planning and organization performance could be the further area of research in the case of medium and small business organizations in developing countries.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The major purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of strategic planning management activates on organizational performance in private sector. As strategic planning provides a framework for steering operation in desirable direction over the future this can raise a very important question which is that. What are activities much effect the performance? The result of this research support prescriptive strategic management literature which advocates that a positive relationship between strategic planning activities and organizational performance. Moreover, the research support the results of empirical research about the practice of strategic planning in medium and small business organization, which stated that the number of medium and small business organizations that adopted strategic planning is increasing over time in Sudan because of their belief in its benefit especially in relation to the enhancement of organizations. Furthermore, this study is one of the fewest empirical studies in Sudan providing an insight into better understanding the nature and practices of strategic planning.

Based on the back drop from study it can be recommended that strategic planning and performance needs a lot of research in non-developed countries in general and in particular in Sudan. Moreover, there is a need for financial institution and scientific research centers to introduce a more comprehensive strategic planning procedure to improve effectiveness.

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