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Leveraging On Strategic Planning To Strengthen Internal Quality Systems in Fragile Organizational Contexts, Case of Somalia

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Abstract

This study examines how strategic planning can be effectively leveraged to strengthen internal quality systems within fragile organizational contexts, with a focus on Somalia. Although strategic planning is widely recognized as a driver of institutional resilience, Somali institutions continue to face challenges such as weak governance structures, limited integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and donor-driven operational models. Employing a desktop review methodology, the study critically synthesizes national strategies, donor evaluations, and academic literature to assess gaps, opportunities, and enablers of strategic planning in Somalia's public and civil society sectors.

Findings reveal that while many organizations possess formal strategic plans, most lack implementation coherence, contextual adaptability, and embedded feedback loops. Drawing on contingency and institutional theories, the study highlights the persistent misalignment between planning intentions and operational realities, often resulting in fragmented execution and symbolic compliance. To address these challenges, the study recommends: (1) embedding strategic planning within national policy frameworks; (2) strengthening institutional capacity for performance monitoring and adaptive learning; (3) promoting stakeholder-driven planning processes that are context-sensitive and

inclusive; and (4) reducing over-dependence on donor-defined priorities through locally owned strategy development.

The proposed Integrated Operational Model for Strategic Planning and Internal Quality System Enhancement provides a practical roadmap for achieving these goals. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theory and practice by offering a scalable, context-informed framework for institutional reform in fragile states. It delivers actionable insights for policymakers, development partners, and organizational leaders working in post-conflict or high-risk environments, encouraging a shift from reactive planning to proactive, quality-oriented governance.

Keywords: *Strategic Planning, Internal Quality Systems, Fragile Contexts, Somalia, Governance, Organizational Resilience, Monitoring and Evaluation, Adaptive Management*

1.0 Introduction

Strategic planning has emerged as a cornerstone of organizational resilience in volatile operating environments, enabling institutions to anticipate risks and align priorities (Bryson, 2018). Globally, organizations employ strategic frameworks to foster coordination, optimize resource use, and navigate uncertainty (Mintzberg et al., 2005). However, in fragile contexts, this process is frequently fragmented or absent altogether, resulting in reactive rather than proactive organizational responses. The absence of long-term planning reduces institutional coherence and undermines internal quality control (OECD, 2020). As organizations face increasing pressure to demonstrate impact, embedding strategic planning into core operations becomes essential.

Fragile institutional environments are typically characterized by weak governance structures, limited resources, and persistent instability (World Bank, 2021). In such contexts, internal quality systems—including monitoring, evaluation, and compliance mechanisms—often lack consistency and rigor. This undermines accountability and hinders evidence-based decision-making (Kapucu & Garayev, 2016). Without a robust strategic direction, organizational processes remain fragmented and ad hoc. Nevertheless, literature suggests that well-grounded strategic planning can catalyze improvements in institutional performance and accountability (Schmitt & Devermont, 2020). These insights are critical for fragile states striving to build sustainable governance systems.

Somalia exemplifies a fragile context where strategic planning has yet to be effectively institutionalized across public and nonprofit sectors

(Menkhaus, 2014). Years of political instability have hampered policy continuity and organizational development (UNDP, 2022). Many entities operate on donor-driven project cycles with limited integration into long-term planning frameworks. Consequently, internal quality systems remain underdeveloped, uncoordinated, and unable to sustain improvements over time (Transparency International, 2021). This creates a strategic vacuum that weakens institutional learning and performance tracking. Bridging this gap through contextualized planning models is essential for Somalia's state-building trajectory.

In Somalia's development landscape, donor agencies have increasingly emphasized the need for stronger organizational accountability (OECD, 2022). Despite this, most institutions continue to rely on fragmented operational plans that are poorly aligned with internal quality mandates (Peters et al., 2019). This disconnect weakens organizational capacity to evaluate impact, adapt to environmental shifts, and ensure service consistency. Moreover, the absence of strategic planning discourages a culture of learning and adaptability (DFID, 2019). A shift toward integrated, evidence-driven strategies is urgently required.

Effective strategic planning must be tailored to Somalia's complex sociopolitical environment and fragile institutions (Andrews et al., 2017). Evidence demonstrates that adaptive planning, grounded in stakeholder engagement and continuous feedback, supports quality-driven governance systems (USAID, 2020). For Somalia, this requires moving beyond consultant-led blueprints toward participatory frameworks rooted in local realities. Organizations that embrace such planning exhibit stronger internal coordination, clearer performance metrics, and better alignment with national development goals (World Bank, 2023). Embedding strategic planning in this manner offers a pathway toward institutional transformation and sustainable service delivery.

2.0 Study Rationale

Despite widespread consensus that strategic planning strengthens institutional resilience and operational coherence, its adoption remains limited in fragile contexts such as Somalia (Bryson, 2018; Andrews et al., 2017; Schmitt & Devermont, 2020). A significant proportion of Somali public and civil society institutions lack formal strategic plans, and those that exist are often donor-driven, externally authored, and poorly integrated into internal operations (UNDP, 2022; World Bank, 2023; Transparency International, 2021). The disconnect between planning and

internal quality systems undermines evidence-based decision-making and creates operational inefficiencies (OECD, 2020; Kapucu & Garayev, 2016). Without strategic alignment, core functions such as monitoring, evaluation, audit, and compliance remain reactive and fragmented (USAID, 2020). Consequently, Somali institutions are frequently unable to meet donor requirements, track performance indicators, or respond flexibly to shifting socio-political realities (Menkhaus, 2014; Peters et al., 2019).

Somalia's long-standing governance challenges—including decades of conflict, weak institutional infrastructure, and high donor dependency—further exacerbate the problem (UNESCO, 2022; African Development Bank, 2020). Transparency International (2021) reports that fewer than 30% of Somali public institutions operate with documented quality assurance protocols, while over 60% of CSOs lack formal performance tracking mechanisms (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2022). Even in donor-funded projects, internal quality systems are often limited to short-term reporting, with little integration into strategic frameworks (DFID, 2019; USAID, 2020). This results in inconsistent service delivery, redundant efforts, and an inability to institutionalize learning (Kapucu & Garayev, 2016; Mingers & White, 2020). As organizations increasingly operate in high-risk environments, the absence of strategic foresight severely limits their capacity to mitigate institutional vulnerabilities or capitalize on development opportunities (Bryson, 2018; Mintzberg et al., 2005).

Compounding this challenge is the tendency for strategic planning in Somalia to be viewed primarily as a donor compliance exercise rather than a core organizational function (UNDP, 2022). Top-down planning often lacks participatory input, contextual sensitivity, and follow-through in implementation (Peters et al., 2019; Andrews et al., 2017). This undermines staff ownership and restricts the development of adaptive, mission-aligned institutions capable of learning and evolving (World Bank, 2023). Without embedded feedback mechanisms, strategic plans fail to influence program design, resource allocation, or quality assurance frameworks (Mwakio & Cherono, 2023). Consequently, strategic incoherence persists across sectors, even as Somalia embarks on critical public service reforms and decentralized governance efforts (African Union, 2022; Federal Government of Somalia, 2021).

The implications are far-reaching. Donors are increasingly demanding outcome-based programming and performance transparency, yet Somali institutions lack the strategic tools to deliver (DFID, 2019; USAID, 2020; UNDP, 2022). The absence of harmonized strategic and quality systems

inhibits sectoral coordination, promotes duplication, and weakens service credibility (Transparency International, 2021; OECD, 2022). Moreover, the lack of strategic planning reduces resilience to shocks such as funding volatility, political disruptions, and climate-related emergencies (Kapucu & Garayev, 2016; Menkhaus, 2014). In such contexts, strategic planning is not a luxury but a necessity—critical for navigating fragility, ensuring accountability, and achieving institutional stability (Senge, 2006; Mintzberg et al., 2005; Bryson, 2018).

Therefore, this study seeks to examine how strategic planning can be effectively leveraged to enhance internal quality systems in fragile organizational contexts, with a specific focus on Somalia. By identifying best practices, contextual barriers, and enabling conditions, the study will generate actionable insights for public institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners (World Bank, 2023; UNDP, 2022; OECD, 2020). It will contribute to ongoing discourses on institutional transformation, state-building, and governance innovation in post-conflict settings (USAID, 2020; DFID, 2019; Andrews et al., 2017). Ultimately, the study aims to provide a scalable and context-sensitive framework for embedding strategic planning into organizational governance structures in Somalia and similarly fragile environments (Schmitt & Devermont, 2020; Federal Government of Somalia, 2021; African Union, 2022).

3.0 Research Objective

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which strategic planning influences key internal governance mechanisms—including monitoring and evaluation, compliance, risk management, and performance tracking—within Somali public institutions and civil society organizations.

4.0 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it addresses a critical gap in understanding how strategic planning can be institutionalized within fragile governance environments to enhance internal quality systems—a topic of increasing global relevance (OECD, 2020; World Bank, 2023). Second, Somalia presents a compelling case where institutional fragility, donor dependency, and ad hoc programmatic responses have historically undermined strategic coherence and accountability (UNDP, 2022; Transparency International, 2021). By focusing on this context, the research generates localized insights that can inform practical reforms.

Third, the study provides actionable guidance for policymakers, development partners, and organizational leaders seeking to strengthen institutional resilience and operational efficiency in post-conflict settings. Findings from this research are expected to inform the design of context-sensitive planning frameworks that align organizational goals with performance outcomes and stakeholder expectations. Finally, as Somalia embarks on public sector reform, decentralization, and capacity-building initiatives, this study contributes to evidence-based policymaking by offering a model for integrating strategic planning with quality assurance, thereby promoting sustainable governance and effective service delivery.

5.0 Theoretical Review

This study is grounded in two interrelated theoretical frameworks: Contingency Theory and Institutional Theory. Together, these frameworks provide a multidimensional lens for examining how strategic planning can strengthen internal quality systems within fragile organizational settings. In contexts such as Somalia—where institutional volatility, resource scarcity, and weak governance structures are prevalent—these theories help explain both the challenges and potential pathways for embedding strategic planning into organizational practice (Ahmed & Hashi, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

5.1 Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory posits that there is no universal model for organizational effectiveness; rather, internal systems and management strategies must align with specific environmental conditions to optimize performance (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Donaldson, 2001). This framework is particularly relevant to Somalia, where political instability, limited infrastructure, and unpredictable donor funding necessitate adaptive and context-sensitive approaches to strategic planning.

Critics of Contingency Theory contend that its emphasis on environmental fit may oversimplify the complexity of real-world decision-making and fails to provide actionable guidance for managers operating in dynamic, high-risk settings (Van de Ven et al., 2013; Burton & Obel, 2018). Nonetheless, its relevance persists in fragile contexts by underscoring the importance of aligning organizational strategy with contextual constraints and opportunities. This is especially critical when developing internal quality systems that must remain flexible yet reliable under pressure (Kapucu & Hu, 2021).

5.2 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory, as advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), emphasizes how organizations conform to external norms, rules, and expectations in order to secure legitimacy and survival. In Somalia, where many organizations rely heavily on donor support and operate within loosely regulated institutional ecosystems, this theory is particularly useful for understanding why strategic planning practices are often shaped more by external pressures than by internal performance goals (Farah & Warsame, 2022).

Nevertheless, Institutional Theory has been critiqued for overemphasizing conformity at the expense of innovation and for underestimating the agency of local actors in shaping institutional practices (Greenwood et al., 2017; Battilana et al., 2020). Despite these criticisms, the theory remains highly applicable to this study, as it explains how strategic planning in fragile environments is frequently adopted to meet the expectations of international partners, thereby linking organizational legitimacy directly with internal quality assurance mechanisms (UNDP, 2023; OECD, 2022).

6.0 Materials and Methods

This study employed a desktop review research design to analyze how strategic planning contributes to strengthening internal quality systems in fragile organizational contexts, with a specific focus on Somalia. A desktop review was deemed appropriate given the complex security and institutional landscape in Somalia, which restricts direct data collection but provides a rich repository of policy reports, institutional audits, donor evaluations, peer-reviewed research, and program assessments. This method enabled a comprehensive synthesis of existing empirical and conceptual knowledge, generating strategic insights without compromising researcher safety or organizational confidentiality (Bowen, 2009; Snyder, 2019).

The data sources for this review included both peer-reviewed academic literature and grey literature such as evaluation reports from multilateral agencies (e.g., UNDP, World Bank, USAID), national development plans, internal audit reports, and working papers from think tanks and NGOs operating in Somalia. Databases consulted included Google Scholar, JSTOR, World Bank eLibrary, African Journals Online (AJOL), and the Somali Ministry of Planning repository. Document selection was guided by inclusion criteria prioritizing materials published between 2015 and 2024, with a thematic focus on strategic planning, organizational performance, internal quality systems, and governance structures in Somalia.

A total of 76 documents were initially identified, of which 42 met the criteria for inclusion after quality appraisal. These were evaluated using a thematic content analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), guided by four predefined themes derived from the theoretical framework:

1. Strategic planning design and institutional alignment
2. Capacity and resource allocation for quality systems
3. Feedback and learning mechanisms
4. External legitimacy and stakeholder engagement

Themes were iteratively refined as patterns and correlations emerged from the data, allowing both inductive insights and theory-led validation. To ensure analytical depth and validity, document selection followed explicit inclusion criteria based on relevance, credibility, and temporal scope:

- Temporal Scope: Documents published between 2010 and 2025 were included to capture recent institutional reforms and strategic planning initiatives following Somalia's post-transition governance period.
- Completeness and Accessibility: Documents had to be publicly available, complete (not excerpts or summaries), and in English to ensure consistency in analysis.
- Source Credibility: Priority was given to documents from reputable sources, including the Government of Somalia ministries and agencies, international development organizations (e.g., UNDP, World Bank, USAID, African Development Bank), peer-reviewed academic journals, recognized think tanks and policy institutes, and civil society/NGO evaluations with transparent methodologies.
- Thematic Relevance: Only documents explicitly addressing strategic planning, governance systems, institutional quality, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), or organizational capacity in the Somali context were considered.

Documents were excluded from the review if they lacked clear authorship, institutional affiliation, or a verifiable publication source, as this would risk reliance on unverified data. Materials were also excluded if they were primarily advocacy-oriented or opinion-based without empirical grounding, if they focused exclusively on humanitarian or emergency relief operations without relevance to institutional or strategic planning, or if they duplicated content from other included sources without offering additional analytical contribution. Finally, documents published before 2010 were excluded, as they may not adequately reflect the post-transition governance dynamics relevant to Somalia's current institutional realities.

To mitigate potential biases inherent in secondary data, the study employed triangulation across diverse document types, critical cross-comparison of data sources, and peer debriefing to validate emerging themes. Data saturation was reached when the comprehensive review of 42 documents produced recurring patterns and no new themes emerged.

The data were analyzed thematically through the lenses of Contingency Theory and Institutional Theory, enabling interpretation of how contextual and structural factors shape the misalignment between strategic planning intentions and operational realities in Somalia's institutional landscape. Where applicable, the reviewed documents were correlated with these theories to assess how Somali organizations adapt or fail to adapt strategic quality systems to volatile contexts. Contingency Theory helped interrogate how context-specific variables (e.g., security, donor

dependence, staffing gaps) influenced the effectiveness of planning tools, while Institutional Theory illuminated how organizations in Somalia conform to donor norms or resist formalization due to weak rule enforcement (Donaldson, 2001; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

To ensure credibility and validity, triangulation was reinforced by comparing findings across different document types (e.g., NGO reports versus government policy evaluations). Reliability was further enhanced through consistency in coding and independent verification by a second analyst familiar with Somali governance structures. All findings were organized using a matrix-based synthesis tool, allowing clear comparison across actors (government, NGOs, donors) and dimensions (strategy, quality, context).

7.0 Empirical Results

Numerous Somali public institutions, such as the Ministry of Planning (MoPIED) and the Office of the Auditor General in Puntland, have drafted strategic plans aimed at improving organizational coherence and accountability (OAG Puntland, 2024; MoPIED, 2023). However, these plans frequently lack built-in performance monitoring systems, resulting in gaps between intention and practice. Formulating a strategy is only the first step; what matters is its internalization and operationalization across departments. Viewed through the lens of Contingency Theory, these gaps underscore a misalignment between the static design of plans and the dynamic, high-risk environment in which Somali institutions operate. The evidence supports Bryson's (2018) position that strategy must be tailored to situational complexity rather than merely documented as a formal artefact. Without real-time responsiveness and feedback mechanisms, strategic plans risk becoming redundant and diluting institutional effectiveness.

Within the health sector, Somalia's Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) 2022–2026 sought to strengthen institutional capacity through investments in workforce development, ICT infrastructure, and emergency preparedness systems (MoH, 2021). While the plan outlines quarterly performance reviews, sector assessments reveal that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units are not adequately staffed or funded, thereby undermining feedback loops (UN ESCWA, 2021). An independent evaluation conducted in 2024 noted that although immunization and maternal health targets were well-defined, data collection systems remained fragmented and inconsistent across regional administrations

(World Bank, 2023). Thus, even well-structured plans struggle to achieve impact without operationalized internal quality mechanisms.

The Federal Directorate of Education's 2023–2027 plan appears robust on paper but remains weak in localized execution due to limited institutional harmonization and fragmented accountability structures (FDE, 2023; Saed & Warsame, 2024). A deeper consulting inquiry reveals that the sector suffers from a classic Institutional Theory paradox: form without function. Strategy documents are adopted to signal alignment with global norms and donor expectations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), yet implementation is hollow—driven more by symbolic legitimacy than by operational imperatives.

Many regional education officers are unfamiliar with performance metrics, and technical capacity for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is minimal. From a governance advisory perspective, this reflects a systemic weakness in which strategy functions primarily as a compliance tool rather than a driver of transformation. Unless strategic planning is embedded into the decision-making culture through decentralized ownership, it cannot generate meaningful institutional reform or strengthen quality assurance.

NGOs operating in Somalia, including IOM and SCC, often present detailed strategic frameworks (IOM, 2022; SCC, 2024). However, post-implementation reviews consistently highlight capacity bottlenecks, particularly in data systems, MEL staff deployment, and cross-project learning. In donor-led contexts, strategy development is frequently driven by visibility and compliance rather than by internal reflection and organizational learning.

According to Contingency Theory, an effective strategy requires alignment between environmental uncertainty and internal systems. Yet most Somali NGOs operate in highly adaptive environments while relying on inflexible, static strategic models. This misalignment creates fragility at the core of operations. Furthermore, the emphasis on donor reporting over institutional learning contributes to chronic underinvestment in quality systems.

A refocused strategy should therefore prioritize institutional agility, locally generated insights, and capacity-centered planning tools. Anchoring quality assurance into core operations in this way would enable NGOs to move beyond symbolic compliance and toward sustainable organizational resilience.

Adaptive planning approaches piloted by the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF) and USAID's TIS+ program have demonstrated improved learning and responsiveness (CDFI, 2023; USAID, 2024). However, these

successes are typically consultant-driven and seldom integrated into local governance structures. For adaptive models to be effective, they require not only top-level champions but also lateral, interdepartmental traction.

Accordingly, institutional design must shift from reliance on imported tools toward the development of contextualized ecosystems of planning and performance. Adaptive planning becomes truly transformative only when it is embedded into institutional memory, organizational culture, and operating procedures.

Somalia's Agricultural Strategic Plan (2023–2028) aims to enhance food resilience but suffers from poor monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) integration at sub-national levels, particularly in Galmudug and Southwest states (FAO, 2024; ADO Somalia, 2023). Local agricultural officers lack digital tools, technical training, and budgetary control, all of which paralyze effective strategy implementation.

Institutional Theory reveals a pattern of ceremonial planning strategies that exist in form but, without routine embedding, remain largely performative (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Strategic reviews highlight disjointed timelines, vague indicators, and unrealistic activity costing, all of which suggest limited internal vetting.

A viable strategy requires greater emphasis on co-creation, iterative feedback, and embedded learning loops. Donor-commissioned strategies must therefore pivot from compliance instruments to living documents, incorporating flexible, real-time performance calibration aligned with community realities.

Recent co-creation models introduced through UN–EU joint programming and GAVI Somalia have produced encouraging results by emphasizing local ownership, harmonized metrics, and embedded feedback systems (UNDP, 2024; GAVI, 2023). These models highlight participatory planning, strategic alignment, and adaptive management features that have long been advocated in public sector consulting. Contingency Theory is affirmed here: success arises when strategy adapts to real-time stakeholder engagement and contextual constraints. Moreover, such models signal a gradual shift away from top-down planning.

In fragile states, embedding these models requires policy frameworks, cross-sectoral advisory boards, and capacity building at the front line. Institutional trust is cultivated not through the form of strategy but through process ownership and contextual integrity, an area in which Somalia can take the lead if lessons are consolidated and scaled.

Across all reviewed sectors, including health, education, agriculture, and civil society, a consistent pattern emerges: strategy documents abound, yet systemic internalization remains absent. Contingency Theory suggests that organizational resilience in volatile environments such as Somalia depends on tight alignment between strategy and environment (Donaldson, 2001). Institutional Theory explains why organizations adopt strategies for legitimacy yet fail to enforce internal compliance. Somalia's institutions therefore require holistic planning systems that integrate vision with feedback, ownership with execution, and legitimacy with performance. The opportunity lies in embedding strategic planning within national systems, not merely as policy but as an institutional habit.

8.0 Bridging the Gap: Operationalization Framework and Recommendations

8.1 Proposed Operationalization Framework

The Integrated Operational Model for Strategic Planning and Internal Quality System Enhancement in Fragile Organizational Contexts offers a pragmatic and context-sensitive approach tailored to the operational realities of fragile states such as Somalia. In these settings, where institutions often grapple with weak governance, inconsistent funding, and limited technical capacity, the model provides a structured framework for aligning strategic vision with internal quality mechanisms, including monitoring, evaluation, audit, and compliance (Fig. 1 and Table 1).

The model emphasizes practical tools such as stakeholder-driven planning workshops, context-specific risk assessments, internal system audits, and decentralized performance tracking—all rooted in real-time institutional learning and adaptive feedback. Drawing on Contingency Theory and Institutional Theory, it rejects “one-size-fits-all” approaches and instead advocates for continuous alignment between strategy and environmental conditions.

Through its modular and participatory design, the model empowers local institutions to transition from reactive crisis management to proactive, quality-focused operations. In doing so, it strengthens both legitimacy and resilience over time, positioning fragile-state institutions to embed strategic planning as a driver of sustainable governance and organizational transformation.

Figure 1: Proposed Operationalization Framework (Researcher, 2025)

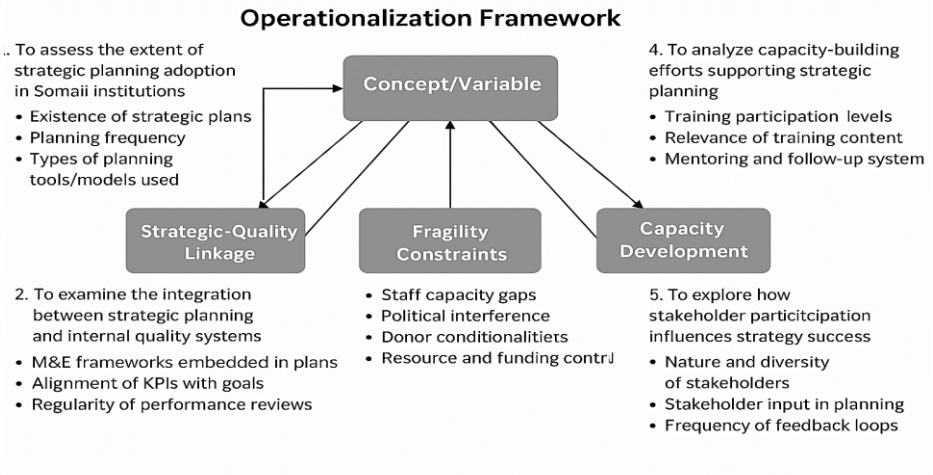


Table 1: Integrated Operational Model for Strategic Planning and Internal Quality System Enhancement in Fragile Organizational Contexts

Objective	Concept/Variable	Indicators	Measurement Method	Data Source	Expected Outcome
1. To assess the extent of strategic planning adoption in Somali institutions	Strategic Planning Adoption	- Existence of strategic plans- Planning frequency- Planning tools used	Document review, Interviews with leadership	Organizational reports Key informants	Level of formalization and frequency of strategic planning
2. To examine the integration between strategic planning and internal quality systems	Strategic-Quality Linkage	- M&E frameworks embedded in plans- KPI alignment- Performance review cycles	Strategic plan analysis Staff surveys, Focus groups	Policy documents Organizational M&E reports	Degree of alignment between planning and quality control
3. To determine the challenges affecting strategic planning in fragile environments	Fragility Constraints	- Staff capacity gaps- Political interference- Resource limitations	Interviews Secondary data review	MoPIED reports Donor assessment UN agency data	List of internal and external inhibitors

4. To analyze capacity-building efforts supporting strategic planning	Capacity Development	- Number of staff trained- Training content relevance- Follow-up and mentoring systems	Training reports, HR records, Observation	Training institutions, NGOs Public agencies	Understanding of readiness and gaps in strategic capacity
5. To explore how stakeholder participation influences strategy success	Stakeholder Involvement	- Number/type of actors involved- Stakeholder input used in planning- Feedback loops	FGDs Plan review Stakeholder mapping	Meeting minutes Plan drafts NGO participation records	Effectiveness and inclusivity of the planning process

The Integrated Operational Model for Strategic Planning and Internal Quality System Enhancement represents a significant departure from earlier frameworks in the literature, particularly those grounded in conventional strategic management paradigms that assume institutional stability, centralized control, and uniform technical capacity. Unlike legacy models that often rely on standardized planning cycles and rigid evaluation mechanisms, this model is explicitly designed for fragile contexts such as Somalia, where governance is weak, resources are inconsistent, and institutional learning must remain adaptive and real-time.

Drawing on Contingency Theory and Institutional Theory, the model introduces a modular, participatory architecture that integrates stakeholder-driven planning, decentralized performance tracking, and context-specific risk diagnostics. This dual emphasis on operational effectiveness and legitimacy enables institutions to transition from reactive crisis management to proactive, quality-focused governance.

To benchmark this model against existing literature, a targeted search was conducted using keywords such as “strategic planning in fragile states,” “contingency theory,” and “institutional theory in weak governance” across databases including SpringerLink, Cambridge University Press, TheoryHub, StudiousGuy, and 1Library.net. The search focused on publications from 2005 to 2025, ensuring a robust comparative foundation for assessing the model’s theoretical contributions and practical relevance.

8.2 Recommendations

1. Embed strategic planning as a core institutional function by establishing formal structures and dedicated units to ensure consistency, legitimacy, and alignment with Somalia's national development goals.
2. Develop adaptive, locally relevant plans that reflect Somalia's fragile realities, allowing flexibility in response to shifting political, economic, and security dynamics.
3. Integrate strategic goals with quality assurance mechanisms such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), risk management, and compliance, thereby embedding accountability and performance tracking into all organizational processes.
4. Strengthen staff technical capacity in strategic planning and quality assurance through targeted training programs, mentorship initiatives, and institutional partnerships with development agencies.
5. Promote inclusive planning processes that actively engage internal staff, communities, and donors to build ownership, enhance responsiveness, and align strategic goals with ground-level realities.
6. Establish structured systems for continuous learning and adaptation by institutionalizing regular reviews, iterative plan revisions, and embedded learning loops informed by performance data, lessons learned, and emerging risks.

9.0 Conclusion

The Integrated Operational Model offers a context-sensitive framework for aligning strategic planning with internal quality systems in fragile environments. By embedding adaptive tools such as stakeholder-driven workshops, decentralized performance tracking, and real-time feedback loops, the model directly addresses the operational constraints typical of fragile states like Somalia.

Theoretically, it advances both Contingency Theory and Institutional Theory by demonstrating how modular, participatory systems can foster legitimacy and resilience under volatile conditions. From a policy standpoint, the model presents a replicable blueprint for other fragile contexts such as South Sudan, Yemen, and the Central African Republic, where governance and technical capacity remain limited.

This study concludes that while strategic planning is increasingly adopted in Somalia's fragile organizational contexts, its effectiveness is hindered by weak integration with internal quality systems such as

monitoring, evaluation, and compliance. Drawing from Contingency and Institutional perspectives, the findings highlight how environmental volatility and donor-driven mandates often result in symbolic rather than functional planning.

Despite these challenges, evidence shows that when planning is participatory, context-driven, and continuously adapted, it can significantly enhance institutional accountability, resilience, and service delivery. Therefore, Somali institutions must embed strategic planning into organizational culture and operational systems, transforming it from a compliance tool into a driver of sustainable institutional performance.

Future research should prioritize empirical field validation through mixed-method designs, combining longitudinal case studies, stakeholder interviews, and performance audits to assess the model's scalability, effectiveness, and institutional impact across diverse fragile-state settings.

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