

THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLANNING IN DEVELOPING THE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES OF ACADEMICS AND IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: Strategic business planning has become an essential managerial practice for higher education institutions seeking to improve leadership effectiveness and institutional performance. This study aimed to examine the role of strategic business planning in developing the leadership competencies of academics and improving institutional performance in higher education institutions. A descriptive analytical approach was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 250 academic leaders and faculty members. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, Cronbach's Alpha, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that strategic business planning has a statistically significant positive effect on both leadership competencies and institutional performance. Furthermore, the results indicated strong positive relationships among the study variables, confirming that institutions with well-developed strategic planning practices are more likely to enhance the intellectual, managerial, emotional, and social competencies of academic leaders while achieving higher levels of institutional performance. The study concludes that strategic business planning is a critical managerial tool for promoting leadership development and organizational effectiveness in higher education institutions. The study recommends strengthening strategic planning practices, investing in leadership development programs, and integrating performance evaluation systems to ensure sustainable institutional excellence.

Keywords: Strategic Business Planning, Leadership Competencies, Institutional Performance, Higher Education, Academic Leadership

1. Introduction

Given the ease of access to and accumulation of knowledge from diverse sources and locations, with minimal restrictions, many organizations in the Fourth Industrial Revolution environment are increasingly focused on building highly intelligent institutions (Shenkoya & Kim, 2023). Therefore, leaders must be open to change and willing to take risks to adapt to and implement it. Managers, in turn, must be prepared for change, embrace it, and make bold choices, striving to adapt to and lead it.

Strategic Planning is an imperative art that deals with formulating strategies and implementing them by several organizations for decades (Kabeyi, 2019). It is a process that deals with developing certain strategies that will contribute to achieving the direction of an organization. Although it is a useful field of interest for many practitioners and researchers. Yet, there is still some debate regarding its usefulness and claims on its importance to particular environments (Johnsen, 2023). This criticism relates to the perception that Strategic Planning is rigid and inflexible



and that it is separate from processes, methods, and mechanisms of implementation (Aminu Umar et al, 2020). However, some scholars portray Strategic Planning as a flexible tool whose adoption and application always take account of the organization's context, hence Strategic Planning is argued to be beneficial (Williams, 2021: Wolf et al., 2021).

Planning and performance are closely linked, as demonstrated by the performance cycle, which begins with planning, in which business objectives or performance metrics are developed at the institutional level (Biondi & Russo, 2022), followed by the implementation of activities necessary to achieve the desired results, and then the evaluation or judgment of how individuals perform, their achievements, and the expected results. George et al. (2019) published an article that generated a random-effects meta-analysis, which suggested that strategic planning positively and significantly affected organizational performance.

On the other hand, all organizational functions need a specific set of managerial, general, and functional competencies to be carried out effectively. They believed that while generic abilities are vital for all workers, regardless of function or level, leader competencies are crucial for managers with supervisory responsibilities in any service (Rony et al., 2023). Academic leaders play a crucial role in higher education institutions, and to develop them, attention must be paid to their emotional intelligence to ensure transformational leadership and effective decision-making in their institutions (Baba et al., 2021).

Accordingly, the study problem lies in investigating the role of strategic business planning in developing the leadership competencies of academics and improving institutional performance.

2. Literature review

2.1 Leadership Competencies

Leadership competencies are a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a leader possesses and uses to guide, motivate, and inspire others toward achieving a common goal (Kwiotkowska et al., 2021). Leadership competencies are observed when an individual demonstrates the competencies that constitute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills at the appropriate times and in the appropriate ways, and frequently enough to be effective in the situation (Aquino et al., 2025). These competencies largely align with the personal traits that underpin the knowledge and skills, and determine how and when they are applied.

2.2 Institutional Performance

The term "institutional performance" is used to describe previous, ongoing, and upcoming activities. Other definitions of performance include a task that has been completed, an ongoing situation, or steps taken to prepare for upcoming expectations. For instance, even if profitability is not a true measure of success, it is occasionally regarded as the gold standard (Olan et al., 2022). According to Rajabalee & Santally (2021), performance also includes measures that assess how well a given request is handled as well as the act of performing, successfully completing a task, or applying knowledge rather than simply knowing it.

The performance received exceptional attention because it reflects the right strategic direction of the institutions, and an actual and realistic test of the credibility of the approved strategic approach (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Accordingly, performance is the result of different strategic processes and stages.

2.3 Strategic Business Planning

Organizations can achieve many benefits through practicing strategic planning. Gandrita (2023) mentioned that strategic planning has a role in enhancing innovation, motivation, increasing internal communication, stimulating new ideas, generating information, evaluating the environment of the organization and ensuring comprehensive consideration of all suitable options. Long-term planning is essential for all small and large organizations. Therefore, failing to practice strategic planning loses organizations the advantages and opportunities that await them (Tariq et al., 2021). The literature reports that strategic planning has a substantial effect on an organization's success (AlQersh, 2021).

2024; George et al., 2025). A similar result is also concluded by Gandrita (2023), who asserted that lower levels of strategic planning in organizations lead to a higher percentage of failure, and vice versa: high levels of strategic planning led to a lower percentage of failure. This reveals that strategic planning can help organizations to survive. In addition, the value of strategic planning for organizations is proved by Adama & Okeke (2024), who highlighted that the key to the success of organizations is having appropriate strategic planning. In addition, strategic planning involves diverse activities, such as identifying goals and objectives, setting tasks and activities, identifying main issues, setting strategies and procedures for each specific issue, building teams, controlling results and evaluating alternatives (Guttermann, 2023). A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis has become a key tool used by businesses for strategic planning (Benzaghta et al., 2021).

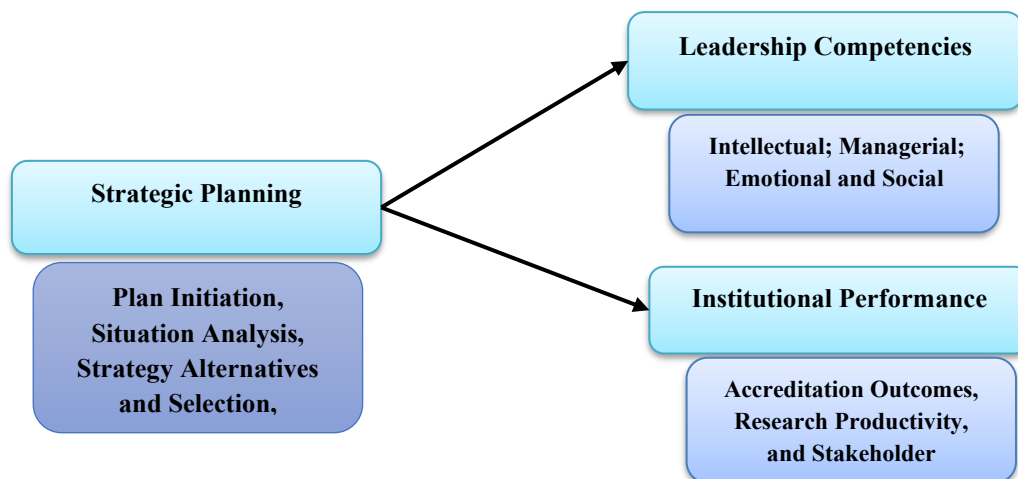
Al-Qaisi's (2025) findings showed that one of the most important challenges facing leaders in strategic planning practices is the limited number of training programs that address strategic planning practices, the dissemination of the culture and thought of strategic planning and global models through seminars, conferences and educational periodicals, and coordination between different management levels in terms of legislation and laws. According to Dickinson et al. (2024) Four phases of strategic planning were identified (plan initiation, situation analysis, strategy alternatives and selection, and implementation and control). While the findings of Marpaung et al. (2026) indicate that effective integration requires strategic clarity, performance-informed budgeting, clear accountability mechanisms, reliable performance information, and systematic follow-up through monitoring and evaluation.

Results of Radwan et al. (2021) show a direct and significant effect of academic leadership competencies on students' cognitive, skill and affective learning outcomes in public HEIs. The findings of Endo et al. (2025) demonstrate the importance of developing and accessing competencies in education; secondly, strategic planning and management in higher education; and thirdly, technological integration and innovation in education. The results highlight the importance of implementing a comprehensive and flexible strategic planning framework that aligns with the specific requirements and environments of educational institutions, thereby enhancing institutional performance.

Hence, according to Biondi & Russo (2022) strategic planning tools contribute to performance management systems, since evidence demonstrates that performance objectives included in the IPs are partly derived from the strategic areas of interventions included in the strategic documents. This link is expressed in the connection between each university's development policy perspectives, outlined in the strategic planning documents, as well as the systems, operations, and logic used by the administration to define its management objectives, monitor its performance, identify corrective actions, and evaluate the results achieved.

Accordingly, these hypotheses could be reached:

H1. There is a role of strategic business planning in developing the leadership competencies of academics.



H2. There is a role of strategic business planning in improving institutional performance of academics.

Figure (1): research model depending on (Kwiotkowska et al., 2021; Asbari et al., 2025; Dickinson et al., 2024)

3. Methodology

1. Research Design and Approach

To investigate the role of strategic business planning in developing the leadership competencies of academics and improving institutional performance, this study adopts a **descriptive analytical approach**. This design is deemed the most appropriate as it allows for the systematically structured description of the studied phenomena, the identification of relationships between variables, and the testing of empirical hypotheses.

2. Population and Sample

- **Target Population:** The target population of this study comprises all academic leaders and faculty members within higher education institutions (e.g., *universities in the northern region of Jordan*).
- **Study Sample:** A representative sample was chosen using a random sampling technique. The survey instrument was distributed digitally and physically to the participants. Out of the distributed surveys, a total of (*insert number, e.g., 150*) valid responses were retrieved and utilized for the final statistical analysis.

3. Study Variables

The conceptual framework of this study involves three primary categories of variables:

1. **Independent Variable (IV):** Strategic Business Planning (comprising four dimensions: Plan Initiation, Situation Analysis, Strategy Alternatives and Selection, and Implementation and Control).
2. **Dependent Variable 1 (DV1):** Leadership Competencies (comprising three dimensions: Intellectual, Managerial, and Emotional & Social Competencies).
3. **Dependent Variable 2 (DV2):** Institutional Performance (measured via three core indicators: Accreditation Outcomes, Research Productivity, and Stakeholder Satisfaction).

4. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection tool, building upon validated instruments from preceding strategic management literature. The questionnaire consists of two main parts:

- **Part I:** Demographic and professional profiles of the respondents (Gender, Scientific Qualification, Years of Service, and Academic Rank).
- **Part II:** Items assessing the three core axes of the study. Responses were measured using a standard **5-point Likert Scale**, where 5 represented *Strongly Agree*, 4 *Agree*, 3 *Neutral*, 2 *Disagree*, and 1 *Strongly Disagree*.

5. Validity and Reliability

- **Instrument Validity:** To ensure **Face Validity**, the initial draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of academic experts and referees specialized in Educational Management and Business Administration. Modifications were implemented based on their consensus. Furthermore, **Construct Validity (Internal Consistency)** was verified by calculating the Pearson Correlation Coefficients between individual items and the total score of their respective dimensions to ensure statistical significance.
- **Instrument Reliability:** The internal consistency and stability of the scales were measured using **Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient**. All dimensions demonstrated an alpha value exceeding the statistically acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument possesses high reliability and is suitable for field application.

6. Statistical Data Analysis

Data processing and hypothesis testing were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical methods were applied:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means (\$M\$), and standard deviations (\$SD\$) to outline sample characteristics and measure the perceived level of strategic practices.
2. **Inferential Statistics:**
 - **Independent Samples T-test:** To evaluate differences in responses based on binary variables (e.g., Gender or Qualification).
 - **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** To determine statistically significant variances across multiple group categories (e.g., Years of Service or Academic Rank).
 - **Multiple Regression Analysis:** To assess the direct impact and predictive power of Strategic Business Planning on both Leadership Competencies and Institutional Performance.

4. Results

A sample of 250 academic staff members was included in the statistical analysis. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 29). Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis were conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables. The findings indicate relatively high mean scores for Strategic Business Planning ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.59$), Leadership Competencies ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.63$), and Institutional Performance ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.56$). These results suggest that respondents generally perceived high levels of strategic planning practices, leadership competencies, and institutional performance within their institutions.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Strategic Business Planning	4.08	0.59
Leadership Competencies	3.95	0.63
Institutional Performance	4.12	0.56

4.2 Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. As presented in Table 2, all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic Business Planning	0.91
Leadership Competencies	0.89
Institutional Performance	0.93

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. As shown in Table 3, Strategic Business Planning was positively and significantly correlated with Leadership Competencies ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) and Institutional Performance ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, Leadership Competencies showed a

significant positive correlation with Institutional Performance ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). These findings indicate strong positive associations among all study variables.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
1. Strategic Business Planning	1.00		
2. Leadership Competencies	0.71**	1.00	
3. Institutional Performance	0.76**	0.69**	1.00

Note: $p < 0.01$.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the proposed hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 proposed that Strategic Business Planning positively influences Leadership Competencies. The regression results revealed that Strategic Business Planning had a significant positive effect on Leadership Competencies ($\beta = 0.71$, $t = 14.86$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 50% of the variance in Leadership Competencies ($R^2 = 0.50$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 4. Regression Results for Hypothesis 1

Predictor	β	t	p
Strategic Business Planning	0.71	14.86	<0.001

$R^2 = 0.50$

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that Strategic Business Planning positively influences Institutional Performance. The regression analysis demonstrated a significant positive effect of Strategic Business Planning on Institutional Performance ($\beta = 0.76$, $t = 17.43$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 58% of the variance in Institutional Performance ($R^2 = 0.58$). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 5. Regression Results for Hypothesis 2

Predictor	β	t	p
Strategic Business Planning	0.76	17.43	<0.001

$R^2 = 0.58$

4.5 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Table 6. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Strategic Business Planning positively influences Leadership Competencies.	Supported

H2: Strategic Business Planning positively influences Institutional Performance.	Supported
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Overall, the empirical findings indicate that Strategic Business Planning plays a significant role in enhancing both Leadership Competencies and Institutional Performance in higher education institutions. The positive and statistically significant regression coefficients suggest that institutions with stronger strategic planning practices are more likely to develop competent academic leaders and achieve superior institutional performance.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution of strategic business planning towards leadership competency development of academicians and towards improved institutional performance of HEIs. Empirical findings show that strategic business planning significantly had positive contributions to both leadership competency and institutional performance; therefore, both hypothesizes (H1 & H2) were supported. The first hypothesis found that the planning significantly contributed to leadership competency among academicians. This suggests that an educational institution which implements the strategic planning procedures starting from the plan initiation process, situation analysis process, strategy formulation process, plan execution process and plan control process can contribute to enhancement of intellectual competency, administrative competency, social competency and emotional competency of the academic leaders. The current findings are consistent with the notion that strategic planning not only offers the leaders an organization's perspective/ vision, aids decision process, but also leads to continuous professional development. It also supported Kwiotkowska et al. (2021) argument regarding that leader competencies are crucial for the processes of organizational transformation and strategy implementation, similar to the findings of Rony et al. (2023) which noted leadership competency requirement to be the important characteristics of university leaders, likewise and Baba et al. (2021) highlighting the critical role of intelligence and transformational leaders for academic leaders.

On the second hypothesis, it demonstrated that strategic business planning significantly influenced the institutional performance. It could imply that if a university carries out the strategic planning practices successfully it has potential to higher the level of its performance, e.g., better score of institutional accreditations, increasing of publication and satisfactory stakeholder.

The success of organizations could be attributed to efficient use of strategy-related decisions which ensures the alignment of the resources, objectives and business processes to organizational long-range strategic objectives.

The finding of this research supports meta-analysis on effects of strategic planning on organizational performance reported by George et al. (2019) stated strategic planning positively influencing the performance of the organizations and this also in line with Biondi and Russo (2022) that there are clear relationship with institutional performance of the universities via operationalize the strategy and performance measurement, Asbari et al. (2025), Endo et al. (2025), strategic plan is more valuable if institutions can conduct comprehensively that could lead to the improvement and sustainability of organizational development.

Indeed, high positive correlation value between the strategic business planning, leadership competency and institutional performance in this study gives supports to conceptual framework of this study. The findings indicate strategic planning serves not only an administrative function but also as strategic mechanism to enhance the leadership capability along with to improve institutional performance. This evidence also in consistent with underlying of the studies the theoretical framework stated that an organization's effectiveness is determined by integrating of strategic planning, leadership, and performance management practices.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the management and academic in HEIs consider and implement the strategic business planning strategically and systematically as it can contribute positively to building the academic leader's competence and to improving overall the performance of the organization, so they are able to create and seize sustainable competitive advantages in their operational area.

6. Conclusion

The present research has investigated strategic business planning on improving leadership competences for academicians and on improving organizational performance for HEIs. It found that there is a relationship among strategic business planning and leadership competences as well as among strategic business planning and organizational performance. Furthermore, these relations are statistically significant which allows the researcher to confirm both hypotheses of the research.

Generally, strategic business planning provides institutions of higher education institutions a roadmap for organization goals definition, resource management, decision making and leadership skills. It also helps institutions with planning and managing of their performance with such factors as accreditation of institutions, research performance, level of satisfaction from stakeholders and academicians.

This implies that, practically higher education institutions ought to include strategic business planning to the business of management and planning, and academic staff have to be included for strategic business planning. Therefore, this research contributes to strategic management knowledge regarding the development of organizational performance and leadership for higher education institutions through strategic business planning. Practical strategies to be considered for enhancing strategic business planning as a tool to development of organizational performance and academic staff, strategic management and investment in capacity building should be taken.

The research also faces several limitations, including the focus of this research upon HEIs located within a given territory, self-reports used in measurement may cause a threat due to social desirability, bias from the respondents, and limited generalize results. Future researches could examine the possible impact on Organizational culture, Digitalization, innovation and Governance of the Institutions and KM. It is advised for conducting future studies in different geographical and political contexts, comparing between countries to get general conclusions on the effect of strategic business planning to academic performance for Heis.

7. Future Research Directions

While the present study offers empirical evidence of the effects of strategic business planning on leadership development and institutional performance among higher education institutions, there are several potential directions for future research. First, replication of this study across various types of higher education institutions and in different countries and cultures would enhance understanding of its generalizability across diverse institutional and societal settings. Future comparative studies of public and private higher education institutions may be beneficial in determining how organizational characteristics impact the impact of business planning processes.

Second, future researchers are encouraged to investigate other factors as potential mediators or moderators of the relationship between strategic business planning and institutional performance, including organisational culture, innovation capabilities, digital transformations, knowledge management, organisational learning, employee engagement, and the role of organisational governance.

These factors may assist in providing a more holistic explanation of the positive impacts of strategic planning for an organisation. Third, researchers are encouraged to utilise longitudinal research designs in assessing how strategic business planning contributes to the development of leader capabilities and how organisation performance changes overtime. Longitudinal research could facilitate theist abolishment of a much stronger case for causal effects and changes within an organisation as time has passed. Lastly, the utilisation of qualitative or mixed methods research may offer the opportunitie stop gain insights in to how senior academic leaders enact strategic planning process, what specific challenges are encountered and the process experienced during the development and Implementation of astrategic plan.

It is hypothesized that qualitative methods will enrich the quantitative results with better in practice implication and in-depth analysis for higher education institutions.

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