

The Influence of Organizational Strategic Plan Implementation and its Relationship with Secondary School Academic Achievement in Selangor

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Abstract

The academic excellence of the school is the main target of the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEBP) 2013-2025 to compete, and be at par with, the world's best education by the year 2025. In order to fulfill this desire, it is important for school leaders to form and implement organizational strategic plan effectively at school level to guarantee the excellence of the school's academic achievements. However, there is a lack of studies that examine the relationship between these variables, especially at the local level. Therefore, this study is conducted to determine the level of implementation of the organizational strategic plan and its relationship with the school's academic achievement. A cross-sectional survey method was used in the data collection process. A total of 420 subject teachers who were randomly selected from 39 secondary schools in Selangor, Malaysia. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using IBM SPSS version 25 and AMOS version 24 software. The descriptive analysis shows that the level of implementation of the organizational strategic plan was high ($M=5.13$, $SP=0.60$) and the school's academic achievement level was satisfactory ($M=5.15$, $SP=0.90$). The SEM test shows that the relationship between the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement is significant at a positive value ($\beta=0.140$, $p<0.05$). The analysis found that the implementation of the plan still has a positive effect on the school's academic achievement even though the effect is small. There are some weaknesses in the planning stage that need to be overcome immediately by the principal in order to for the academic achievement of the school to gain optimal effects. It is expected that principals are given continuous courses and training to improve their knowledge and strategic management skills. Future studies suggested to be conducted in qualitative study to obtain more in-depth information regarding the process of implementing the strategic plan of the

school organization, identifying the constraints faced by principals in implementing the plan as well as identify factors that can influence the effectiveness of school planning and academic achievement. It is also suggested that future studies involve schools throughout Malaysia.

Keywords: Implementation, Organizational Strategic Plan, School Academic Achievement

Introduction

The academic achievement of the school is a determinant of the quality of education in the country. In order to ensure that the quality of the country's education reaches international education standards, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has established the MEBP (2013-2025) as a guide for the MOE to steer the country's education in a more structured and planned manner. The content of the plan needs to be fully planned to ensure that the goal of MEBP (2013-2025) to place Malaysian education at par with the world's best country education by the year 2025 is achieved. For that, a number of initiatives have been formed by the MOE through several changes including drafting the old curriculum standard document in 2017, implementing a new 21st century learning policy in 2014 and introducing classroom assessment in 2016. All the changes made are a form of significant and sustainable investment that needs to be implemented well. The investment made by the MOE directly helps the production of human capital that can contribute to economic growth and the achievement of the aspirations of the country's education system.

MOE is very committed in setting and fulfilling the targets of MEBP (2013-2025) and the Twelfth Malaysia Plan to produce high output. To ensure that the targets are achieved, the government has continued to allocate a high budget to the education sector since the country's independence to ensure that all school academic activities can be implemented (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2021). In fact, the allocated budget is the highest compared to the budget of other countries in East Asia such as Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong and so on (MEBP, 2013-2025). This high budget explains to the people the importance of education which is the country's biggest investment compared to other sectors. The investment made shows the seriousness and commitment of the country to ensure that the return on investment is high. This is important to guarantee a better standard of living.

The performance of the country's education has witnessed great progress since 1957. However, in this five-year period, the performance has demonstrated a low return on investment (Economic Planning Unit, 2021) and is not in line with the government's annual budget allocation (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Selangor is one of the states that recorded achievements at the bottom five positions among states, with reference to the Malaysian Certificate of Examination since 2016. The achievements are not in line with the state's achievements in the industrial sector which is the main source of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In an effort to improve the school's academic achievement, it is important for every school to have a form of organization-curriculum strategic plan that is more systematic and properly structured. According to Ada (2018) the academic excellence of a school stems from the implementation of an effective organizational strategic plan. The concept of the strategic plan itself is to guide the organization to achieve better performance (Dahnke, 2019; Frantzen, 2018; Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016). Therefore, initiatives and actions need to be taken immediately by school leaders and citizens to form and implement a strategic organization plan more effectively to ensure that better school academic achievements are in order by the year 2025.

Problem Statement

The academic achievement of the state of Selangor is still at a constant level and does not even show a correlation to the allocation given by the central government (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013) as well as as to the increase in the financial assistance every year by the state government. The 2019 Malaysian Certificate of Examination analysis report shows that the achievement gap percentage between urban and rural schools is 0.08 percentage points with an advantage in urban schools, and the percentage of the GPS value for urban schools showing an increase of 0.02 percentage points. The analysis also found that 50.0 percentage points from the total number of 226 schools still maintained the achievement of GPS values at a satisfactory level between 4.51 and 6.99 for four consecutive years from 2016 to 2019, while the percentage of students who failed to receive the Malaysian Certificate of Examination certificate did not show a decrease of less than 15.0 percentage points from 2015, and the number of core subjects that had shown a decrease, increased in the Malaysian Certificate of Examination 2019.

Efforts to improve school's academic achievement are achieved by implementing an effective organizational strategic plan with both the scope and content aimed at academic excellence. The ability of the organization strategic plan in improving school academic achievement has been confirmed by most scholars including Al-Mawdieh (2020); Yalcin and Yildiri (2020); Dahnke (2019); Lindahl (2016); Meyers and VanGronige (2019); Mohamad et al (2016); Priyambodo and Hasanah (2021); Strunk et al (2016); Zakayo (2018) Although the influence is positive on the school's academic achievement, Kasan (2013) study found that most school leaders in Malaysia only pay moderate attention to the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and that the understanding of leaders and teachers in forming and implementing the plan is poor (Al-Harethi & Al-Maamari, 2018; Yaakob et al., 2019). In addition, research on the implementation of strategic plans, either quantitatively or qualitatively in the country, is still not carried out (Mohd Faiz Mohd Yaakob et al., 2019). Therefore, this study simultaneously opens the space for the researcher to identify the level of implementation of the school's organizational strategic plan and its influence on the school's academic achievement.

Research Objective

This study sets three objectives, namely

1. identify the level of implementation of the organizational strategic plan;
2. identify the school's academic achievement level; and
3. identify the relationship between the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement.

Literature Review

The strategic plan of the organization formerly known as strategic planning is used in the military to form a strategy to defeat the enemy. Seeing its effectiveness in the military field, the idea of strategic planning began to be used in the business sector to achieve profit and then it is absorbed into the field of education to strive for school academic excellence. Due to these requirements, all schools in developed countries including the Portuguese Ministry of Education (Carvalho et al., 2021) and the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), Every Student Succeed Act (2015) and the School Improvement Grant in America (Meyers & VanGronigen,

2019) including the Malaysian Ministry of Education have instructed all schools to form and implement a organizational strategic plan to ensure that the school's academic achievement level is always at a commendable level. This is because its role as an indicator can help leaders and teachers to implement academic activities or programs aimed to achieve school academic excellence (Dahnke, 2019; Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016).

Based on the context of the national education, the implementation of the organizational strategic plan has not yet reached the level expected by the MOE even though its implementation has been set for all schools since the formation of the High Quality Education Standard in 2001. This is acknowledged by Kasan (2013) where he noted that the organization's strategic plan has only been implemented at a moderate level. The discussion about it continued in the studies of Al-Harethi and Al-Maamari (2018); Yaakob et al (2019) where they found that leaders and teachers have a poor understanding of the implementation of the plan. This explains that the compliance with the instructions for the implementation of the plan for schools in Malaysia is still low and requires more aggressive and integrated monitoring from the MOE, the State Education Department and the District Education Office towards achieving school's excellent academic achievements.

The implementation of the organizational strategic plan forms a significant relationship with the school's academic achievement and this has been proven by Agi (2017); Al-Mawdieh (2020); Caputo and Rastelli (2014); Fernandez (2011); Ford and Ihrke (2019); Huber and Conway (2015); Ikemoto et al (2014); Meyers and VanGronigen (2019); Mintrop et al (2001); Mintrop and MacLellan (2002); Russell and Sharpe (2014); Strunk et al (2016); Villerot and Sharpe (2014); Waters and Marzano (2006). Its ability to have a positive effect on school's academic achievement has also been stated in the study of (Yalcin and Yildiri, 2020; Ishak and Hamzah, 2018; Priyambodo and Hasanah, 2021; Zakayo, 2018). However, Frantzen (2018) the positive effects on school academic achievement are not received directly from the implementation of the plan. It appears, that there are other factors that influence the academic achievement in schools.

In order to ensure that good academic achievement of the school can be attained, the formation of the plan must follow the correct process. Without the right process, the plan cannot be implemented effectively and excellent academic achievement cannot be achieved (Yalcin & Yildirim, 2020; Antoniou et al., 2016; Myende & Bhengu, 2015). The mission, vision, structure, resources, current achievements and goals of the plan need to be clear (Bryson & Alston, 2004; Dahnke, 2019) to help determine the strategy selection (Burgos, 2018; Meehan & Jonkey, 2017), the school environment must properly be analyzed Hamzah (2020); Salama (2021) and good control and evaluation have to be ensured (Lynch, 2015). The strategic plan that is formed and implemented according to the right process leads to the effectiveness of the plan and the achievement of goals (Bryson, 2018; George et al., 2019; Schlebusch & Mokhatle, 2016). Al-Harethi and Al-Maamari (2018), through a study, found that the organizational strategic plan could not be implemented properly due to the fact that the principals do not seem to understand the plan implementation process well. Therefore, the leader's understanding of every action from the stage of forming to the stage of evaluating the plan is very important to guarantee the school's good academic achievement.

Research Framework

The research framework shows the relationship between the five dimensions of the organizational strategic plan and school academic achievement measured based on GPS values. The strategic plan of the organization refers to Zainal Abidin Mohamed's Strategic Planning Process Model (1999) which is divided into five phases. The first phase is planning, followed by the phase of implementation, control and evaluation of the plan, obstacles during the planning and the last phase, the obstacles during implementation plan. Figure 1.1 shows the direct relationship between the independent variable which is the organizational strategic plan and the dependent variable which is the academic achievement of the school.

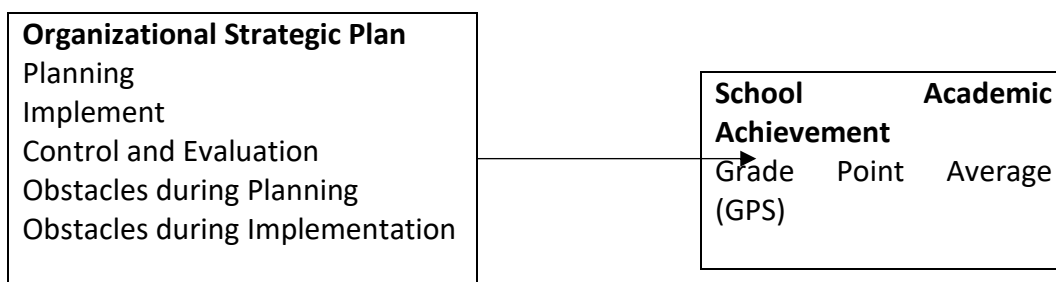


Figure 1.1: Research Framework

Research Methods

This study is conducted as a cross-sectional survey in regular secondary schools in Selangor, Malaysia. A total of 39 schools and a total of 420 teachers were invited to participate in the study, but only 387 teachers had responded. The 387 samples of teachers still meet the minimum sample size of 377 and were selected at random. The sample size was determined based on Raosoft's sample size calculator calculation which provided a larger sample size compared to the table of Krejcie and Morgan.

The research questionnaire is divided into three parts, namely parts A, B and C with a total of 45 items. Part A is related to the demographics of the respondents (6 items), part B is related to the strategic plan of the organization (38 items), measured using a 7-point likert measurement scale and part C is related to the school's academic achievement (1 item). In order to measure the implementation level of the organizational strategic plan, the strategic planning instrument built by Kasan (2013) was adapted and used. Meanwhile, the school's academic achievement was measured by taking the value of the GPS from 2017 to 2019. The results of the reliability analysis conducted found that the Cronbach Alpha value for the organizational strategic plan instrument was 0.907. Therefore, this instrument can be used in the study because the Cronbach Alpha value obtained is above the minimum reliability acceptance limit of 0.70. According to Ary et al (2019); Hair et al (2013) a good questionnaire is above the Cronbach Alpha value of 0.70. Table 1.1 shows the Cronbach Alpha value for the organizational strategic plan questionnaire according to the dimensions.

Table 1.1

Reliability Values of the Organizational Strategic Plan Questionnaire by Dimension

Dimension	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha
Planning a Strategic Organizational Plan	18	0.937
Implement the Action Plan	6	0.779
Control and Evaluation	5	0.885
Obstacles During the Process of Planning a Strategic Organizational Plan	4	0.721
Obstacles During the Implementation of the Organizational Strategic Plan	5	0.887
Overall Cronbach Alpha	38	0.907

All data will undergo a cleaning process to identify incomplete, confusing or missing data so that they can be removed. A total of 379 questionnaires will be analyzed and the rest will be eliminated. IBM SPSS version 25 and AMOS version 24 software are used for the data analysis process involving two types of analysis namely i) the descriptive analysis to identify the level of implementation of the strategic plan of the organization and the level of academic achievement of the school; and ii) the inferential analysis involving SEM tests to identify the relationship between the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement.

Findings*Organizational Strategic Plan Implementation Level*

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the implementation level of the strategic plan of the organization is high, as a whole (M=5.13, SP=0.60). The three dimensions of the implementation of the organizational strategic plan recorded a high level. The dimension of planning the organizational strategic plan (M=5.44, SP=0.68) recorded the highest level compared to the dimension of obstacles during the implementation of the organizational strategic plan (M=3.90, SP=1.10) which stayed at medium level. The interpretation of the six mean levels formed by Fauzi Hussin et al., (2014) is used to measure the level of each dimension of the organizational strategic plan implementation. Table 1.2 shows the level of the implementation according to dimensions.

Table 1.2

Level of Implementation of Organizational Strategic Plan According to Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SP	Level
Planning a Strategic Organizational Plan	5.44	0.68	High
Implementing the Action Plan	5.40	0.79	High
Performing Control and Evaluation	5.36	0.83	High
The Obstacles During the Process of Planning a Strategic Organizational Plan	4.55	0.89	Quite High
The Obstacles During the Implementation of the Organizational Strategic Plan	3.90	1.10	Moderate
Overall Level			High

School Academic Achievement Level

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the school's overall academic achievement level is satisfactory ($M=5.15$, $SP=0.90$). The interpretation of the achievement of the High Standard of Quality Education (2010) is used to measure the level of academic achievement of the school. Table 1.3 shows the overall level of the school academic achievement.

Table 1.3
School Academic Achievement Level

	Mean	SP	Level
Overall Level	5.15	0.90	Satisfactory

The Relationship Between the Implementation of the Organizational Strategic Plan and School Academic Achievement

The results of the SEM test show that the relationship between the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement is significant at a positive value ($\beta=0.140$, $p<0.05$). The findings of the study prove that the organizational strategic plan affects the school's academic achievement. The relationship formed means that the school's academic achievement has received positive effects from the implementation of the organizational strategic plan. Table 1.4 shows the SEM test results in determining the relationship between the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement.

Table 1.4
Structural Equation Model Test Results

Relationship between Constructs	Beta	Estimate	S.E.	CR	p	Result
Achievement ← Plan	0.140	0.249	0.112	2.218	0.027	Significant

Discussion

Level of Implementation of the Organizational Strategic Plan-Curriculum and School Academic Achievement

Overall, the study respondents acknowledged that the principals' implementation of the organizational strategic plan was at a high level. The findings of the study are slightly different from the findings of Kasan (2013) who found that the level of implementation of the organization's strategic plan by school principals is moderate. The high level of implementation of the strategic plan explains that the principal has a good understanding of the implementation of the strategic plan and the findings of the study are not consistent with the study of Ambotang et al (2014); Al-Harethi and Al-Maamari (2018) who found that the level of understanding of the leaders in implementing the strategic plans is poor.

The results of the study found that the principals have paid great attention, and have implemented successfully the five phases of the organizational strategic plan, at the same time implying that the leaders' strategic management skills are high. If seen from another angle, the principals have demonstrated their appreciation, good practice and cultivation of all the actions outlined in the Malaysian Education Quality Standard Wave 2 (SKPMg2) (2018) well. It is evident that the plan of the organization is implemented according to the correct actions and the expected standard has been achieved. The MOE instructions which demand that all schools form and implement strategic organization plans are also followed by the

principals. Overall, the principals have formed and implemented the strategic plan of the organization well and at the same time give added values and new information to the field of national education.

The findings of the study also show that the school's academic achievement level is at a satisfactory level. The findings of the study are not consistent with the study of Abu Bakar (2016) who found that the academic achievement of the school is good. However, the school's academic achievement can still be improved if other additional efforts are carried out proactively and comprehensively. Among the efforts that can be done is to analyze external factors such as politics, technology, ecology, school culture that affect the school's academic achievement as suggested by Mohamed (1999) through his book *Strategic Management in the Education Sector*. Looking at the current changes and developments, it is not impossible that these external factors are also influential and do leave an impact on the school's academic achievement.

The Relationship Between the Implementation of Organizational Strategic Plans and School Academic Achievement

The study has successfully unraveled the relationship between the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement. The SEM test found that the relationship between the implementation of the organizational strategic plan and the school's academic achievement was significant at a positive value. The study gave the same findings as Agi (2017); Al-Mawdieh (2020); Ameen (2019); Caputo and Rastelli (2014); Kasan (2013); Ebiziem et al (2021); Ford and Ihrke (2019); Kwaslema and Onyango (2021); Meigaru et al (2019); Meyers and VanGronigen (2019); Meyers and Hitt (2018); Mintrop and MacLellan (2002); Russell and Sharpe (2014); Strunk et al (2016); Waters and Marzano (2006) found that school academic excellence is achieved when the organizational strategic plan is implemented effectively. This is also supported by Bryson et al (2018); Wolf and Floyd (2017); Zakayo (2018) who explained that the organizational strategic plan influences and has a positive impact on school academic achievement. Therefore, the organizational strategic plan needs to be implemented effectively to guarantee good school academic achievement. However, the findings of the study are not in line with the view of Frantzen (2018) who stated that the school's academic achievement does not receive a direct effect or contribution from the implementation of the organization's strategic plan. Differences in the research findings and scholars' views have created some space for the proliferation of new knowledge and for it to be highlighted.

The finding that draws the attention of the researcher in this study is that although the strategic plan of the organization is implemented at a high level, the academic achievement of the school is still at a satisfactory level. Teachers agree that the strategic plan of the organization has been formed and implemented well but it still needs to be improved in terms of analyzing the environment that can undermine the effectiveness of the plan and the school's academic achievements. In order to achieve a perfect and effective level of implementation, the knowledge about the organization's strategic plan process needs to be imparted to the principal optimally (Cheng, 2020). Previously, Ada (2018) explained that the lack of training, skills and poor knowledge of leaders had caused the strategic plan to fail to be implemented effectively. Therefore, in order to guarantee sustainability and improve the school's academic achievement, every stage, from formulating to evaluating the plan, needs

to be well understood and mastered by school leaders. At the same time, the existence of other factors that influence the school's academic achievement should also be taken into account.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Overall, the principals have been seen to be good at complying with the MOE's directives by implementing the organizational strategic plan at a high level. Although the school's academic achievement is only at a satisfactory level and it has yet to improve, the implementation of the plan still has a positive effect on the school's academic achievement even though the effect is small. There are some weaknesses in the planning stage that need to be overcome immediately by the principal in order for the academic achievement of the school to gain optimal effects. Therefore, this study is expected to give a good exposure to school leaders to make improvements to the current organizational strategic plan also to identify other factors that also affect school academic achievement. At the same time, this study can provide new information on the level of implementation of the organizational strategic plan and strengthen the findings of the previous studies on the positive and significant relationship between the organizational strategic plan and school academic achievement.

In order to ensure that the level of implementation of the strategic plan is good, continuous training and courses need to be provided to principals and teachers to ensure that the content is understood and the implementation can be mastered well. Further research can be done to identify factors that can influence the effectiveness of school planning and academic achievement such as principal leadership, school resources in terms of the teachers, finances and others, to obtain more in-depth information that needs to be evaluated and addressed. It is also suggested that future studies involve schools throughout Malaysia with a larger number of samples so that more comprehensive information about the level of implementation of the strategic plan of curriculum organization among school principals in Malaysia can be obtained. In addition, interviews with school principals can be conducted to obtain more in-depth information and more accurate findings regarding the process of implementing the strategic plan of the school organization, and it is also worth identifying the constraints faced by leaders in implementing the plan.

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