

# Strategic Management in the Public Sector: Reflections on It's Applicability to Iranian Public Organizations

Hassan Danaee Fard · Asghar Moshabbaki ·  
Tayebeh Abbasi · Akbar Hassanpoor

Published online: 6 October 2010  
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2010

**Abstract** Strategic management is a managerial story of private sector that has been transferred to the public sector. Many authors have challenged its applicability in public organizations. This paper discusses some important barriers to implementation of strategic management in the public sector empirically. After presenting a conceptual model, we examine several important factors that influence the failure or shortcomings of public sector strategic management. The last section of paper offers implications for theory and practice.

**Keywords** Public organizations · Strategic management · Strategic planning · Strategy

## Introduction

According to the literature, strategic management is not rooted in the public sector. Rather, it is an invention of the private sector that has been pushed into the public sector. Thus, public strategic management has developed as a unique concept, as it emerged in business organizations and then crossed the sector line into public organizations.

As a result, there is some disagreement regarding which strategic management processes are applicable to public institutions. Some accept that these processes

---

H. Danaee Fard (✉) · A. Moshabbaki · T. Abbasi  
Faculty of Humanities, University of Tarbiat Modares, Tehran, Iran  
e-mail: hdanaee@modares.ac.ir

A. Moshabbaki  
e-mail: moshabak@modares.ac.ir

T. Abbasi  
e-mail: t.abbasi@modares.ac.ir

A. Hassanpoor  
Allameh Tabatabayee University, Tehran, Iran  
e-mail: ak\_hassanpoor@yahoo.com

apply in general to both the private and public sectors (Koteen 1997). Others (see Nutt and Backoff 1993) take the so-called “publicness” of the organization into consideration. While Miller (1989) points out that strategic management in a public-sector organization forms that organization’s business policy and strategy, strategic management depends on context, with strategic management in public administration differing from that in the private sector. Therefore, understanding the unique elements of public strategic management that distinguish it from private strategic management is critical.

Some of these elements are due to the particular characteristics of public organizations. For example, the purpose and mission of the public sector organizations are generally determined externally. In the public sector, organizations are constrained by statutes and regulations that are predetermined. Rather than seeking profit, the primary financial driver of these organizations is the maximization of output within a given budget. In addition, successful implementation of strategic management in public organizations depends upon the presence of a strong leadership. Finally, whether members of the organization clearly understand the procedures for implementation is also a key component for a successful strategic management system.

Since the public sector is highly influenced by political and economic entities, a given strategic management system can easily end at the next election cycle. Because of political influence, the length of the appointed term for political managers in public organizations is relatively shorter than in private organizations (Behn 1995). Thus, strategy, which is typically a long term concept, gets cut short when it is applied to the public sector, as government managers perform their work in a relatively short time period compared to private managers. Furthermore, since strategy is more related to the long term and management is more related to the short term, the idea of strategic management in the public sector seems to be a “contradictory” idea (Bozeman and Straussman 1990: 47).

In addition, the standards and criteria used to measure performance in public organizations are diverse and complicated. As there are no clear performance standards in a public organization evaluation, strategic management provides a guideline for implementation of a management program in the public sector. Lacking a unifying goal or objective comparable to profit in the private sector, public managers often suffer more than the private sector from red tape, caution and rigidity. Such procedural rigidity and goal displacement are often criticized as an overriding problem that leads to dysfunctional public organizations. An ambiguity in goals and vagueness in performance evaluation serve as the main causes of such bureaucratic phenomenon.

In this paper, we present the pathology of strategic management and survey the reasons why strategic management fails in public organizations. The data were collected from 70 top managers from Iranian public organizations. These organizations have been encouraged to adopt the administrative reform plans (such as strategic management) of Iran as “the seventh reform program in the administrative system” that started 1997 (Table 1). We also test a set of hypotheses regarding the factors that influence strategic management. Although some studies have discussed the barriers to strategic planning and the pitfalls of strategic management, they have often concentrated on the private sector (Steiner 1979:15;

**Table 1** The public organizations that have been choice in this research

Ministries	Number of managers (number of organizations)
Ministry of education and training	6
Ministry of Jihad agriculture	7
Ministry of cooperatives	2
Ministry of information communications technology	5
Ministry of welfare and social security	6
Ministry of social affairs and work	6
Ministry of sciences, research and technology	7
Ministry of housing and urban development	3
Ministry of health and medical education	5
Ministry of industries and mines	4
Ministry of commerce	6
Department of environment	3
Institute of standards and industrial research	4
Ministry of energy	6
Total	70

Kotter 1995; Moore and Wen 2007). In our research, we use a comprehensive set of variables to understand what factors influence strategic management in the public sector.

### Literature review

Strategic planning may be defined as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that define what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it (Bryson and Roering 1988; Elbanna 2007). The deliberate attempt to produce change is probably the greatest strength and weakness of strategic planning as a process.

Hensey (1997) has discussed four phases in the historical evolution of strategic management. Budgeting and control, the first phase, coincided with the beginning of the so-called scientific management period. During this phase, the assumption was that the past repeated itself. Then, the long-range planning phase began in the 1950s. The basic assumption underlying long-range planning was that past trends generally continue. Some consider this phase to be the origin of strategic management, tracing it to 1954. A third phase started in the 1960s and continued some 20 years. During this time, strategic management was viewed as a linear, sequential process, and, as a result, the emphasis in business was on strategic planning. This third phase was characterized by the feeling that the future can be predicted to the required degree and that the environment (i.e., trends and forces) is predictable or controllable. The fourth and latest period—strategic management—began in the mid-1980s in response to a belief that the traditional planning cycles are not compatible with rapid and unpredictable changes.

Public organizations have followed a somewhat parallel path (Hughes 2003: 151). A long-range planning phase in government began in the 1960s, as evidenced by the

development of budgeting systems such as the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS). Strategic planning in government agencies began in the 1970s (Bryson and Roering 1988; Berry 1994; Berry and Wechsler 1995). By the late 1980s, strategic management of public organizations became a topic of discussion in various circles, and today there are examples of its implementation at all levels of governments.

It should be noted that, in the 1960s and 1970s, “long range” might have meant a decade or more. In the modern strategic management model, the long-range view is represented—and therefore determined uniquely—by the mission and the vision of each organization. According to our model, long range is anything over 1 year. Strategic planning, as previously noted, assumed that the future was knowable to a certain degree and that any changes to planning assumptions could be made within the planning cycle. Today’s strategic management captures the very long-range intent in a concise vision that focuses on nearer-term objectives. In other words, by outlining an organization’s response to the fundamental issues it faces, an organization can develop strategies intended to deal with strategic problems. Not surprisingly, the key element of effective strategy is flexibility.

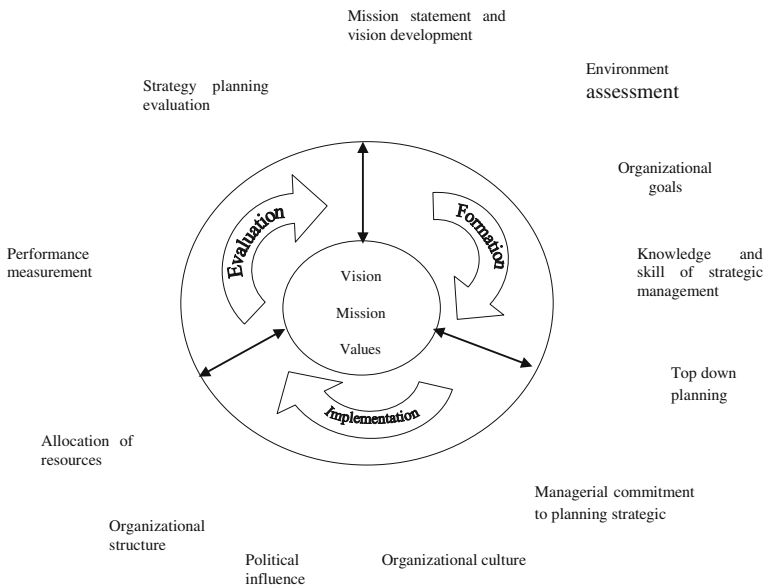
### Theoretical perspective

The overall purpose of strategic management is to develop continued commitment to the mission and vision of the organization. On this basis, various models have been presented in the literature on strategic management, and some of these models have been presented specifically for the environmental public sector (Steiner 1979:60; Eadie 1983; Nutt and Backoff 1992; Bryson 1995:21; David 1999: 27; Drumaux and Goethals 2007).

We do not aim to critique the strategic management processes discussed in the literature on strategic management. Rather, we present an argument in order to elucidate why strategic management fails in public organizations. For strategic management to be successful there must be a shared commitment to the values, mission, and vision both within the governmental unit or agency (including elected officials or appointed executives, professional managers, and employees) and among the relevant external stakeholders. Thus, at the core of our model are the underlying values that are most important to the agency, its mission within the governmental system and the communities or constituencies that it serves, and a vision of what the agency should look like in the future.

An important part of strategic management entails developing and refining a clear sense of values, mission, and vision as well as working to build and maintain a sense of ownership toward the organization among interested parties. With this in mind, our model has three components (see Fig. 1): strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation.

The strategy formulation phase is concerned with determining the future direction of the organization. If we define strategy as “a plan to achieve the mission goals and meet the mandates” (Bryson 1995:4), then strategy formulation necessarily involves identifying an organization’s goals and objectives if they are not already defined. This usually requires an evaluation of the external and internal situation of the organization, including external opportunities and threats as well as organizational



**Fig. 1** The conceptual model

strengths and weaknesses. This component also includes the specification of the organization's mission, vision and long-range objectives. Finally, strategy formulation should include performance measures to evaluate how successfully an organization has implemented strategy and the extent to which the strategy has contributed to the achievement of the organization's stated goals and objectives.

Flexibility becomes particularly important during the second phase, strategy implementation. The transition from strategic planning to strategic management occurs during this phase (Bourgeois and Brodwin 1984). Strategy implementation involves several components, including: designing the organization's structure and climate to match its strategy; ensuring that divisional and functional managers have the right background, skills and attributes that match the demands of the strategy; employing the right functional policies to facilitate the strategy; and allocating resources to the operating units in support of the strategies approved for those units. In addition, since new information may become available and circumstances might change, the implementation process should allow for, if not outright emphasize, adaptive learning. Such learning will lead to more effective implementation because realized strategies are a blend of both what is intended *and* what emerges in practice (Mintzberg and Westley 1992).

Finally, strategic evaluation, the last component of strategic management, involves the measurement and review of the organization's progress. Using the measures specified during strategic formulations, this component includes feedback to other elements of the strategic management process in order to make corrections, address issues, and solve problems that the organization may encounter. In fact, strategic evaluation is explicitly connected to the other components of this model, as the process of evaluation involves measuring, evaluating, providing corrective action, and using the results of these measures to reevaluate strategies.

## Operational framework

Most of the literature in public strategic management is concerned with the strategy processes in public organizations (Berry 1994; Bryson and Roering 1988; Donald et al. 2001; Eadie 1983; Hatten 1982; Ingraham et al. 2003; Meier et al. 2006; Poister and Streib 1999; Ring and Perry 1985). Some studies have analyzed the barriers to strategic planning and the pitfalls of strategic management, but, as noted before, they have often concentrated on the private sector (Beer and Eisenstat 2000; Kotter 1995; Lorange 1993; Mintzberg 1994; Moore and Wen 2007; Ugboro and Obeng 2005). By looking at the variables that influence strategic management in the public sector, we aim to fill this gap in the literature. Using the model we presented in the previous section, we focus on a set of variables that influence strategic management in the public sector and develop a set of testable hypotheses. These variables are shown in Tables 1 and 2 and are discussed below.

### Research questions

The Research questions examined in this study were:

- Is unclear mission statement and vision development a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?

**Table 2** Barriers of strategic management in the public organizations

Phases of strategy management	Variables	Sources
In phase 1: Strategy formation	Unclear mission statement and vision development	Brown 2006; Bryson 1995; Chun and Rainey 2005; Denhardt 1985; Donald et al. 2001; Eadie 1983; Grewe et al. 1989; Hendrick 2003; Koontz 1976; Moore and Wen 2007; Nutt and Backoff 1992; Ogbechie et al. 2009; Steiner 1979; Wooldridge et al. 2008.
	Inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment	
	Unclear goals	
	Low level of managerial commitment to planning strategic	
	Low level of knowledge and skill of strategic planning and strategy implementation	
	Top down strategic planning	
In phase 2: Strategy implementation	Lack of a supporting organizational culture for strategic planning	Barzelay 1992; Brown 2006; Hatten 1982; Koontz 1976; Kotter 1995; Steiner 1979
	High turnover of managers	
	Inappropriate organizational structure	
	Inappropriate allocation of resources	
In phase 3: Strategy evaluation	Inability to specify performance measurement	Hendrick 2003; Epstein 1992; Hatten 1982; Steiner 1979; Wilson 1994
	Lack of system to evaluate strategic planning	

- Are unclear goals in the public sector barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is lack of top managerial commitment to strategic planning a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is lack of awareness and knowledge of strategic planning and strategy implementation, a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is an organizational culture that does not support strategic management a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is an organizational structure that is inappropriate for strategic management a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Does the high turnover of managers and large amount of political influence constitute a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is inappropriate allocation of resources a barrier to strategic management?
- Is inability to specify performance measurements a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?
- Is lack of strategic planning evaluation systems a barrier to strategic management in public organizations?

### **Hypotheses and their rationales**

*Unclear mission statement and vision development* Regarding both public and private sectors, most strategic planning theorists share a belief in the importance of having a clear mission statement to provide both a sense of an organization's purpose and a justification for its existence. Some theorists distinguish between vision and mission. For example, Bryson and Roering indicate that a successful vision should include: 1) mission, 2) basic philosophy, 3) goals, 4) basic strategies, 5) performance criteria, 6) important decision rules and 7) ethical standards expected of all employees (Bryson and Roering 1988). In other words, a mission statement should clarify an organization's purpose and explain why it should be doing what it does; on the other hand, vision clarifies what the organization should look like and how it should behave as it fulfills its mission. In addition, the mission is a powerful instrument of accountability for public and nonprofit organizations because they do not have a financial bottom line (Drucker 1989; French 2009).

In the development of mission statements in public organizations, organizational mandates should be clear and understandable. Poor understanding of mandates may lead an organization to one of three fundamental problems. First, if an organization does not know what it must do because it lacks clear mandates, it is unlikely to do it. Second, members of the organization may believe that they are more tightly constrained in their actions than they actually are, thus retarding the achievement of the organization's goals. Third, members of the organization may assume that, if they are not explicitly told to do something, they are not allowed to do it (Bryson 1995:21). This again creates barriers to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. In light of these issues, we examine the following hypotheses:

H1: Unclear mission statement and vision development is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Continuous monitoring environmental assessment* Organizations do not exist in a vacuum; rather, both their objectives and the steps necessary to achieve those objectives exist in the context of available resources and constraints within the organizations' environments (Denhardt 1985). Thus, public organizations must understand their external and internal environments so that they can develop productive strategies to align the two and respond effectively to any changes. Having identified the various demands that are made of a given organization, it may be beneficial for the organization to take each demand area and identify other organizations that also service that demand, categorizing them according to whether they complement or compete with the organization. In the case of certain demands, one organization may both complement and compete with another organization. Nevertheless, the act of categorizing organizations provides the substance upon which an analysis of opportunities, threats, and whether to decrease or increase provision can be based (Wilkinson and Monkhouse 1994). Thus, we hypothesize:

H2: Inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Ambiguous goals in the public sector* In the literature on the distinctive characteristics of public organizations and their management, there are two frequently repeated observations. First, public organizations have more vague goals when compared with private business firms, and, secondly, public organizations have greater difficulty assessing goal achievement than private firms (Dahl and Lindblom 1953:22; Drucker 1980). Goal ambiguity refers to the extent to which an organizational goal or set of goals representing the desired future allows for different interpretations. Our definition of organizational goal ambiguity is consistent with other understandings of the concept (Chun and Rainey 2005; Kelemen 2000; Locke et al. 1989).

Not only do public organizations set multiple, vague, and ambiguous goals but almost all large organizations, including business firms, have complicated, intertwined goals. As an organization grows, its tasks and its internal and external relationships are especially intricate and difficult to understand. However, public organizations are unique insofar as they often convert their goals into high-level values in order to cope with this goal ambiguity. These goals often have constitutional value, such as justice, equity, and equality. Problematically, these idealized values might in fact conflict in practice, and public employees may feel pressured to balance them when they formulate or implement public policy. Moreover, public organizations are virtually always mandated to take into account external political interests that often conflict with one another. Thus, public employees are left with unclear, ambiguous goals that cannot provide specific, practical solutions for issues facing the organization, which, in turn, leads to an inability to achieve organizational objectives and goals. Thus, we have the following hypothesis:

H3: Unclear goals in the public sector are a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.



*Managerial commitment to strategic planning* The support and commitment of the organization's key decision makers is vital if strategic planning is to succeed (Bryson 1995:21; Nutt and Backoff 1993; Nutt and Backoff 1992:57; Steiner 1979). If implementation requires involvement of multiple parties and organizations, then the involvement of key stakeholders outside the organization is also crucial to the success of public organizations (Barnett and Burgelman 1996; Bryson 1995:37).

Although strategic planning is a concern of all managers at all levels of an organization, the commitment of an organization's top managers is particularly vital to achieve an overall organizational commitment to strategic planning (Bryson 1995:58; Nutt and Backoff 1992). Top management personnel are charged with linking the organization to its environment. Middle managers translate policies and decisions into operations. Technical people on the front lines are the most knowledgeable about the ways in which the organization's basic technologies work and are the closest to the organization's customers. The input of these groups is vital to improve the quality of strategic planning and to minimize any potential resistance to the implementation of strategic plans. Therefore, we examine the following hypothesis:

H4: Lack of top managerial commitment to strategic planning is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

H5: Lack of awareness and knowledge of strategic planning and strategy implementation is one barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Top-down strategic planning* The literature on strategic management clearly maintains that executives and organizational members can assume a variety of postures and roles in strategy-making (Shrivastava and Nachman 1989). Depending on the organization, the amount of discretion available to top management varies widely from very little to a great deal. In fact, the role played by top managers can range all the way from that of a 'commander', where strategy is consciously formulated at the top and issued to the rest of the organization, to what might be called the 'sponsor', where strategy emerges from below and is merely recognized and approved by the top (Mintzberg 1987). Similarly, the complementary role played by organizational members can range all the way from that of the 'good soldier', where members execute the plans formulated by top management (Guth and MacMillan 1986), to that of an 'entrepreneur', where organizational members are expected to behave autonomously and pursue new initiatives (Hart and Banbury 1994).

On this basis, an emergent or bottom-up approach is a necessary component of the strategic planning process if information from all branches of the organization is to be included in the decision-making process. Moreover, a bottom-up approach can motivate staff to support organizational goals. And finally, given the increasing pressures on government to deliver higher quality services with limited resources, business practices are continually changing through a trial-and-error process as employees, supervisors, and managers seek ad hoc arrangements that meet their emerging needs (Plant 2006). However, failure to reframe strategic planning in a way that embraces an emergent or bottom-up approach persists despite recognition that traditional approaches are not always effective in the public sector, especially in

highly complicated organizations with correspondingly complex organizational goals and objectives. Thus, we hypothesize:

H6: Top-down strategic planning is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Organizational structure and organizational culture* One major aspect that contributes to strategic planning failure is the organization's neglect of the organizational and cultural requirement of strategy. In short, an organization may overlook internal differences among its units, yet taking these differences into consideration is critical for successful strategy implementation (Wilson 1994).

Organizational culture is a system of shared attitudes, values, and beliefs. The nature of the organization's culture system defines appropriate behavior and shapes the decision-making process of its senior managers. Thus, the formulation and implementation of strategic planning is strongly affected by the culture of an organization. For strategic planning to succeed, the organization's culture should put great emphasis on organizational improvement by linking performance and reward as well as providing training and development programs.

An organization's structure also effects how a strategy is formulated and implemented. To successfully achieve organizational goals and objectives, those who are responsible for strategic management should ensure that budgeting and financial management systems, performance management, and other administrative processes are designed to facilitate the implementation of strategic plans and to reinforce the focus on strategy throughout the organization. Designed and used appropriately, these systems also can provide information that is indispensable for further strategic planning, assessment, and evaluation. Strategic managers also need to be aware of the linkages between strategy and structure. They must recognize that purposeful structuring can facilitate strategy implementation and that the relationships inherent in an organization's structure may facilitate or impede the feedback of information that could be vital for further strategic planning and evaluation. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H7: An organizational culture that does not support strategic planning and/or the implementation of an organization's strategy is one barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

H8: An organizational structure that is inappropriate for strategic planning and/or the implementation of an organization's strategy is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Turnover of managers* There are more political intrusions into management and greater infusion of political criteria in public organizations than in the private sector. The imprint of political authority on public management is deep, particularly at the level of direction-setting and strategy formulation. In addition, an elaborate overlay of formal institutional constraints governs the management process in the public sector, involving more formal law, rules, and mandated procedures and policies than in the private sector. Although it is through innovation that we can develop better ways to manage public organizations, recognition and implementation of employee innovations in many cases are blocked by civil service rules and regulations

(Barzelay 1992). Finally, there is often a continual change in leadership in public organizations, which makes continuous improvement difficult.

In this highly politicized context, public managers have weaker power bases and less authority to alter and/or reshape the systems that they manage as compared to private sector managers. The ability of public managers to act autonomously depends upon a complex web of actors in authority networks as well as an equally complex set of rules and regulations. In addition, views, interests and opinions of leaders, legislators and interest groups sometimes dominate over strict efficiency and economic considerations in the decision process of public organizations. Thus, we hypothesize:

H9: The high turnover of managers and large amount of political influence constitute a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Allocation of resources* Allocating resources to organizational units in order to facilitate an organization's strategies is one of the key elements in implementing strategies (Hatten 1982). For this reason, an organization's resources must be analyzed both in terms of quantity as well as in terms of the qualitative support that they provide for achievement of the organization's goals. In fact, the analysis of the fit between an organization's strategy and its resources is sometimes referred to as the internal consistency test of strategy. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H10: Inappropriate allocation of resources is a barrier to strategic management.

*Performance measures* Performance measurement is a critical part of performance improvement for an organization of any size and type, and performance measures constitute the ingredients of any performance-monitoring system. A good set of performance measures should answer four key questions: How many? How efficiently? Of what quality? To what effect? (Dess and Robinson 1984; Epstein 1992: 62). Measuring the right things for the right reasons in the right manner may make the difference between a completely—as opposed to an almost—successful improvement initiative (Behn 2003).

Organizational performance is hard to measure in the public sector. There is a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a valid set of organizational performance and organizational effectiveness criteria. Even so, the dimensions of organizational performance in the public sector are generally understood as divided into internal and external performance, and each criterion is often evaluated based on efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness. In addition, organizational performance is assumed to be affected by individual-level variables (Kim 2004).

However, measurement constitutes one of the biggest difficulties in thinking through the problem of management in government, as managers consider management to be simply a problem of measurement. Government employees seem to be perpetually measuring, counting something or churning out some statistical report. But most of this counting is focused on inputs—how much is spent, how many people are served, what service each person receives, etc. Very seldom do the efforts to measure focus on outcomes or results because measuring results is so difficult. However, measuring outcomes is extremely important; without considering

the effectiveness of organizational practices, an exclusive focus on efficiency may sacrifice quality for the sake of workload output (Hughes 2003:172). Therefore, we examine the following hypothesis:

H11: Inability to specify performance measurements is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

*Assessment of strategic plans* Strategies can cease to work for several reasons. Problems Change. Political environments may shift, and, although a strategy may be well developed to address a certain problem, there may be insufficient resources devoted to its implementation.

Strategies should be reviewed not only for their effect on the immediate issues facing the organization but also for indicators of success and failure. In other words, issues affecting strategy formulation in the first place should be revisited when strategies are reviewed. This process involves measuring, evaluating, and providing corrective action and then using the results of these measures to reevaluate strategies. It should be noted that the strategic planning activities presented here are more than a static collection of mission, goals, objectives, techniques, strategies and strategic planning documents. Rather, it is “an organization-wide commitment to a set of values, operating philosophies, and priorities and a strategic way of thinking in which all major decisions are evaluated in light of their strategic implications”. In other words, the real purpose of strategic planning is not to “make plans but to change the mental models decision makers carry in their heads” (Bryson 1995:75). We examine the following hypothesis:

H12: A lack of strategy planning evaluation systems is a barrier to strategic management in public organizations.

## Methodology

The data were gathered by administering a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the barriers to strategic management in Iranian public organizations. Top managers at 70 public organizations were chosen to answer the questionnaire. Since managers play a relatively active role in strategic planning and implementation of strategies in the Iranian public organizations and have the specialized knowledge and experience required to answer the questions. It is also worth noting that respondents who answered the relevant personal background question indicated that they have experiences in public organizations. Further details about the sample are described in Table 3.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate 44 key elements. Multiple-choice answers in the questionnaire were presented on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very little, 5 = great deal) in order to enable each respondent to evaluate each element as well as to allow our research team to readily translate responses into numerical results for reliable and valid statistical analysis. The elements were selected with a focus on 12 major dimensions. The questionnaire was created after consulting with managers in various public organizations as well as with university faculty. In addition to evaluating the reliability of the questionnaire, we also measured with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (84%).

**Table 3** The descriptive statistics analysis of the sample

Education		Practice as manager in public sector	
Undergraduate	5	Fewer than 5 years	7
Graduate	18	5–10 years	12
Others	47	11–15	25
		16–20	24
		More than 20	2
Total	70		70

### Data analysis

In this section, we analyze the results of our questionnaire. Since the data obtained using the Likert scale were in ordinal form, statistical analyses were conducted based on nonparametric procedures. We used the Binominal test to analyze the elements that were evaluated by respondents, namely, the barriers that influence the success of strategic management in public organizations. This test is as powerful as its classical parametric counterpart, the *t*-test. We then used the Friedman Test for ranking the factors that were seen by respondents as barriers to strategic management in public organizations. First, Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of our variables.

The respondents were asked to rate potential barriers to strategic management on a five-point scale, from very little (1) to a great extent (5). Table 5 summarizes the percentages of respondents who chose each rating (i.e., very little, to some extent, to a great extent). After examining the results in Table 5, we found seven barriers that particularly influenced strategic management, according to respondents: inability to specify performance measurement (81% responded 4 or higher); higher turnover of managers and political influence on public organizations (77% responded 4 or higher); inappropriate organizational structure (77% responded 4 or higher); lack of a strategy planning evaluation system (76% responded 4 or higher); unclear goals (73% responded 4 or higher); inappropriate allocation of resources (66% responded 4 or higher); and lack of managerial commitment to planning strategic (66% responded 4 or higher).

In addition, other perceived barriers to strategic management include: Unclear mission statement and vision development (61% responded 4 or higher); low level of awareness and knowledge of strategic planning and strategy implementation (53 responded 4 or higher); lack of an organizational culture that supported strategic planning (53% responded 4 or higher); inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment (51% responded 4 or higher); and top-down strategic planning (47% responded 4 or higher). These results suggest that respondents, in general, believe that public strategic management faced significant problems. In addition, these problems span all phases of successful strategic management. Further analysis shows the priority of the identified variables according to the mean rank of each item. Table 6 summarizes the mean rank using the Friedman Test.

As a final analysis, we evaluated our test hypotheses using the Binomial Test. Although some respondents did not view an unclear mission statement and vision

**Table 4** The descriptive Statistics of variables that influence on failure of strategic management in public organizations

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Unclear mission statement and vision development	3.76	.53	2.50	5.00
Inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment	3.59	.60	2.33	4.67
Unclear goals	3.82	.40	2.75	5.00
Low level managerial commitment to planning strategic	3.94	.63	2.50	5.00
Low level knowledge and skill of strategic planning and strategy implementation	3.70	.62	2.25	5.00
Top down strategic planning	3.67	.57	2.25	4.75
Lack of a supporting organizational culture for strategic planning	3.58	.57	2.25	4.67
High turnover of managers	3.97	.58	2.20	5.00
Inappropriate organizational structure	3.90	.70	2.00	5.00
Inappropriate allocation of resources	3.65	.66	2.00	4.67
Inability to specify performance measurement	3.93	.60	2.00	5.00
Lack of a system to evaluate strategic planning	3.86	.56	2.67	5.00

development as a principal barrier to strategic management, statistical evidence was found to support H1 (see Table 5). Hence, at the asymptotic significance level (.073), we accept that unclear mission statement and vision development is one barrier to strategic management (H1). Also, a majority of respondents believed that an inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment is not a barrier to strategic management. So, at the asymptotic significance level (.90), we reject that an inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment is a barrier to strategic management (H2). On the other hand, almost more than 75% of our sample claimed that lack of clear, unclear goals is a factor that influences the failure of strategic management. Hence, at the asymptotic significance level (.00021), there is evidence to support H3. In addition, this sample of managers also saw a lack of managerial commitment to strategic planning as one barrier to strategic management. Therefore, at the asymptotic significance level (.021), H4 is accepted. We reject, however, H5, H6, and H7 at the asymptotic significant level (.072), since our statistical evidence does not support that any of the following factors act as barriers to strategic management according to respondents: lack of awareness and knowledge of strategic planning and strategy implementation; top-down strategic planning; and lack of an organizational culture that supports strategic planning. Lastly, most of our respondents claimed the following to be barriers to strategic management: high turnover of managers; inappropriate organizational structure; inappropriate allocation of resources; inability to specify performance measurement; and lack of a strategy planning evaluation system. Hence, H8 (at the asymptotic significance level, almost .0009), H9 (at the asymptotic significance level, almost .0009), H10 (at the asymptotic significance level, almost .012), H11 (at the asymptotic significance level, almost .0002), and H12 (at the asymptotic significance level, almost .0002), are accepted.

**Table 5** The result of analyses of the research variables by Binomial test

Items	Category	N	Observed prop.	Test prop.	Asymptotic significance (2-tailed)
Unclear mission statement and vision development	Group 1	27	.39	.50	.073
	Group 2	43	.61		
	Total	70	1.00		
Inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment	Group 1	34	.49	.50	.905
	Group 2	36	.51		
	Total	70	1.00		
Unclear goals	Group 1	19	.27	.50	.000
	Group 2	51	.73		
	Total	70	1.00		
Low level managerial commitment to planning strategic	Group 1	24	.34	.50	.012
	Group 2	46	.66		
	Total	70	1.00		
Low level knowledge and skill of strategic planning and strategy implementation	Group 1	33	.47	.50	.720
	Group 2	37	.53		
	Total	70	1.00		
Top down strategic planning	Group 1	37	.53	.50	.720
	Group 2	33	.47		
	Total	70	1.00		
Lack of a supporting organizational culture for strategic planning	Group 1	33	.47	.50	.720
	Group 2	37	.53		
	Total	70	1.00		
High turnover of managers	Group 1	16	.23	.50	.000
	Group 2	54	.77		
	Total	70	1.00		
Inappropriate organizational structure	Group 1	16	.23	.50	.000
	Group 2	54	.77		
	Total	70	1.00		
Inappropriate allocation of resources	Group 1	24	.34	.50	.012
	Group 2	46	.66		
	Total	70	1.00		
Inability to specify performance measurement	Group 1	13	.19	.50	.000
	Group 2	57	.81		
	Total	70	1.00		
Lack of a system to evaluate strategic planning	Group 1	17	.24	.50	.000
	Group 2	53	.76		
	Total	70	1.00		

A Based on Z Approximation

Group1 include respondents that choice (every extent/extent); Group2 include respondents that choice (very little, little, and some)

The probability, based on the asymptotic distribution of a test statistic and assuming that the data set is large, of obtaining results as extreme as the one observed, and in either direction when the null hypothesis is true. A two-tailed significance level tests a null hypothesis in which the direction of an effect is not specified in advance

**Table 6** The results of Friedman test

Items	Rank	Mean rank
Unclear mission statement and vision development	7	6.21
Inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment	11	5.46
Unclear goals	6	6.64
Low level managerial commitment to planning strategic	2	7.45
Low level knowledge and skill of strategic planning and strategy implementation	9	5.88
Top down strategic planning	8	6.09
Lack of a supporting organizational culture for strategic planning	12	5.16
High turnover of managers	1	7.66
Inappropriate organizational structure	3	7.41
Inappropriate allocation of resources	10	5.71
Inability to specify performance measurement	4	7.40
Lack of a system to evaluate strategic planning	5	6.92

$N=70$ ; chi-square: 46.056; df:11

### Implications for strategic management in public organizations

Empirical results of this research indicated influential critical factors on implementation of strategic planning in Iranian public sector are : unclear mission statement and vision development; inability to continuous monitoring environmental assessment; unclear goals; lack of managerial commitment to strategic planning; low level of knowledge and skill regarding strategic planning and strategy implementation; top-down strategic planning; lack of an organizational culture supportive of strategic planning; high turnover of managers and political influence; inappropriate organizational structure; inappropriate allocation of resources; inability to specify performance measurement; and lack of a strategy planning evaluation system.

What are implications of these results for theory and practice of strategic management in public sector? At first we must note that study of failures of strategic planning in public organization has been major concern of practitioners and academicians from the 1970 and 1980s. For example, Steiner (Steiner 1979:294) studied the pitfalls in strategic planning process. He found that the important pitfalls are lake of top management commitment and involvement in strategic planning processes .Wilson (1994) suggests that one major factor that contributes to failure of strategic management is the weakness of the organizational and cultural requirement for implementation of strategy. Grundy and King (1992) emphasized strategic planning fails, not “because its tools are faulty but because it is not seen by managers as an essential part of the strategic change process” (Grundy and King 1992:101).

Authors hope that this study guides organizational practitioners and managers to consider theses factors in development of strategic planning and implementation of



strategic plans. However, the results of this study suggest following implications for theory and practice of strategic planning in public sector:

1. **The nature of public sector.** Some of these barriers relate to the essence of management in public sector. Public administration operates in political environment. Political influences (national, international, and global) affect the public policy process and plans of public agencies. On the other hand, public administrators work in a political world and politics is a critical part of their working environment. Minimal changes in global, international and national conditions (known “butter fly effect in chaos theory”), may sweep all plans, programs and projects. Strategies in public sectors based on budget appropriations; there is a covariance between amounts of apportioned public budget and plans, programs and projects. Therefore legal restrictions influence public managers’ operations and views in different ways. Theoretical outcome of this reasoning is: there are differences between administration in public sector and management in private sector. We can not borrow private sector techniques and apply in the public sector blindly and adopt them without modifications. Generic approach to administration in public organizations, without adjustments is a rejected idea in practice and theory, we must not repeat it (give references and back it up...many generic ideas have been applied to public organizations).

The fact that the political factors affect public organizations is not limited to Iran. However, some issues are special in the context of Iranian administrative system. The administration approach to the public sector is very political in Iran, as is the case in almost all administrative systems around the world. The dominance of political approach in all elements of administration of public organizations has caused a kind of managerial myopia and short sighted perspective in planning. On one hand, politicized public managers seek for short-term results and don’t appreciate long-term programs—this is the case in most countries, including the United States. On the other hand, programs such as strategic management are considered as a fashion of management practice and, as a result, such programs are not in a way to promote efficiency and productivity or to achieve the aims of public organizations. Public managers pay attention to these programs because of prestige of strategic planning as a trend of the day.

Furthermore, dominance of political approach in the public sector management has influenced appointment and selection system in this sector; such approach has led to a high turnover of managers. Public organizations are troubled by a problem that is known colloquially as “musical chairs”. Since the public sector is influenced by a political climate changing with election cycles, long-term planning would be difficult—and this case in many countries with democracy. In these situations, managers tend to programs which can be achievable in a short term. The outcome of this reasoning is politicization of administration in the public sector resulting in managerial myopia. An administrative system must be conscious about the role of politics in administration—though the two are not separable

2. **Managerial myopia in public sector.** Strategic management is typically a long-term program and the presence of a strong leadership is essential to its successful implementation. However, it gets cut short when it is applied to the

public sector. Since the public sector is highly influenced by politics and policy, the long-period ends face serious problems. Implementation of strategic management and its use in reforming procedures and improving services are more related to long term views, the idea of implementation of the long term programs in the public sector seems to be a contradictory idea. In fact, strategic management more often fails in the public sector due to a high turnover of managers as well as the ever-changing demands of the political climate. These two factors are among the origins of managerial myopia.

3. **Application of private techniques in public sector.** There are different viewpoints about applicability of strategic management in public sector. Some accept that these processes apply in general to both the private and public sectors (Koteen 1997). Others take into consideration the distinct nature of public organizations and therefore are questioning explicabilities of these ideas in this sector (Miller 1989). Certainly, the public sector differs from private sector (Adams 1979; Lynn 1981; Kogod and Caulfield 1982; Rainey 1983; Hartle 1985; Durant et al. 1986; Dewitt et al. 1994; Moe 1994; Kobrak 1996; Libecap 1996; Larson and Coe 1999; Haass 1999; Bernier and Hafsi 2007). Maneuverability of managers in public sector is less a choice than for private sector managers. The context of public organizations differs from private sector and legal constraints influence the goals of this sector. Generally, public agencies are more tightly constrained and public managers must not only work within these legal and political constraints, but also must face legal and administrative rigidities and inflexibilities.

Beyond the differences between these two sectors, using and promoting private management techniques such as strategic management requires private thought (what do you mean?), but this event results in contradictions because philosophical foundations of these sectors are different. Since ideas of private sector fit their sphere, without the philosophy of private sector in public organizations promoting these ideas in public sector will not be viable or valuable. In countries such as the USA, because of its corporate capitalist system, most of the values of the private sector may be appreciated in the public sector and they may face little difficulty in using such techniques. But fitness between private sector values and public values in Iranian organizations is not without difficulties.

4. **Lack of alignment among meta- policy, policy and strategy.** There are four managerial systems in Iran. The linkage between the four systems is an alignment among meta-policy (level 1), policy (level 2), strategy (level 3), and strategy (level 4) (Danaee Fard 2009: 1026). A major problem in implementation of strategic management in Iranian public sector is lack of an alignment between the above mentioned levels. Meta- policies may not require strategic management but public managers focus on strategic vision.
5. **Distinctive organizational culture.** Organizational culture in public organizations is typically influenced by a set of basic public values. Public service motivation is desired to serve the public interest, loyalty to duty, the Constitution, to the government, and to social equity. Additionally, there are complex values and goals in the public sector that conflict with one another. These values imply to characteristics of organizational culture.

On the other hand, public officials have to obey public policies and they should leave public offices before opposition to those policies (explain what you mean, not clear). On this base, maybe we do not need to change the nature of public sector to eliminate barriers to implement programs such as strategic management missions, goals, and objectives. Instead, we should change our approach about the trend and rapidity of using private sector practices in public sector. According to Denhardt (2000), the best strategy for public managers must be “dedicating to public service.” The public sector needs believable managers not on TQM and ISO, or strategic planning. All political systems must provide a linkage among their philosophy, doctrine, policy, and strategy.

Therefore, the focus of building theory about strategic management in the public sector must be different from the one in the private sector. Implementation of strategies in public sector has particular requirements that are completely different from private organizations.

## References

- Adams, B. (1979). The limitations of muddling through: does anyone in Washington really think anymore? *Public Administration Review*, 39(6), 544–552.
- Barnett, W. P., & Burgelman, R. A. (1996). Evolutionary perspectives on strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17, 5–19.
- Barzelay, M. (1992). *Breaking through bureaucracy: A new vision for managing in government*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Beer, M., & Eisenstat, R. A. (2000). The silent killers of strategy implementation and learning. *Sloan Management Review*, 41(4), 29–40.
- Behn, R. (1995). The big questions of public management. *Public Administration Review*, 55(4), 313–324.
- Behn, R. O. (2003). Why measure performance? Different purposes require different measures. *Public Administration Review*, 63(5), 586–606.
- Bernier, L., & Hafsi, T. (2007). The changing nature of public entrepreneurship. *Public Administration Review*, 67(3), 488–503.
- Berry, F. S. (1994). Innovation in public management: the adoption of strategic planning. *Public Administration Review*, 54(4), 322–329.
- Berry, F. S., & Wechsler, B. (1995). State agencies' experience with strategic planning: findings from a national survey. *Public Administration Review*, 55(2), 159–168.
- Bourgeois, L. J., & Brodwin, D. (1984). Strategic implementation: five approaches to an elusive phenomenon. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5, 241–264.
- Bozeman, B., & Straussman, J. D. (1990). *Public management strategies: Guidelines for managerial effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, P. (2006). Do senior management development programs enhance strategic management capabilities? *Strategic Change*, 15(1), 37–45.
- Bryson, J. (1995). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Bryson, J. M., & Roering, W. D. (1988). Initiation of strategic planning by governments. *Public Administration Review*, 48(6), 995–1004.
- Chun, Y. H., & Rainey, H. G. (2005). Goal ambiguity and organizational performance in U.S. federal agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15, 529–557.
- Dahl, R. A., & Lindblom, C. E. (1953). *Politics, economics, and welfare*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Danaee Fard, H. (2009). An administrative manifesto for survival in the twenty-first century. *Public Administration Review*, 69(6), 1025–1027.
- David, F. R. (1999). *Strategic management*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Denhardt, R. B. (1985). Strategic planning in state and local government. *State and Local Government Review*, 17(1), 174–179.
- Denhardt, R. B. (2000). *The pursuit of significance: Strategies for managerial success in public organizations*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press Inc.

- Dess, G., & Robinson, R. (1984). Measuring organizational performance in the absence of objective measures: the case of the privately-held firm and conglomerate business unit. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(3), 265–273.
- DeWitt, J., Donald, F., Kettl, D. F., Dyer, B., & Lovan, R. (1994). What will new governance mean for the federal governance? *Public Administration Review*, 54(2), 170–175.
- Donald, C. G., Lyons, T. S., & Tribbey, R. C. (2001). A partnership for strategic planning and management in a public organization. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 25(2), 176–193.
- Drucker, P. F. (1980). The deadly sins in public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 40, 103–106.
- Drucker, P. F. (1989). What can business learn from nonprofits. *Harvard Business Review*, 67(4), 88–93.
- Drumaux, A., & Goethals, C. (2007). Strategic management: a tool for public management. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 20(7), 638–654.
- Durant, R. F., Thomas, L. W., Brown, R. G., & Fletcher McClellan, E. (1986). From complacency to compliance: toward a theory of Intragovernmental regulation. *Administration and Society*, 17(4), 433–459.
- Eadie, D. C. (1983). Putting a powerful tool to practical use: the application of strategic planning in the public sector. *Public Administration Review*, 43(5), 447–452.
- Elbanna, S. (2007). The nature and practice of strategic planning in Egypt. *Strategic Change*, 16(5), 227–243.
- Epstein, P. D. (1992). Measuring and analyzing the productivity of professionals and managers. In M. Hoizer (Ed.), *Public productivity handbook* (pp. 47–62). New York: Marcel Dekker Inc.
- French, S. (2009). Critiquing the language of strategic management. *The Journal of Management Development*, 28(1), 6–16.
- Grewe, T., Marshall, J., & O' Toole, D. E. (1989). Participative planning for a public service. *Long Range Planning*, 22(1), 110–117.
- Grundy, T., & King, D. (1992). Using strategic planning to drive strategic change. *Long Rang Planning*, 25(1), 100–108.
- Guth, W. D., & MacMillan, I. C. (1986). Strategy implementation versus middle management self-interest. *Strategic Management Journal*, 7(4), 313–327.
- Haass, R. N. (1999). *The bureaucratic entrepreneur: How to be effective in any unruly organization*. Washington: Brookings Institution.
- Hart, S., & Banbury, C. (1994). How strategy-making processes can make a difference. *Strategic Management Journal*, 15(4), 251–269.
- Hartle, T. W. (1985). Sisyphus revisited: running the government like a business. *Public Administration Review*, 45, 341–351.
- Hatten, M. L. (1982). Strategic management in not-for-profit organizations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 3(2), 89–104.
- Hendrick, R. (2003). Strategic planning environment, process, and performance in public agencies: a comparative study of departments in Milwaukee. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13(4), 491–519.
- Hensey, M. (1997). Strategic planning: developments and improvements. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 29–32, March–April.
- Hughes, O. E. (2003). *Public management and administration: An introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ingraham, P. W., Joyce, P. G., & Donahue, A. D. (2003). *Government performance: Why management matters*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Kelemen, M. (2000). Too much or too little ambiguity: the language of total quality management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37, 483–498.
- Kim, S. (2004). Individual-level factors and organizational performance in government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15(2), 245–261.
- Kobrak, P. (1996). The social responsibilities of a public entrepreneur. *Administration and Society*, 28(2), 205–237.
- Kogod, R. P., & Caulfield, S. C. (1982). Beyond corporate responsibility: toward a fundamental. Redefinition of the roles of public and private sectors. *National Journal*, 22, 981–985.
- Koontz, H. (1976). Making strategic planning work. *Business Horizons*, 2, 37–47.
- Koteen, J. (1997). *Strategic management in public and nonprofit organizations: Managing public concerns in an era of limits*. Westport: Praeger.
- Kotter, J. (1995). Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73, 59–67.
- Larson, P. E., & Coe, A. (1999). *Managing change: The evolution role of top public servants. Managing the public services strategies for improvements series 7*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

- Libecap, G. D. (1996). *Advances in the study of entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth: Reinventing government and the problem of bureaucracy*. Greenwich: JAI Press.
- Locke, E., Chah, D. O., Harrison, S., & Lustgarten, N. (1989). Separating the effects of goal specificity from goal level. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 43(2), 270–287.
- Lorange, P. (1993). *Strategic planning and control: Issues in the strategy process*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Lynn, B. C. (1981). How much government is too much? *New England Economic Review*, 21–35, March.
- Meier, K. J., O'Toole, L., Boyne, G. A., & Walker, R. M. (2006). Strategic management and the performance of public organizations: testing venerable ideas against recent theories. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 17(3), 357–377.
- Miller, G. J. (1989). Unique public sector strategies. *Public Productivity and Management Review*, 13(2), 133–144.
- Mintzberg, H. (1987). The strategy concept I: five Ps for strategy. *California Management Review*, 30, 11–24.
- Mintzberg, H. (1994). Rethinking strategic planning part I: pitfalls and fallacies. *Long Range Planning*, 27(3), 12–21.
- Mintzberg, H., & Westley, F. (1992). Cycles of organizational change. *Strategic Management Journal*, 13, 39–59.
- Moe, R. C. (1994). The reinventing government exercise: misinterpreting the problem, misjudging the consequences. *Public Administration Review*, 54(2), 111–122.
- Moore, S., & Wen, J. J. (2007). Strategic management in Australia and China: the great leap forward or an illusion? *Journal of Technology Management in China*, 2(1), 10–21.
- Nutt, P. C., & Backoff, R. W. (1992). *The strategic management of public and third sector organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nutt, P. C., & Backoff, R. W. (1993). Organizational publicness and its implication for strategic management. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 3, 209–231.
- Ogbechie, C., Koufopoulos, D. N., & Argyropoulou, M. (2009). Board characteristics and involvement in strategic decision making: the Nigerian perspective. *Management Research News*, 32(2), 169–184.
- Plant, T. (2006). Public sector strategic planning: an emergent approach. *Performance Improvement*, 45(5), 5–6.
- Poister, T. H., & Streib, G. D. (1999). Strategic management in the public sector: concepts, models, and processes. *Public Productivity & Management Review*, 22(3), 308–325.
- Rainey, H. G. (1983). Public agencies and private firms: incentives, goals and individual roles. *Administration and Society*, 15(2), 233–246.
- Ring, P., & Perry, J. (1985). Strategic management in public and private organizations: implications of distinctive contexts and constraints. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(2), 276–286.
- Shrivastava, P., & Nachman, S. N. (1989). Strategic leadership patterns. *Strategic Management Journal*, 10, 51–66.
- Steiner, G. A. (1979). *Strategic planning: What every manager must know*. New York: Free Press.
- Ugboro, I. I., & Obeng, K. (2005). The practice and use of strategic planning systems in public Transit Organizations. *Research and Special Programs Administration*, January, Available at: <http://www.ncat.edu/~traninst/UgboroandObeng/finalreport/2004.pdf>.
- Wilkinson, G., & Monkhouse, E. (1994). Strategic planning in public sector organizations. *Executive Development*, 7(6), 16–19.
- Wilson, I. (1994). Strategic planning isn't dead- it changed. *Long Rang Planning*, 27(4), 12–24.
- Wooldridge, B., Schmid, T., & Floyd, S. W. (2008). The middle management perspective on strategy process: contributions, synthesis, and future research. *Journal of Management*, 34(6), 1190–1221.

**Hasan Danaee Fard** holds a doctorate in public administration from Allameh Tabatabaei University and is an associate professor of public administration at Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran, Iran. He has published several books and many articles and book chapters in academic journals and edited volumes on the topics of administrative theory, public organizations, policy making, organization theory, and development management.

**Asghar moshabaki** holds a doctorate in business management. He has published several books and many articles and book chapters in academic journals and edited volumes on the topics of organization behavior, strategic management, organization theory, and development management.

**Tayebeh Abbasi** is PHD student of public policy making in Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran, Iran. She has published many articles on the topics of public organizations, policy making, and human resources in public sector.

**Akbar Hassanpoor** holds a doctorate in public administration from Allameh Tabatabaei University. He has published several books and many articles and book chapters in academic journals and edited volumes on the topics of public organizations, human resources, organization theory, and development management.