

PROPER Management Strategy Application: Level of Implementation and Performance in the United Arab Emirates

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ABSTRACT

The tertiary sector in the United Arab Emirates was affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic from the recent year 2020. In order to solve this consequence, the management strategy application is essential to sustain a small, medium, and large enterprise's profitability and competitive business performance. The research study aims to determine the respondents' demographic profiles, implementation level of management strategy and performance level in financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance of a private companies in the United Arab Emirates. The technique used was the descriptive quantitative type of research utilizing the survey questionnaire and Likert Scale, to harvest the answer from selected 108 personnel from different industries. They were requested to rate the variables such as planning, risk analyzing, organizing, performing, evaluating, realigning as they relate to the financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance. It was concluded that implementation level revealed by the results and findings that both planning and evaluating (n=102 or 94.5%) are the most chosen tools on implementing the management strategy application. The independent variables, as perceived by respondents, are highly implemented, and accepted. This outcome can be generalized that business organizations need to focus or review their strategy implementation in planning and evaluating to align their operational activities and programs with financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance. In general, the performance level based on the respondents' perceptions regarding financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance are high to very high. As shown by the result, (n=103 or 95.4%) for commitment to customer satisfaction is the most chosen indicator of the business performance. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the P.R.O.P.E.R. management strategy application be used to improve the level of financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance of the organization.

Keywords

PROPER, Management Strategy Application, Implementation level, Performance level, United Arab Emirates

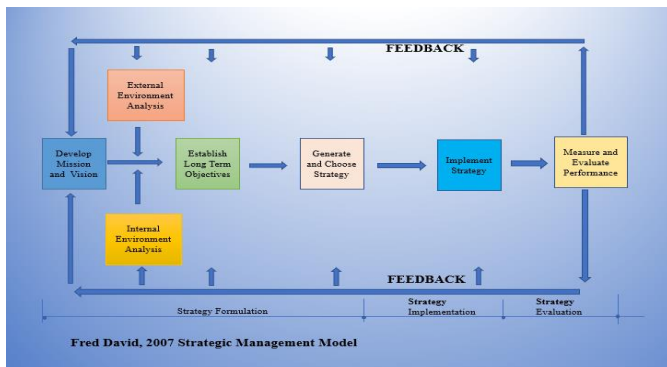
Introduction

In the recent year 2020, and according to IMF-World Economic Outlook Database-October 2020, the Emirates recorded decreased financial results partly due to the slow global economy, political tensions in neighboring countries, and weaker energy demand. Also, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and depend on the post-pandemic global economic improvement, result from an increasing business optimism, necessary government fiscal stimulus, and private company ventures connected to the rescheduling of Dubai's Expo 2020. From the third quarter of 2020, oil production reaches an almost-decade low, affecting public finances. Based on the latest updates, G.D.P. in the oil and gas sector has reduced gradually due to a diversification policy. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted this sector; OPEC lower oil production decreased global oil demand and supply chain disturbance (Dabrowski & Domínguez-Jiménez, 2021). Activities in the manufacturing sector have grown in recent years, especially in metal production,

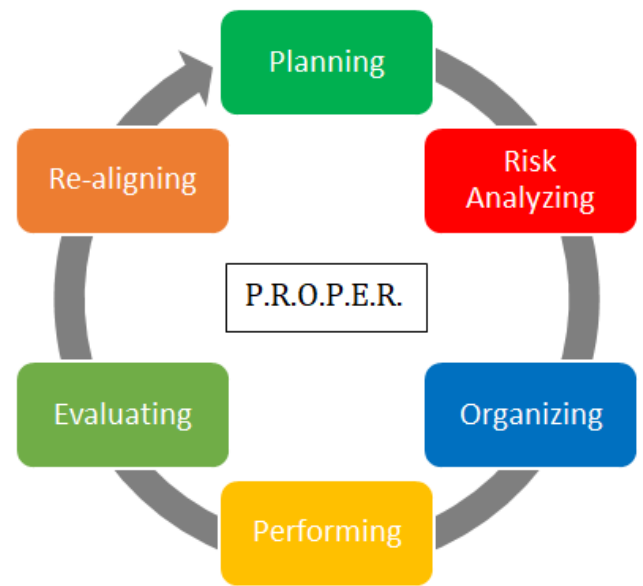
furniture, foodstuffs, aluminum, construction materials, fertilizers, and petrochemical industry, fiberglass, and real estate. The significant sub-sectors affected are international trading, air transportation, banking and finance activities, and tourism. The travel and tourism sector has a total contribution of around 12% of G.D.P., mainly by the Emirate of Dubai as driving force (U.A.E. Official Portal Website). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this industry contracted in 2020, as international trade and tourism decreased sharply. To mitigate this consequence, sustain and improve the profitability, financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance of an organization are the objectives of all practicing businesspeople using management strategy applications and other techniques. In business operations, the overall system fails if any one component fails to perform (Heizer, 2016). The central question is, what lies behind the financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business

performance of a business? A study supported that financial performance is the mirror image of business outputs that signified the industry's financial health in a specified period (Farah Naz, 2016). According to a study conducted, there are a total of five significant financial performance indicators were determined, namely: investor return, business efficiency, operations management, activity efficiency, risk coverage, and asset management that can provide important information about the financial performance of the company (Neelu Nandan, 2020). Furthermore, one piece of advice from an author is that delivering customer satisfaction and obtaining profits in return is a critical concept in modern marketing ideas and practices that emphasize the rapid market growth in Asia (Nataraajan, 2018). The research study conducted in Asian Countries like China, Hongkong, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, showing that all service quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction that leads to customer loyalty and happiness that have a general similarity of economic values in the five countries (Yi, 2018). Clients must be attended to as assets, and they vary in their requirements, decisions, and selection behavior. Therefore, effective formulation and implementation of strategies that match the environmental scanning process can serve as a model for organizational sustainability and competitive advantage (Adewale, 2016). Based on the aforementioned claims, the researcher wishes to determine the P.R.O.P.E.R. management strategy application level of implementation and performance towards targeting the highest level of business performance in the United Arab Emirates.

Theoretical Framework:



Strategic Management by Fred David,2007
Figure 1



P.R.O.P.E.R. Management Strategy by Edgar N. Barrozo,2021
Figure 2

Conceptual Framework

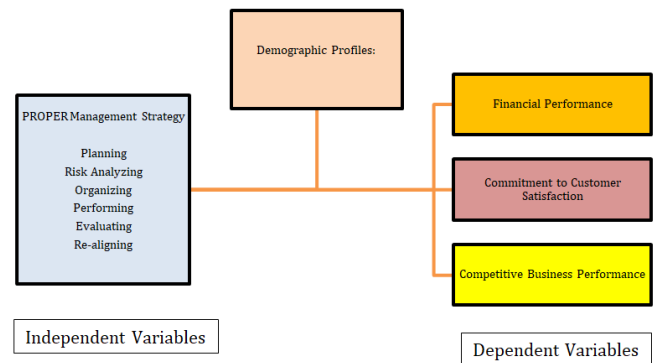


Figure 3

Literature Review

During the COVID -19 pandemic crisis, the revenue income among firms in all establishments is experiencing a global economic downturn. The management strategy's primary purpose is to achieve good financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance to sustain the enterprise's profitability and business continuity effectively (Barrozo,2021). Choosing the best among good alternatives is a challenging management decision that results in formulating a strategic plan. According to (Ackoff's theory), planning is the design of what we want in the future and the means to implement them effectively. Effective planning describes where a business or enterprise is going, and the action plan required to realize

progress and predict and forecast if it is successful. The latest style and in-deep analysis methods and techniques have been developed, and risk analysis approaches are now widely used in public and private business sectors (Aven, 2016). Identifying the barriers before reaching them allows us to plan earlier before crossing them. To acquire coordinated effort by defining task and authority relationships is the purpose of organizing (Fred David,2017). By determining what to do, who will do, and who reports to whom means organizing. A well-organized firm dominates and defeats a much more reliable but less-organized enterprise. The overall system fails if any one component fails to perform (Heizer, 2016). Each specific job is performed by individual interrelated components that compose one system. The operations manager must initiate change as the product move into their life cycle (introduce, grow, mature, retire) (Jay Heizer, 2016; Sradars, 2019). According to Fred David 2017, an organization's well-being depends on evaluating strategy; the management can be alerted before a potential problem occurs by the on-time evaluation process. Based on the study, identifying and taking corrective action when strategy initiatives fail is to adopt an essential strategy evaluation process. (Nwachukwu, Chladkova 2019). The weaknesses in the implemented strategic plan can be highlighted and make the entire process start again by using strategy evaluation. (Ivancic, 2013). An ongoing misalignment between business, economy, and acceptable societal results is due to present economic and political sudden change (Kelly and Sheppard, 2018). Firms with aligned business and marketing strategies demonstrated a significantly more reliable overall performance than those not aligned business and marketing strategies (Eric Olson, 2018). Financial performance is the primary mirror image of business sector outputs and results that signified the industry's overall financial health in a specified period (Farah Naz, 2016). This was a clear indication of how well an establishment was using its resources to increase the shareholder's wealth and profitability. Delivering customer satisfaction and obtaining profits in return is a critical concept in modern marketing ideas and practices that emphasize the rapid market growth in Asia (Natarajan, 2018). Therefore, the effective formulation and

implementation of strategies matched with the environmental scanning process can serve as a model for organizational sustainability and competitive advantage (Adewale, 2016).

Methodology

Research Objectives

1. To determine the demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To determine the strategy utilization profiles of the respondents.
3. To determine the implementation level of the P.R.O.P.E.R. management strategy application in terms of planning, risk analyzing, organizing, performing, evaluating, and realigning.
4. To evaluate the performance level in terms of financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance.

This research study was a Descriptive Quantitative Design that utilized survey questionnaires using the Likert Scale (Creswell, 2014) to provide a numeric description of the selected respondents' attitudes, trends, or opinions. This study is descriptive, using a survey approach as its research strategy. It is descriptive because it aims to examine a situation by describing essential factors associated with a specific situation, such as demographic, socio-economic, events, behaviors, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge (Acosta, Acosta 2016). The purpose of descriptive design studies looks at the population's characteristics, identify the problems within the unit, an organization, or population, or look at variations in characteristics or properties between institutions or countries (Siedlecki, 2020).

Sample and Data Collection

The researcher conducted the survey from October 2020 to February 2021, and the questionnaires were given through the distribution of survey questionnaires and google forms survey. The data was collected through a survey questionnaire using the online platform (Google Form). Survey questionnaires were based on the available survey items developed by researchers tested and proven as a useful measurement tool. The survey links were attached to emails, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger, and LinkedIn to selected Respondents staying and working in the United Arab Emirates. The survey

included a Demographic Profile where respondents were asked about their socio-demographic profile, working status profile and to scale their perceptions on the independent variables. These factors were structured to be direct, concise, and short of encouraging the respondents to complete the survey. A descriptive quantitative design, and frequency statistics is utilized in this study. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to 19 respondents to improve the content and validate the reliability of the result (Kleeman,2018). The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was computed at 0.91, which suggests high reliability, as shown in the table below using IBM SPSS V25 Software. The basic and frequently utilized psychometric tool in educational and

social science research is applying the Likert Scale. Psychometric tools like the Likert scale and its variants and focuses on issues like validity, reliability, and scale analysis are necessary (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, Pal 2015). A common rating format for surveys is the Likert Scale whereby, it ranks quality from high to low or best to worst using five or seven levels by the respondents (Allen, Seaman 2007). To measure the perceptions of the respondent, a Likert scale was utilized in this research study as an instrument. The scale was from 1 to 5; one (1) is very low, two (2) is low, three (3) is moderate, four (4) is high, and five (5) is very high, as described in Table 1 below.

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation	Action to be Taken
5	4.51 – 5.0	Strongly Agree	Very High	None
4	3.51 –4.50	Agree	High	Very Little Ramification
3	2.51 –3.50	Somewhat Agree	Moderate	Some Ramification
2	1.51 –2.50	Disagree	Low	More Ramification
1	1.0 – 1.5	Strongly Disagree	Very Low	Total Change

Table 1 Likert Scale

The researcher distributed the survey questionnaires and collected data responses from 108 selected respondents working with private companies and those who are having private business in the United Arab Emirates. The respondents participated in the quantitative data collection by joining in the survey, and the researcher acquired consent acknowledgment from respondents to participate. To protect the private interest and intellectual property of the respondents was the major concern of the researcher.

Analyzing of Data

The data collected were treated using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 25 to analyze the frequencies, descriptive statistics, and supported by Microsoft Excel to complete the process of data analysis. The percentage was calculated from the demographic information for all participants and the respondents' perception of the strategic management performance level in financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and the competitive business performance of private companies. And computed

the implementation level of proper management strategy based on the answer in the questionnaire's ratings. All the statistical data results and discussions were validated and certified by the specialist statistician with closed supervision and guidance.

Findings / Results

This section presented the results and discussions regarding the demographic profiles of the respondents and perceptions with regards to the independent variables such as planning, risk analyzing, organizing, performing, evaluating, realigning, together with dependent variables such as financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance.

Demographic Profiles

The demographic profile results were used to describe the respondents' characteristics, as they are the study's main players. As discussed in the empirical review of related literature, making crucial decisions in organizations is central to many business operations with diversified employees (Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek, Praag,

2013). Research has focused on the elements to make the team successful as they are the main player in business practices. Finally, the overall study demonstrated almost no support for the gender taken effect on job performance, which challenges the prevailing assumptions of critical mass theory and tokenism hypothesis (Mackey, Roth 2019). Even previous studies suggested that gender profiles must be diversified to form workplace flexibility; this research was conducted on 108 respondents from (TML) top management level, (ES) engineers and specialists, and (WP) working professionals from selected business

industries were requested to join the study. When grouped according to job category, 17.6% (n=19) were from the top management level, 19.4% (n=21) from engineers and specialists, and 63% (n=68) from working professionals (refer to table 4.2). In table 4.1, shown socio-demographic profiles such as gender, 40.7% (n=44) are male, 59.3% (n=64) are female; while marital status, 25% (n=27) are single, 75% (n=81) are married; Ages, 41.7% (n=45) are 23 to 38 years old, 54.6% (n=59) are 39 to 54 years old, 3.7% (n=4) are 55 to 74 years old.

Table 4.1 Socio-demographic profile (Gender, Marital Status, and Age)

		TML	%	ES	%	WP	%
Gender	Male	11	58.0	17	81	16	23.5
	Female	8	42.0	4	19	52	76.5
		19	17.6	21	19.4	68	63
Marital Status	Single	5	26.3	2	9.5	20	29.4
	Married	14	73.7	19	90.5	48	70.6
Age	23-38	8	42.1	5	23.8	32	47
	38-54	8	42.1	16	76.2	35	51.5
	55-73	3	15.8	0	0	1	1.5
	74-Above	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.2 Educational and Work demographic profile:

		TML	%	ES	%	WP	%
Education	Secondary	1	5.3	1	4.8	4	5.9
	Diploma	0	0	0	0	6	8.8
	Bachelor Degree	8	42.1	12	57.1	52	76.5
	Master Degree	8	42.1	7	33.3	5	7.4
	PhD Degree	2	10.5	1	4.8	1	1.5
Size of Company	1 to 9	5	26.3	0		8	11
	10 to 99	6	31.6	3	14.3	16	23.5
	100 to 499	5	26.3	2	9.5	20	29.4
	500 to 999	2	10.5	3	14.3	8	11.8
	1000 to 2999	0		1	4.8	6	8.8
	3000-Above	1	5.3	12	57.1	9	13.2
Years in UAE	1 to 3	3	15	2	9.5	23	33.8
	4 to 10	5	26.3	3	14.3	16	23.5
	11 to Above	11	57.9	16	76.3	29	42.6
Nature of Business							
	Engineering	2	10.5	5	23.8	4	5.9
	Maintenance	0		3	14.8	0	
	Consulting	1	5.3	1	4.8	2	2.9
	Education	2	10.5	1	4.8	7	10.3
	Retail	4	21.1	1	4.8	11	16.2
	Logistics, Services	4	21.1	1	4.8	20	29.4
	Health Care	1	5.3	0	0	5	7.4
	Hospitality/Tourism	1	5.3	0	0	3	4.4
	Manufacturing	1	5.3	1	4.8	6	8.8
	Construction	3	15.8	5	23.8	7	10.3
	Energy/Oil and Gas	0	0	1	4.8	0	0
	Operations	0	0	2	9.5	2	2.9
	Others	0	0	0	0	1	1.5

As to educational profile, 66.7% (n=72) have bachelor's degree, 18.5% (n=20) have master's degree, 3.7% (n=4) have doctorate degree, 5.5% (n=6) have diploma, and 5.5% (n=6) have secondary level education. The work demographic profile when grouped according to size of company, 23% (n=25) for 100 to 499 staffs, 20.4% (n=22) for 10 to 99 staffs, 20.4% (n=22) for 3000 above, 12% (n=13) for 500 to 999 staffs, 12% (n=13) for 1 to 9 staffs, 6.5% (n=7) for 1000 to 2999 staffs. When grouped according to years of stay in UAE, 52% (n=56) for 11 years above, 26% (n=28) for 1 to 3 years, 22% (n=24) have stayed for 4 to 10 years.

The respondents are from the 13 types of business industries in the United Arab Emirates. When grouped as per industries, 23.15% (n=25) from logistics and services, 14.8% (n=16) from retail, 13.8% (n=15) from construction, 10.2% (n=11) from engineering, maintenance 2.7% (n=3), consulting 3.7% (n=4), education 9.2% (n=10), healthcare 5.5% (n=6), hospitality 3.7% (n=4), manufacturing 7.4% (n=8), energy 1% (n=1), oil and gas 1% (n=1), operations 3.7% (n=4), and others 1% (n=1). The highest was the logistics and services industry with 23.15%, followed by the retail industry with 14.8%, and the lowest position are from the energy, oil and gas industry, and others with 1%.

Table 4.3 Strategy Utilization Profile:

		TML	%	ES	%	WP	%
	Respondents using strategy	18	94.7	17	81	46	67.6
	Respondents not using	1	5.3	4	19	22	32.4
Strategy used by respondent	Strategic Management	6	31.6	5	23.8	18	26.5
	SWOT Analysis	5	26.3	2	9.5	11	16.5
	PEST Analysis	0	0	1	4.8	0	0
	Operations Management	5	26.3	6	28.6	16	23.5
	Blue Ocean Startegy	0	0	1	4.8	0	0
	Porter 5 Forces	0	0	0	0	1	1.5
	Balance Score Card	2	10.5	2	9.5	0	1.5
	Others	0	5.3	0	19	0	30.5
	Total	18		17		46	

Table 4.3 revealed that 75% (n=81) of the respondents utilized strategy in their company, while 25% (n=27) do not use a specific strategy. Eight (8) major business strategies were commonly used by respondents, as mentioned above. It can be observed the strategic management was the highest choice with 26.85%

(n=29), followed by operations management with 25% (n=27), SWOT analysis with 16.7% (n=18), balance scorecard with 4.62% (n=5), others were 24% (n=26), and fewer choices were pest analysis 1% (n=1), blue ocean strategy 1% (n=1), porter five forces 1% (n=1).

Table 4.4 Implementation Level of Strategic Management Application:

Independent Variables	Very High	%	High	%	Low	%	Very Low	%	Rank
Planning	102	94.5	6	5.5	0	0	0	0	1st
Evaluating	102	94.5	6	5.5	0	0	0	0	1st
Organizing	100	92.6	8	7.4	0	0	0	0	2nd
Realigning	100	92.6	8	7.4	0	0	0	0	2nd
Performing	99	91.7	9	8.3	0	0	0	0	3rd
Risk Analyzing	96	88.9	12	11.1	0	0	0	0	4th

The strategic management application implementation level revealed by the result in table 4.4 shows that planning and evaluating (n=102 or 94.5%) are the most chosen predictors on implementing the strategic management system. The independent variables, in general, as perceived by the three groups of respondents (TML, ES, and WP), are highly implemented and accepted. This outcome can be harvested that business organizations need to focus or review their strategy implementation in planning and evaluating to align their operational activities and programs with financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and

competitive business performance. A study of Majamal 2017, revealed that experts and practitioners in business management debate that even resources are available, some small and medium enterprises still fail due to a lack of strategic planning. Moreover, (Nwachukwu 2019) supports that evaluating a strategy's vital activity determines if strategy execution meets the company goals. There will be adjustments in action planning to meet the business goals based on the evaluation process results and possibly, additional resources or more efficient methods and techniques to be used for smooth business operation.

Table 4.5 Level of Performance:

Dependent Variables	Very High	%	High	%	Low	%	Very Low	%	Rank
Commitment to Customer Satisfaction	103	95.4	5	4.6	0	0	0	0	1st
Competitive Business Performance	100	92.6	7	6.5	1	0.9	0	0	2nd
Financial Performance	97	89.8	11	10.2	0	0	0	0	3rd

In general, the level of performance shown in table 4.5 based on the respondents' perceptions in terms of financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, and competitive business performance are high to very high. Thus, 95.4% (n=103) for commitment to customer satisfaction is the most chosen indicator of the perceived business performance necessary to make the

strategic management system implementation effective. Yu-Cheng Lee's 2016 study conducted in Taiwan concluded that perceived quality service had the most significant influence on satisfied and dissatisfied customers to meet the business strategic management system's goal. Likewise, the research study conducted by Yi, 2018 in five Asian Countries like China,

Hongkong, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore, concluded that all service quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction that leads to customer loyalty and happiness that have a general similarity of economic values. It can be inferred that strategic management application should be focused on quality assurance policy implementation and have full commitment to customer satisfaction to generate equal economic, financial values for the business.

Conclusions

The survey results show that most of the respondents were female age between 23 to 54 years old, they are married, with bachelor's and master's degree education, working with a company size of 100 to 1000 staffs, in various business sectors, while staying in U.A.E. for more than ten years. This infers that females are more active and are likely contributors to the business organization workforce and mostly utilize business strategy in their company operations. With regards to the strategy utilization profile: it was revealed by the results that 75% of respondents were using strategies and most commonly utilized were strategic management, operations management, and SWOT analysis. On the level of implementation of strategic management attributes such as planning, risk analyzing, organizing, performing, evaluating, and realigning, which are universally accepted by the respondents because it was high to a very high level as shown in Table 4.4, and would be one of the tools and technique in conducting works to ensure good results and business continuity of the organization while giving emphasis to strategic planning and evaluating, followed by strategic organizing and realigning. The performance level in commitment to customer satisfaction is considered the most critical indicator, followed by financial performance and competitive business performance as perceived by the respondents. The in-depth review of the management strategy application with existing action plan or policy should be designed and aligned concerning customer satisfaction commitment by the business enterprise, resulting in a significant economic return, as revealed in Table 4.5. Consider this research study's findings, and it can be concluded that the theoretical framework mentioned in Figure 1, the strategic management model of Fred

David outlining the strategic formulation, implementation, and evaluation, was proven to be essential in business operations. Therefore, the researcher's conceptual framework consisting of demographic profiles and independent variables (P.R.O.P.E.R.) concludes as sufficient driving forces for business operations resulting in high-performance level-dependent variables (financial performance, commitment to customer satisfaction, competitive business performance) as shown in Figure 3.

Recommendations

1. Even the survey results show that most of the respondents were female and highly educated, the demographic profile results were used to describe the respondents' characteristics as they are the study's leading players. A study demonstrated almost no support for the gender taken effect on job performance. (Mackey, Roth 2019)
2. Use the P.R.O.P.E.R. management strategy as tools and techniques to ensure the organization's operation improvement and business continuity while emphasizing planning and evaluating, followed by organizing and realigning as demonstrated by the results high to a very high level of implementation Table 4.4.
3. The performance level in commitment to customer satisfaction is considered the most critical indicator perceived by the respondent's Table 4.5. The in-depth review of management strategy application with existing action plan or policy should be designed and aligned concerning customer satisfaction commitment by the business enterprise, resulting in a significant economic return. It is highly recommended to analyze the present situation by identifying the internal issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic pinch, and uncertainty, then design a strategy or action plan to mitigate them.
4. Therefore, it is recommended to use the researcher's management strategy by all business owners and practitioners to effectively execute their operations on whatever business activity or venture they wanted to pursue. By adopting a management strategy model derived from P.R.O.P.E.R.

(planning, risk analyzing, organizing, performing, evaluating, realigning) with a step-by-step action plan on each attribute as shown in Figure 2.

5. The researcher also recommends that further research study be conducted to check the effectiveness of P.R.O.P.E.R. strategy in terms of performance and implementation in other aspects of business, such as Employee Satisfaction and Engagement, Sales and Marketing Performance, and Quality Assurance. Engineering, Human Resources Management, and Others.
6. This discovery (PROPER) can be used as a guide in preparing a strategic management model or system. It is also recommended to be a subject for any management courses and curriculum in colleges and universities.

Limitations

This research study is limited to privately-owned business enterprises in the United Arab Emirates. It limits to the Respondents from different industries who were chosen to respond to this study. The timing of this research study is from 2016 to 2020 and citing the related literature. The survey was being conducted between October 2020 to February 2021.

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